

Centering

NEWS OF CENTRAL LUTHERAN | MINNEAPOLIS

FALL 2024

Community through the Essentials



Opening our hearts
and minds in love



"It is only with *the heart that one can*
see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye."
from *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupery

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Cover art:

High School youth visiting Jackson Square while attending
the ELCA National Youth Gathering in New Orleans, LA.

Photo credit: Stephanie Friesen



Community through the Essentials

Another year of learning and growing begins in September under the theme “Community through the Essentials.” In the coming months, we will explore and ponder the essentials of what it means to be people of faith, fully embracing the humanity of all God’s children.

Simply put, essentials are those things that are absolutely necessary. As church, we understand that there are essentials – essential teachings, essential scripture, essential elements of faith. Together through worship, Bible study, programming, and service, you are invited to be a part of this exploration of essentials, old and new.

Community through the Essentials opens us to experience that which we cannot always see. It is in our relationships, in the circles of connection and friendship, that we most authentically love and care for each other. As we learn from the timeless story, *The Little Prince*, “it is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.”

To open the year, we will use a children’s book called *May You Love and be Loved: Wishes for Your Life* by Cleo Wade. This beautiful picture book will introduce some essentials that will help get us thinking about how we love ourselves, and when we can do that, we are ready to love our neighbors as well.

“Simply put, essentials are those things that are absolutely necessary.”

Over the course of the year, we’ll look and listen for the essentials as they appear. God calls to each, and we look forward to exploring Community through the Essentials with you.

Pastor Stephanie

Community through Formation

The Lifelong Formation Area Cluster centers on lifelong faith formation where all can develop a closer relationship with God and deepen their call for mission.

Sunday School

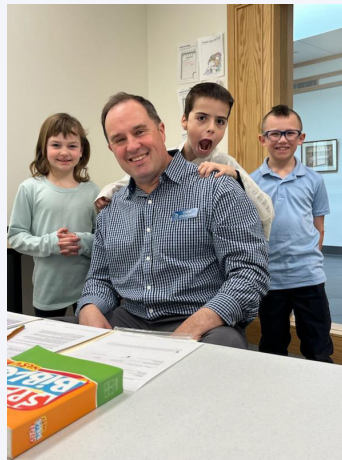
Begins Sunday, September 15, 9:30 a.m.

Classrooms will be cleaned and ready and teachers will warmly welcome students back to tables with stories and activities to spark the kids' imaginations for a new year of learning.

Using this year's theme, *Community through the Essentials*, kids will focus on essential Bible stories to guide their learning and understanding of Jesus. We will intentionally focus on Jesus' love for all and talk about how we are called to do the same.

In a new book by Cleo Wade called *May You Love and Be Loved*, the students will learn about what it means to love their neighbors and friends with a vocabulary that focuses on the essentials of faith including gratitude, forgiveness, compassion, bravery, and confidence. Imagine the energy that will flow from the baptismal promises that call each child beloved.

Registration forms are available on the website and at the Welcome Desk. Sunday school begins for children who are three years old by September 1 and continues through 5th grade. Come and learn and grow in faith!



For kids and teachers, Sunday School is full of Spirit and Fun!

Youth Ministry

Begins Sunday, September 15, 9:30 a.m.

For middle school kids, Confirmation classes highlight their learning for three years. Beginning in sixth grade, students gather weekly to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to be church in the world. We spend time exploring God, Father, Son and Spirit, and how the Trinity invites us into relationship with God through dynamic relationships. We look into what it means to be Lutheran and how that impacts what we believe and how we serve our neighbors.

We tend to the deep questions of faith that emerge in our middle school years honoring the curiosity that maturity brings.



In July, the High Schoolers traveled to New Orleans.

The high school youth group meets every Sunday for students to deepen relationships with one another and to continue conversations about what it means to be God's people in our neighborhoods and in the world. The high schoolers have time to be social and they have time to learn, focusing on current events and concerns in their lives.

With the pastors and other adult leaders in the congregation, the high school students continue in their formation journey as they prepare for the next steps in their lives.



Kids bake bread during a First Communion class.

Adult Education

Adult Education comes in many forms at Central and you are invited to participate whenever and however it works for you.

Adult Bible Study

There are two options for adult Bible study. If you prefer daytime study, a group gathers on Wednesday mornings at 11 a.m. for a text study on the coming week's lectionary texts. Pastors meet with this group taking an in-depth look at scripture for the week and explore what they mean for us historically and at present. These are great conversations that highlight the texts used in worship each week.

If evening study is better, Wednesday Night Bible study is offered weekly.

The study **begins on**

October 2 at 6 p.m. and you are invited to come in person or on Zoom. This year we are using the theme Community through the Essentials to guide our Wednesday night learning. Each of the pastors has chosen essential texts, those stories from scripture that anchor our understanding of what the Bible teaches us about God and the ways in which Jesus teaches us to live in God's good creation. This group meets for an hour and is designed for you to come when it works for you.



Wednesday morning Bible study meets weekly throughout the year.

Adult Forums

There are adult forums at 9:30 a.m. each Sunday. With a slant toward faith in daily life, these forums are designed to open us to the intersections between daily living and faith. We'll explore topics this year that include Luther's marks of the church, sacramental living, vocational calling, and a host of other topics. There are always cookies and coffee and good conversation.

On the third Sunday of each month, we invite you to join an experience we call Empowering Conversations. These are forums that encourage you to think about the ways of peace that lead to justice. Empowering Conversations is designed to help us think deeply about where the community needs a little

disruption to bring equity to the community.

Other Adult Opportunities

Central has a book club that meets monthly on the second Thursday at 1:30 p.m. Member-led, this group chooses its library of readings, and they host guided conversations about what they've read and learned. All are welcome to read along and join the conversation. Zoom is available for those who prefer to join the conversation from home.

There is a host of other opportunities for adults and information is available on the website at www.centralmpls.org.

Save the Date

The start of the program year is full of opportunities for us to worship and be together in community.



The C3 Team was very active during Earth week.

September 2
Monday, Labor Day
Building Closed

September 4
Wednesday
7:15 p.m.
Weekly Adult Choir rehearsal begins

September 18
Wednesday
6 p.m.
Weekly Bell Choir rehearsal begins


September 21
Saturday
10:30 a.m.
Installation of Rev. Jen Nagel as Bishop of the Minneapolis Area Synod



Karen received a special quilt to keep her warm this winter.

September 7-8
Rally Weekend
Sunday, 9:30 a.m.
Intergenerational Learning

September 15
Sunday
9:30 a.m.
Weekly Sunday School, Confirmation, High School Youth Group, and Adult Forums begin
noon
Empowering Conversations With Barbara Lundblad

October 2
Wednesday
6 p.m.
Weekly Evening Bible Study begins 

October 5-6
Confirmation Retreat



The OWLS enjoy many activities, including the annual Christmas luncheon.



Central folks gathered on the North Plaza to enjoy Carillon concerts this summer.

October 19-20

Global Mission Weekend

Sunday, noon

Empowering Conversations
with Rev. Franklin Ishida

November 2-3

All Saints Weekend

Sunday, 11:30 a.m.

CLC Foundation End-of-Life
Seminar

November 5

Election Day

November 9-10

**Sabbath to End Homelessness
Weekend**

Sunday

12:30-4:30 p.m.

Fall Prayer Retreat



The pastors will lead an end-of-life seminar in November.

November 17

Sunday

noon

Empowering Conversations

November 23

First Communion Class

November 23-24

**Generosity Ingathering
Weekend**

November 25

Monday

11 a.m.

Thanksgiving Worship and Meal

November 28

Thanksgiving Holiday

Thursday, 10 a.m.

Downtown Congregations
Interfaith Worship



The 2024 confirmands.



Many enjoyed singing in the summer pop-up choirs!



We can't wait for Sunday School to begin on September 15!

Community through Community

The Community Area Cluster centers on welcoming all into life-giving community where relationships are fostered and a range of human needs are met.

Thanksgiving Meal

In church, the word Thanksgiving takes on an entirely different meaning than it does in North American culture; it is less a family meal where we feast on specific items and fight over football and politics. Every time we gather in the sanctuary, we celebrate the Lord's Supper. In the midst of that liturgy



Delicious Thanksgiving classics are served.

there is a formula called "The Great Thanksgiving." We give thanks for all the ways God has interacted with us throughout history to save us. We list the ways God saved us when we were slaves in Egypt; when we were chasing other idols, when

Jesus saved us from starvation, and when he conquered death for our sake. We give thanks that God has saved us over and over and we speak the words of hope that God will once again save us in the meal we gather together to eat.

For some folks in our community, salvation is a near daily event. Food stability is hard to maintain when you are staying at a shelter or when you are sleeping outside. Most Mondays during the year, we gather together for a meal and it saves every one of us who are hungry. That is all of us. Some folks could find lunch a million different ways, but we are the church when we gather on Mondays, too. The food we eat is only part of our salvation. The fellowship and the care we provide for



Staff and volunteers do an amazing job serving up the meal.

each and every one of us wraps us in God's love as it becomes tangible. We are the hands of God when we gather. The Monday worshipping community knows that in their bones and here's where thanksgiving comes back into play. We are a thank-filled people. When we gather on **Monday, November 25**, we will have all the turkey, mashed potatoes, and gravy you could want. We will also have amazing fellowship, once again sharing what is burdening us and what is bringing us life. Please join us. Worship starts at 11 a.m. and the meal will be served at 11:30 a.m. All are welcome, no exceptions.



The Great Room is full during the Thanksgiving Meal.

Align Update on the U.S. Supreme Court Johnson v. Grants Pass Decision

From Align Director Katie Dillon:

“On Friday [June 28], the Supreme Court issued their decision in the case Johnson v. Grants Pass, upholding that city’s ability to ticket people for sleeping outside, even when they have no other option and no shelter space is provided. The decision came in during the Friday Street Voices of Change meeting, and we held space for anger, sorrow, and disappointment during the meeting, and reaffirmed our commitment to making change in our local community. Align’s foundation of listening to the lived experience of those with experiences of homelessness reminds us that all of our neighbors are deserving of humanity and dignity, regardless of their housing status. And we remain committed to our mission of addressing homelessness together.”



This Supreme Court decision reminds us of our call as the Church to care for all people, and that as long as one person is without a home, we are all homeless. Through Align and Street Voices of Change, we listen to people who have resorted to sleeping outside because the shelter wasn’t a safe place to be or because there just was not space for them in a shelter. The case had been made that it is cruel and unusual punishment to ticket people sleeping in public spaces when there is nowhere else for them to legally go. The Supreme Court did not agree. However, good and strong words came from the people in the state of Minnesota’s Interagency Council on Homelessness. They said:

“The United States Supreme Court’s ruling in Grants Pass v. Johnson is wrong, short-sighted, and harmful. The criminalization of homelessness is not only immoral, but also ineffective. Housing and services end homelessness. Tickets and arrests do not. Further, homelessness disproportionately affects our Native and Black relatives here in Minnesota and this ruling will have an outsized impact on them, making the goal of reducing racial disparities that much more difficult.

The court could have ruled that a government entity cannot punish a person for sleeping on public property when the person has nowhere else to sleep in the city, and that doing so would not prevent state and local governments from placing reasonable limits on the size and location of encampments, or from punishing harmful conduct that may be associated with encampments. Disappointingly, they did not.

The Supreme Court was wrong. We must do right. The State of Minnesota will continue to expand opportunities and resources so people facing homelessness have access to long-term solutions that we know work, including housing that is affordable and linked to supportive services when needed.

Through the coordinated efforts of people with lived experience of homelessness, the Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness, and partners across the state, we will keep people first and focus on the critical work of justice. We care about one another in Minnesota and know that we all do better when we all have a place to call home.”

We will not allow this court ruling to harden our hearts, but instead to open our hearts to people who have no home and empower their leadership on the solutions to encampments.

Community through the Essentials

By Pastor Melissa Pohlman

In many parts of our lives we find ourselves in groups of people. Very infrequently are those random groups. Even when we find ourselves all at the grocery store, there is something we all share in common. We are all at the store at the same time because we



need to eat, or we might live close to this store, or we all get benefits that make gas cheaper because we shop here. The values and experiences and desired outcomes create community. We might not

have a lot else in common with the people around us at any one time, but **the smallest commonalities are what we cling to when the world feels random or chaotic.**

In Martin Luther's day, life felt chaotic and disconnected to him, too. In the midst of trying to call the Church back to itself, Luther asked the question, "How will or how can a poor confused person tell where such Christian holy people can be found in the world?" Basically, how can we find the church in the world? Luther came up with seven marks of the church and the Christian life. **These are the essentials.** When you find them you will find the church and the people who follow Jesus, too.

We will be highlighting these essentials and how we are formed as a community by these guiding touchstones this year together. So, what are the essential marks of the church that mold us as a community?

Luther's Essential Marks of the Church:

- The Word
- Baptism
- Communion
- Forgiveness
- Ministry of all
- Worship and prayer
- Suffering

Luther gives us little glimpses into these essentials. **Where we find the Word of God "preached, believed, professed and lived," there is our community.** Baptism unites us through the water of rebirth. Communion is how we are fed and, after practicing how to feed one another, we are sent out in the world to do the same. We can do this because we are forgiven at the table and forgiven people can

forgive others. We all speak about God's activity in our daily lives, we feed one another, and we care for one another's soul.

This is ministry for each and every one of God's beloved. We are made to experience the wonder of God and to give our praise and to ask

for what we need. This is worship and prayer of all kinds. Finally, we are called to be people who are found in the midst of suffering. Sometimes we are the ones who suffer and sometimes we are called to stand in solidarity with those who suffer. **This is who Central is and in this community we claim what is essential to us.**



Community through Worship

The Worship Area Cluster centers on welcome, hospitality, and the central act of the church as people of God gather for corporate worship.

Music Staff Update

Joe Osowski has accepted the Adult Choir Director position, continuing the work he did as Interim Choir Director. This was the result of a thorough search process that yielded 19 applicants. Organ

Scholar Henry Rye will also be returning for the 2024-25 academic year, concurrent with his studies at St. Olaf.



Choir director Joe Osowski

Organ Renewal Update

The organ project design continues with Richards, Fowkes and Co. They have visited several times, and plans are taking shape for the design and new console. This fall, we will release a series of videos about the organ and the project, including some footage from inside the organ.



Casavant organ

This summer, we have been facing electrical malfunctions. Certain sounds and controls have become unreliable and, at times, unusable. With solid-state electronics, the symptoms are easily identifiable, but not the underlying cause. We have done all the diagnostics possible, short of taking apart and potentially replacing the electrical system. Since the organ project includes a new console and electronics, it would not be a good use of resources to fix now. Melanie and Jim, our wonderful substitutes this summer, both commented that working around these electrical issues was difficult.

With the Olympics recently concluded, it seems an apt metaphor that the organ project is a marathon, not a sprint. In the meantime, we will continue to work around the issues that we can't fix in the short term, and keep publishing updates as they come.

At Central, we enjoy a rich liturgical tradition. Take a look at Central's worship settings:

Sunday, 8:30 a.m. Service: An intimate "First Light" service with Holy Communion. It features hymns and the word, musically enriched by vocal soloists and the Bell Choir.

Sunday, 10:30 a.m. Choral Eucharist: A festive service with Holy Communion. The service features hymns and anthems, led weekly by the Central Choir, as well as the Choristers and Bell Choir.

Saturday, 5 p.m. Evening Service: A contemplative time of prayer, scripture, and Holy Communion. The atmosphere is meditative and relaxed, with quieter music and hymns, often led by a soloist.

Monday, 11 a.m. Service: Grounded in community and followed by a meal. Each week of the month, worship has its own flavor, from testimony times and healing services to confession and forgiveness and Holy Communion. Music is led by members of the worshipping community.

Community through Music

Music has always been an important part of life at Central, whether singing in worship, hosting musical concerts, or enjoying the carillon bells on the plaza.

Central Choir

Who: Adults and high school-age

Rehearsal time: Wednesdays, 7:15-8:45 p.m.

Contact: Joe Osowski, josowski@centralmpls.org



Adult choir in worship.

The Central Choir sings at the 10:30 a.m. worship service September-May and for all major church festivals. A wide variety of music is

sung, from Palestrina and Bach to global music and spirituals. Good music reading abilities are extremely helpful. There are no auditions. Instead, we maintain a two week “trial” period in which both new singers and director ascertain whether the fit is a good one.

Children’s and Youth Music

Who: elementary, middle, and high school ages

Rehearsal time: TBD

Contact: Isaac Drewes, idrewes@centralmpls.org

We are currently assessing congregational interest and availability for children’s music programs. There are several different options for different age groups that we can offer, depending on who is interested. This is a great opportunity for children and youth to be involved in a musical, educational, faith-forming experience at Central. Please fill out the survey to indicate your interest.



Scan for survey



StreetSong MN performs.

Bell Choir

Who: adults and high-school-age with basic music-reading proficiency

Rehearsal time: Wednesdays, 6-7 p.m.

Contact: Marilyn Wahlstrom, mwahlstrom@centralmpls.org

The Central Lutheran Church Bell Choir performs a variety of handbell music throughout the



Bell choir in worship.

program year. It is an engaging and unique way to make music together, and we have openings this fall. Basic music-reading proficiency is necessary, but prior bell-ringing experience is not required; we will teach you the techniques! This ensemble plays in worship approximately once-a-month.

StreetSong MN Choir

Who: Persons ‘experienced’ in homelessness – i.e. persons currently or formerly homeless, and those who care about them.

Rehearsal time: Mondays, 12:30-1:30 p.m.

Contact: Katie Dillon, katie@alignmpls.org

StreetSong draws on the experiences, hopes, and aspirations of its members to produce a choral experience promoting personal fulfillment and the development of community. A meal is available prior to rehearsal, and bus tokens are provided. The choir has appeared at the Central Library in Minneapolis, the Mall of America, the annual Homeless Memorial March and Service, and at various churches and mosques.

Learning together across the Generations

By Pastor Stephanie Friesen

On Palm Sunday earlier this spring, a grandmother sat patiently with her grandchildren wondering where to find the story of God freeing the Israelites from Pharaoh. They were making Peeps Dioramas. A quick glance at a Spark Children's Bible showcased the story of the plagues, spotlighting familiar creatures like frogs, flies, and gnats. The story inspired conversation about God, Moses, and Pharaoh and the relationship between each.

As grandparent and grandchild built their diorama, the story of God and God's people came to life in the form of marshmallow creatures with some glue and toothpicks. And for a brief moment that morning, God's presence was at their fingertips. **This is the magic of intergenerational learning.**

Remembering that children are like little sponges yearning for information and knowledge, these intergeneration learning opportunities open the door for us to connect across generations, sharing stories and experiences of God and God's people through conversation and hands-on learning. Often perceived as 'Craft Sunday' the crafty element of our time together serves as a learning tool to connect and bridge learning and relationship.



As we begin a new program year on Essentials through Community, I am mindful of Rollie Martinson, one of the Church's great teachers on faith formation. He taught us that "faith is caught, not taught."

In other words, faith is formed through a series of experiences; **it's transformational not transactional.** We learn our ABCs and our 123s through rote repetition. It's transactional. We learn about faith through a series of experiences that are inspirational and transcendent. It's transformational. These two types of learning invite us to use different parts of our brain.

Think about your own faith learning for a moment. **Who inspired you?** What and where were those experiences? Can you capture the moments and memories that brought you into full relationship with God?

We have an opportunity and an invitation to create those moments for the next generation through intergenerational learning. We are equipped and called to inspire the next generation of church members, leaders, teachers, and pastors.

Join us on Sunday, September 8, when we gather for our first intergenerational learning event of the season. As we explore and create a wall of love with words and pictures, remember **you are an expression of God's presence and love.**

Community through Generosity

The Generosity Area Mission Cluster centers on the invitation for every child of God to share their gifts of time, abilities, and finances for the sake of God's mission in the world.



This program year, we explore what it means to be a faith community through the essentials. It is

essential that the Holy Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, and makes holy every faith community. Martin Luther named seven essentials for a community's life of faith. Added to the list of essentials is gratitude.

Gratitude shapes worship, faith formation, community, and our shared generosity. In worship, we prepare for communion with the dialog: "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give our thanks and praise." It is one among many of our shared moments of gratitude.

Gratitude is essential for our individual and communal lives of faith. We are transformed by gratitude as we share a portion of what God has first given us: our time, talents, and finances. We gratefully respond because we are made in the image of a generous God. It is in our DNA to give from the abundance in our lives with grateful hearts.

Thank you for your faithfulness, in gratitude for your generous heart,

Pastor Peter

One Community Council Update

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit, we all went into isolation. The Congregation Council president at that time, Lisa Beane, initiated a process for the council to reflect on God's call and strategic possibilities for Central. As we emerged from the pandemic, Jeff Block, the president at that time, continued the council process for listening and learning. The primary goal was to listen and wonder about our shared values and who God might call us to be after the pandemic.

The conversations and process of that council Covid-19 journey came to be called the "One Community" conversation. This work began with the council leaders in 2020-2022 and has continued with the council in 2023 and in 2024.

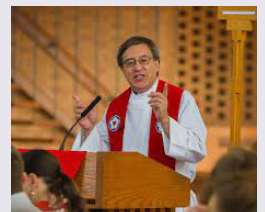
Here, in the continuing "Covid-19 shadow," with implications of the pandemic that will take years if not decades to discern, the council has now identified initial SMART goals and three possible task forces to lead our shared response to God's call. The specifics for these task forces, the opportunity for you to serve and the next steps will be shared in the *Spirit* and eNews this fall.

Thank you to all the council leaders who served and continue to serve with deep faith and care.

Global Mission Weekend

Saturday and Sunday, October 19-20

This year we welcome Rev. Franklin Ishida as our guest preacher. Pastor Franklin serves as the Area Desk Director for Asia and the Pacific for the ELCA. He has been working with the Lutheran Health Care Bangladesh board and ministry these past years to



*Rev. Franklin Ishida
will be here Oct. 19.*



Individuals process up in worship to share their 2023 faith intentions during Ingathering Weekend.

help strengthen our shared work. He will be here to give thanks and celebrate all the ways we walk together in faith around the world.

The Global Mission Team will also have the annual Global Mission Fair set up in the Great Room. You can visit the various tables and learn about the many global mission partnerships in our life together. Pastor Franklin will also speak at the Empowering Conversations lunch at noon, sharing insights about accompaniment and what this means for global mission work today. Watch the *Spirit* and eNews for additional details for the weekend.

CLC Foundation End-of-Life Seminar

Sunday, November 3, at 11:45 a.m.

The Central Lutheran Foundation is sponsoring a funeral planning seminar as a part of their end-of-life series again this year. Join Pastor Peter, Pastor Melissa, and Pastor Stephanie for this seminar. Along with a review of the funeral planning options here at Central, we will specifically focus on scripture passages and other readings for funerals. In the past we have focused on cremation vs. casket burial, music for funerals, and remembrances at funerals.



The Generosity Tree graced the sanctuary and Great Room in 2023.

Fall Prayer Retreat: Essentials for Prayer

Sunday, November 10, 12:30-4:30 p.m.

"Essentials for Prayer" is the theme for this fall's half day prayer retreat. The retreat will

be here at Central on Sunday afternoon, November 10. You are invited to worship, the community meal, and then the prayer retreat. Pastors Kathie and Peter will lead this time of learning and prayer.

We will spend time learning about and then practicing essentials for prayer, like breath and listening, silence and stillness, solitude, body prayer, and mindfulness. Watch for the invitation to sign up. There is no charge for this prayer retreat; it is supported by the Prayer Ministry Team.

Fall Generosity Appeal

Ingathering weekend: November 23-24

The annual fall generosity (stewardship) appeal weekend gathers us as a faith community to share our intentions (pledges) as an act of faith in worship. This year's generosity theme will be "giving thanks for

this essential faith community," guided by the overarching theme for the year: Community through Essentials. One of the essentials in a life of faith is gratitude. Generosity is rooted in gratitude for God's abundance in our lives and the joy we are

given to share from that abundance.

Please save the weekend and watch for the invitations to prayer and preparation as we look to November 23-24.



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