

# Centering

SUMMER 2025  
NEWS OF CENTRAL LUTHERAN | MINNEAPOLIS







"I will make my home among them;

*and I will be their God,*

and they shall be my people."

-Ezekiel 37:27

## CONTENTS

**Welcome** | page 3

Essential stories of **Generosity** | pages 4-5

Invitations: **Save the Date** | pages 6-7

Feature: **Summer on the Plaza** | pages 8-9

Essential stories of **Music** | page 10-11

Essential stories of **Formation** | page 12-13

Essential stories of **Community** | page 14-15

Cover art:

Collage of various Central groups and activities.

Created by Brenda Blackhawk.



## Essential Stories of Home

**W**hat are the essentials in your life? What are the essentials for your faith? What are the essentials for a faith community and our life together? These are a few of the questions that guided our theme of “Community through the Essentials” for this program year. The questions helped us grow in our relationship with God and with one another in this life together. Thank you for your part in each moment of worship, study, prayer, community, and generosity as we explored what is essential.

Now we begin the next series of conversations for our lives of faith: essential stories of home. What does a faith home look like for you? Who helps you have a sense of home? What are the essentials of home for you? What are the essentials for home in our world today? How is God our essential home?

There are many Bible passages that invite us to ponder our stories of home. God’s words in Ezekiel 37:27 are among the most grounding: “I will make my home among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

God’s promise in Ezekiel is the ancient hope of Emmanuel, God with us. Our stories of home begin with God. At the end of our human story, we find a final home in God. The stories of home between our birth and death are what define us and reveal what is essential.

Over these summer months plans will be made for us to gather around the essential stories of home. For now, here is a beloved prayer to help ground you and deepen your sense of God’s presence with you.

Let us pray: Lord God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Yours In Christ Jesus, our Home,  
Pastor Peter*

**The stories of home  
between our birth  
and death are what  
define us and reveal  
what is essential.**

# Essential Stories of 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.

## April 6 Congregational Meeting Recap

On Sunday, April 6, the congregation gathered for a special meeting to approve the proposal and funding for the Sanctuary Renewal Project. Rexanne Spicer, congregational president, called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. Pastor Peter shared the recommendation from the Fiscal and Property Committee and the Congregation Council for the Sanctuary Renewal Project:

"It is the recommendation of the Fiscal and Property Committee and the Congregation Council that the congregation approve the Sanctuary Renewal Project portion of the Casavant and Sanctuary Renewal, not to exceed \$800,000 for the five proposed projects, supported by generous memorial gifts and easement funds. The remainder of the unused funds will go toward the Casavant project."

The five projects include:

1. Sanctuary boiler replacement and additional work (removal of old plumbing, maintenance and duct work in the boiler room)
2. Parking lot re-milling, reline and ramp direction change
3. Sacristy renovation
4. ADA Chancel Ramp

## 5. Altar restoration and remodel.

The recommendation was unanimously approved. Pastor Peter then shared an update on the Casavant organ project timeline. The old-world craft organ builders are in high demand, so our anticipated start date has shifted back to early 2027. We are working on the final details of the contract and cost with the builders. Once those details are finalized, approved by the Casavant Committee, Fiscal and Property, and the Congregation Council, a congregational meeting will be called to approve the recommendation for the Casavant organ project.



*Last year we had face-painting at the Church Picnic.*

## Celebration of Gratitude

The Generosity Team invites you to worship **Pentecost Weekend, June 7-8**, as we give thanks and share our appreciation for the many volunteers who are essential for this

life together as a faith community. Because of God and because of you, the Central faith community continues to thrive in worship, study, community, and care for all in need. A special procession will help us to celebrate and give thanks to God for you and your gifts. On Saturday, a



*New Member Happy Hour is always a summer highlight.*





*Congregation President, Rexanne Spicer, and Pastor Peter share information at the April 6 special meeting.*

special happy hour will follow worship. On Sunday morning we will gather for fellowship at 9:30 a.m. and for the community meal at 11:30 a.m. Because of God and because of YOU we have much to be thankful for as we gather to celebrate Pentecost and our life together.

### New Member Happy Hour

All folks who have joined Central over the past 3-4 years are invited to the annual August New Member Happy Hour on **Tuesday, August 19**. The Generosity Team sponsors this fun evening where you can make connections and explore ways to share your gifts. The theme for the evening will be "Stories of Home." This theme will connect us to the essential stories of home that will shape next year's program theme. An email invitation to all new members will follow, as well as reminders in the *Spirit*. For now, please save the date and plan to join this fun evening in our life together.

### Church Picnic

The annual church picnic is planned for **Sunday, August 24, following the 10:30 a.m. worship service**. Once again Dave and Dwayne will grill, and great sides will be provided. There will be games for the kids, as well as adults. The annual bingo game will happen, and as always, awesome prizes! Save the date for this annual congregational fellowship event!

### Summer Prayer Retreat Invitation

You are invited to be a part of the nine-day prayer retreat from Sunday, June 8 through Wednesday, June 18. This individual prayer retreat, with three gatherings along the way, will be guided by John Philip Newell's book

*The Great Search, Turning to the Earth and Soul in the Quest for Healing and Home*. Pastors Peter, Melissa, and Stephanie team up to lead this retreat.

Newell's book is centered on nine readings from a variety of contemplatives and environmental thinkers of varying faith traditions that invite us into "the great search." Each day's reading ends with an offered prayer practice.

Being an individual retreat, you can shape each day as it works for you and your schedule.

Suggestions and support will be offered. Along the way **we will gather for three meetings: Wednesday, June 11 at 6 p.m., Sunday, June 15 at 9:30 a.m., and Wednesday, June 18 at 6 p.m.** The meetings are offered in-person and on Zoom. As always, you are invited to all three gatherings or the ones that work for you.

Sign up will begin later in May. The book will be available for \$15 at church, or you can buy your own copy elsewhere. If you have any questions, feel free to email Pastor Peter at [pnycklemoe@centralmpls.org](mailto:pnycklemoe@centralmpls.org).



*Dave and Dwayne man the grill at the Church Picnic.*



# Save the Date

Summer is full of opportunities for us to worship and be together in community.

**May 26**  
**Monday, Memorial Day**  
Building Closed

**May 31**  
**Saturday**  
9:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.  
Sacred Sites Tour




*A Sacred Sites Tour with Rev. Jim Bear Jacobs is coming up in May.*

**June 11**  
**Wednesday**  
6 p.m.  
Summer Prayer Retreat Meeting 

**June 12**  
**Thursday**  
Noon  
Street Voices BBQ in Loring Park

**May 31-June 2**  
**Saturday & Sunday**  
During worship  
Graduate Recognition Weekend

**June 7-8**  
**Saturday & Sunday**  
During worship  
Volunteer Appreciation Weekend  
**Sunday**  
9:30 a.m. rehearsal  
Popup Choir

**June 14-15**  
**Saturday and Sunday**  
New Member Welcome Weekend  
**Sunday**  
9:30 a.m.  
Summer Prayer Retreat Meeting 

**June 18**  
**Wednesday**  
6 p.m.  
Summer Prayer Retreat Meeting 

**June 21-23**  
**Saturday – Monday**  
Reconciling in Christ Weekend

**June 22**  
**Sunday**  
9:30-11:30 a.m.  
Vacation Bible School  
**Noon**  
Carillon Concert

**June 28-29**  
Minneapolis Pride Weekend



*Lutheran Night at the Twins is a Summer favorite.*





*Get ready to line up for food trucks at Summer on the Plaza!*

**June 30-July 10**

Restoration Center Closed

**July 6**

**Sunday**

Noon

Carillon Concert and  
Tot Boss Food Truck

**July 13**

**Sunday**

9:30-11:30 a.m.

Vacation Bible School

**noon**

Carillon Concert and  
Potter's Pasties Food Truck

**July 27**

**Sunday**

Noon

Carillon Concert and  
KCM Egg Rolls Food Truck



*Kids get creative at VBS.*

**August 4-7**

Restoration Center Closed

**August 10**

**Sunday**

9:30-11:30 a.m.

Vacation Bible School

**August 19**

**Tuesday**

New Member Happy Hour

**July 13-18**

Middle School Trip to Amnicon

**July 19**

**Saturday**

6 p.m.

Carillon Concert

**August 24**

**Sunday**

9:30 a.m.

Popup Choir rehearsal

**After 10:30 a.m. worship**

Church Picnic

**July 20-27**

High School Trip to Christikon

**July 20**

**Sunday**

9:30 a.m. rehearsal

Popup Choir



*The Middle School youth head to Amnicon for camping and canoeing.*



# Summer on the Plaza:

## Seeking the Essentials of Home

By Brenda Blackhawk

**W**hat images come to mind when you think of summer? Does it evoke the feeling of the sun warming your skin or maybe the cool, mucky lake bottom squishing between your toes? Perhaps you can smell a grill or a bonfire or maybe taste on your tongue a juicy slice of watermelon or a buttery bite of corn on the cob. You might be able to hear the squeals of kids running through the sprinkler or the evening music of frogs and crickets.

For many, but especially for Minnesotans who survive a biting winter most years, summer has a magical quality about it perfect for making cherished memories. These memories are formative; they give us a sense of who we are, of where we fit in, and the spaces we can reliably call home. They are often the foundation of our relationships with specific places and with the people around us. They help us form our understanding of “home.”

In her 2023 article, “Where Do You Really Feel at Home?” writer and cross-cultural consultant Mabel Kwong writes that “the feeling of being at home is intertwined with a sense of belonging.” At Central, we strive to create spaces where anyone and everyone can feel as though they belong, and we try to generate opportunities for people to connect with others and make meaningful memories. For this faith community, “summer” and “home” collide at Summer on the Plaza.

### The music that calls them

Summer on the Plaza happens several times each summer, when carillonneurs (someone who plays the Carillon bells) visit Central to perform a concert and we invite food trucks (or provide treats) for all to enjoy. We gather on the plaza to enjoy summer weather, music, food, and good company. The plaza is a public space, where any and all can join in the moment. While each of these components

are important to the magic that is Summer on the Plaza, it is the music that pulls people in.

“I love that the bells throw music into the air for everyone to hear,” states Central member and volunteer, Judith Hedman.



*Tim Short demonstrates how to play the Carillon.*

The bells don't just call to Central's usual attendees, but rather to anyone in the vicinity. “Central's building looks formidable from the outside,” says Hedman, “and the music on the plaza can be easier for some folks to experience a ‘church’ event.”

Familiar, local carillonneur, Tim Short, expresses that, “There's a curiosity from people with music-making that happens on an instrument high in a tower that weighs over 10 tons.” That curiosity has led to the bell tower tours that Hedman and others give



being included in the events.

The music invites, but it can also aid in producing that sense of belonging. Short knows that “the sound from bells celebrate, heal, mourn, and meditate; studies have shown there are health and wellness benefits to playing or listening to bells.”



*People climb up the tower during a tour and demonstration.*

## The food that fills them

While music is a key aspect of Summer on the Plaza, another big component is the food. For Hedman, these events “feel like a family picnic.”

For each of the Sunday Carillon concerts, we invite a different food truck to park along the plaza and share their delicious creations.

Regular food trucks include Tot Boss, Potter’s Pasties, and KCM Egg Rolls.

Alec and Fiona Duncan, owner/operators of Potter’s Pasties, have been serving up their tasty pasties at these events since 2022. They contribute to that special feeling of belonging as they use family recipes to provide good food. “Our food provides that “homely” feel to it. It’s filling, simple, and delicious.” And though the Duncans come to serve food, they also appreciate the sense of community cultivated at Summer on the Plaza. “We love seeing our old customers and having them introduce us to new ones. The atmosphere is always very welcoming.”



*The people line up at food trucks for something tasty.*

At Central, we have a strong proclivity to feed people. We do it during worship at communion, we do it at our community meals on Mondays and Sundays. We feed people breakfast at Street Voices meetings, and we offer food to our staff and volunteers each week. We believe it is an important aspect of making people feel like they belong.

Central’s Director of Security and lover of tater tots, Dwayne Wright, believes that “food breaks down barriers and helps people connect and feel included and welcome. It also creates lasting memories and builds friendships.”

Summer on the Plaza is a perfect blend of musical invitation, delicious food, good fun, and community connection. It conjures that sense of belonging, that feeling of “home” that we all look for. As Kwong notes, “home is never just a place. It is a feeling within. It is emotion.”

Don’t miss out on these memory-making summer events! For the 2025 schedule, check out pages 6–7 and 10 in this issue of *Centering*.



*People gather to hear the Carillon and enjoy good food.*

# Essential Stories of 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.

## Reconciling in Christ Sunday

On **June 22**, as we celebrate Reconciling in Christ Sunday, Ring Out! Bell Choir will join us to play at both Sunday morning services.

Ring Out! is a new handbell ensemble founded by and for LGBTQIA+ ringers and allies. They are one of the first handbell groups in the nation dedicated to LGBTQIA+ inclusivity. Join us to hear this talented new group!

## Summer Carillon Concerts

Central Lutheran is blessed to have one of only three carillons in the state of Minnesota. We partner with House of Hope Presbyterian in St. Paul to bring in nationally-known artists for our summer carillon series. The schedule is below:

### Sunday, June 22, noon

Carillon Demonstration-Recital: Tim Short, Music Associate and Carillonneur, House of Hope Presbyterian Church (This recital will include an opportunity to climb the bell tower and watch Tim in action playing the carillon).

### Sunday, July 6, noon

Carson Landry, Carillonneur, University of Rochester (NY)

[Food truck: Tot Boss]

### Sunday, July 13, noon

Annie Gao, Carillonneur from Los Angeles and finalist in the 2024 Queen Fabiola Competition

[Food truck: Potter's Pasties]

### Saturday, July 19, 6 p.m.

Lisa Lonie, Carillonneur, Princeton University

### Sunday, July 27, noon

Geert D'hollander, Carillonneur, Bok Tower and Gardens, Lake Wales, FL

[Food truck: KCM Eggrolls]

Please come and enjoy these free, outdoor concerts!



*Don't miss our guest carillonneur series this summer.*

## Popup Choir

This summer, we will have several "popup choir" Sundays. Come at 9:30 a.m., learn a simple choral anthem, and sing it at the 10:30 a.m. service. This is a great way to try out choir and see if you might be interested in

joining in the fall. This is open to high schoolers and adults. This summer, the dates for the popup choir are **June 8 (Pentecost), July 20, and August 24.**

For more information, please email Choir Director Joe Osowski at [josowski@centralmpls.org](mailto:josowski@centralmpls.org).



*The popup choir is a fun opportunity to sing together over the summer.*





*In the summer, crowds gather for food and great Carillon music on the plaza.*

## Guest Organists

In the Twin Cities, we are blessed with a wealth of talented organists and church musicians. This summer, several of these artists will play for worship when Isaac is away for some continuing education and rest and renewal time. Learn more about these guest organists!

### May 31-June 1

**David Cherwien** is recently retired from positions as the Cantor of Mt. Olive Lutheran Church and Artistic Director of National Lutheran Choir. He is a nationally known conductor, composer, and organist. Recognized for his contributions to the field of church music and liturgy, he is often called upon to serve as clinician and hymn festival leader across the country. He has composed and published a considerable amount of music for the church with several publishers. He is a founding member of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians and has served in its leadership in a variety of capacities, including as National President from 1993 to 1997.



*A young Dave Cherwien with Maurice and Marie-Madeleine Duruflé, after an organ concert here at Central Lutheran. Maurice was one of the foremost 20th century French composers of organ and church music, and Marie-Madeleine was a formidable organist.*

### June 7-22

**Dr. David Fienen** is Emeritus Professor of Music at Gustavus Adolphus College. During his 38 years there, he was Cantor at Christ Chapel, taught organ and music theory, and for his last two years was Provost of the College. Since his retirement in 2011, he has been a frequent substitute organist at many churches in the Twin Cities and the Mankato area, collaborative pianist/organist with two Mankato area chamber choirs, and keyboardist with the Mankato Symphony.

### August 3

**Dr. Melanie Ohnstad**, Minister of Music and the Arts Emerita at Westminster Presbyterian, has been a church musician since her graduation from St. Olaf College. Her tenure included the installation of a new Dobson organ, expansion of the church's musical ensembles and community partnerships, and the introduction of new worship styles and global repertoire. Currently she is freelancing as an organist, expanding her culinary explorations, and enjoying more time in hiking boots and cross country skis. Melanie and her husband, Philip Friedman, travel frequently and are delighted with more regular visits with family in CA and CO.

# Essential Stories of *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.

## Nursery

Did you know that faith formation starts long before children start Sunday School?

As soon as we learn of a child's birth here at Central, their name is added to something called the Cradle Roll and we begin sending a monthly newsletter called *Splash* – as in splashed in and with the waters of baptism. From ages one to 36 months, *Splash* arrives in children's homes to help parents and caregivers learn about best practices for forming faith in the years that children are developing most quickly. This resource offers suggestions for books, songs, prayers, and blessings.

Another way we support faith formation in our littlest members is through the nursery on Sunday mornings. Staffed by Emmie Brenke and a full cast of high school volunteers, the nursery welcomes babies and toddlers through age four to a wonderful play space where kiddos learn to make friends and begin learning about worship and our life together at Central.

We are blessed by volunteers and staff who love our

children in the spirit of Jesus who said, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs."



*There's a place for even the smallest of us at Central.*

## VBS

Mark your calendars now for Vacation Bible School (VBS) scheduled for **June 22, July 13, and August 10**. If you're not familiar with VBS at Central, we set aside three Sundays for you to bring kids ages 3 to 11 to church from 9:30–11:30 a.m. where we sing, play, learn, share fun snacks, and hear stories about Jesus and God's people throughout history.

This summer we will explore the question, "Where did Jesus Live?" We'll look at the city of Bethlehem and what the stable might have looked like. We'll look at the area around Nazareth and Capernaum and what houses looked like in those cities. And, we'll think about where Jesus slept when he was traveling around the cities and communities he visited. We'll think about and learn what Jesus ate and how he cooked his food and what he might have done in his free time.

Watch the *Spirit* for more information as the dates get closer.



*The kids love learning and creating together during VBS.*





*Summer Adult Formation keeps us learning, connecting, and having a good time!*

## Summer Trips

Camp Amnicon and Camp Christikon are the summer trip destinations for Central's youth this summer. Beginning July 13, kids will be on the move to wilderness destinations in Wisconsin and Montana.

The middle schoolers will paddle the Flambeau this summer with Amnicon guides leading the way. The Flambeau flows a little faster and the kids will experience a burst of whitewater at the end of their five-day exploration. Each day begins with a First Word and ends with a Last Word, both of which are scripture and poetry-based to inspire students to connect with God in a new way.

The high school students return to Christikon this summer to experience the magic of the Absaroka-Beartooth mountains. The significance of the location is the appearance of volcanic mountains in the Absarokas on

one side of the valley and granite mountains on the Beartooth side. And, the Boulder River roars down the mountain and through the camp for a sound that is unmistakably Montana. Students gather for worship daily and learn teamwork through wilderness adventure.

## Young Adults

The Young Adults will make their annual trip to St. Paul for a Saints Game in June. Last summer over 25 twenty and thirty-somethings gathered to watch the Saints defeat the Toledo Mudhens. The communal effervescence and energy of the Saints stadium is a great backdrop for us to gather as a group for fellowship and fun. Singing, watching silly relays, and cheering on the Saints' ball pig named Ozempig are all highlights of our time together at the game.

Specific information about the date and sign-up will be in the *Spirit* and on the website.

## Adult Formation

Mindful of God's good creation and the sustaining spirit of the earth, we will explore John Philip Newell's new book *The Great Search* in Adult Learning in June. As the title suggests, this book leads us in and through spiritual considerations and practices inspired by great authors like Thomas Berry, Julian of Norwich, and Edwin Muir.

For more details, including meeting times, book purchasing, and more, check out page five of this issue of *Centering*.



*The High School youth will travel to Montana to hike in the Absaroka-Beartooth Mountains.*

# Essential Stories of 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.

## Restoration Center Breaks

The Restoration Center will be closed this summer for our regular refresh times for staff and building renewal. When we close, it gives our staff the opportunity to use their vacation time they so faithfully earn. It also helps our community to have clean and refreshed facilities. The summer closures are when we deep clean and paint. The Restoration Center will be closed June 30 through July 10, reopening on July 14. We will also be closed August 4 through August 7, reopening on August 11.

## June is Pride Month

This June we will be celebrating Pride Month with the Rainbow Circle at Central. The Rainbow Circle is for LGBTQIA+ folks at Central to gather around welcome and inclusion. For two weekends, we will celebrate that God has made us all beautifully in God's image, no exceptions. In the larger Twin Cities, Pride weekend will be celebrated June 27 through 29. Central helps staff a booth at the Pride Festival in Loring Park. If you would like to help staff that table, please reach out to Kevin Lile at

klile\_mn1@comcast.net. At Central, we start the weekend before by observing Reconciling in Christ Sunday. Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Sunday is an annual worship celebration created to share in the commitment of Reconciling Works and partnering faith

communities that have in the ongoing work of welcome, inclusion, celebration, and advocacy for LGBTQIA+ people in the life of the church. Our RIC weekend will be June 21-23. We will celebrate in worship with Ring Out! Ring Out! is a new handbell ensemble founded by and for LGBTQIA+ ringers and allies. They will be with us in worship on Sunday, June 22 at both services. If you have questions about RIC weekend or the Rainbow

Circle, please feel free to email Pastor Melissa at [mpohlman@centralmpls.org](mailto:mpohlman@centralmpls.org).

## SVoC BBQ

Please join the folks of Street Voices of Change for our summer BBQ on June 12 at noon in Loring Park Community Center. It's a time to gather and eat good food, play a little chess, and socialize. All folks are invited to the BBQ. If you have ever wondered what happens at Street Voices of Change meetings and who is involved, here is your invitation.

## Restoration Center Summer Breaks

Closed June 30 – July 10  
and August 4 – 7



*Volunteers from Central have been helping to run the Downtown Churches' Pride Booth for 25 years.*





*StreetSong MN performed at the Homeless Day on the Hill Rally, where many gathered to advocate for housing justice.*

## Legislative Wrap Up

This has been a very difficult year for our legislative priorities as a congregation. Let's start with the successes we are hoping for and working on. **The Homeless Prevention and Assistance Funds bill (SF1511; HF2144)** did meet all the hearing deadlines and is currently included in the omnibus bill. Unfortunately, the funding level is not the \$200 million we were advocating for, but there is hope that between the Governor's budget and final negotiations we may get at least \$100 million.

The rest of the bills we were advocating for with Align, the Align Central group and Street Voices of Change are not moving forward this session. **The Bridge to Shelter Act** that would have solved Hennepin County's fiscal cliff issue with several innovative services begun during covid got the hearings it needed, but did not get included in any omnibus bill or move forward on its own to the floors of the legislature. There is a bit of asking still to be done in last minute negotiations, but it is unlikely anything will come of this bill this session.

The **constitutional amendment for housing** had one informational hearing this session, but as it did not have a formal hearing it will not move ahead this session.

**The Bill of Rights for People Utilizing Shelter** did get an author in the Senate and began the jacketing procedure with the State Revisor's Office. We knew this bill would take multiple years to get a hearing, so while we are disappointed it didn't get further along this session, we are heartened by the progress.



*Many members and friends of Central showed up at the State Capitol for Homeless Day on the Hill 2025.*



Sabbaticals are a time of rest and renewal. Central Lutheran Church provides the rostered leaders a sabbatical after six years of service for spiritual renewal and personal growth. **Pastor Melissa will be taking sabbatical from July 25**

**through September 25 this year.** Her plans include walking a part of the Camino de Santiago through Portugal and Spain with her husband Larye. It also includes visiting other worshipping communities throughout the U.S.



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**Vacation Bible School:**

June 22

July 13

August 10

**Restoration Center  
Closed:**

June 30–July 10

August 4–7

**Summer on the Plaza:**

July 6

July 13

July 27

**Church Picnic:**

August 24



**Exploring the promise of God for all**

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