

Centering

NEWS OF CENTRAL LUTHERAN | MINNEAPOLIS

SPRING 2024



A Season of Prayer-filled
Mindfulness



**"All the things in this world are gifts of God, created for us,
to be the means by which we can come to
know God better, love God more surely,
and serve God more faithfully."**
-Ignatius of Loyola

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Cover art:

Leaders from Street Voices of Change receiving the
Northern Light Award for Inspiring Organizational
Leadership in 2023.



Examen: prayer-filled mindfulness

We are busy people. I say we because I have yet to meet someone who has their life in perfect balance of rest and work and play. If you have achieved this, please send along your tips and tricks! There are times when I am drifting off to sleep that I suddenly remember something I had forgotten until that moment, or I wake in the middle of the night because I forgot to put out the recycling or sign that permission slip for one of the kids. Other times I remember a word I said or a choice I made and rehearse it over and over for how I could have been kinder or more patient.

This Lent we are spending time with St. Ignatius of Loyola's Examen prayer. He encouraged prayer-filled mindfulness, and his Examen prayer was one way of reflecting back on one's day and being able to listen to God's presence and to discern God's direction for us. At one point he suggested that twice a day (at noon and before sleep) people should work through these five invitations:

1. Ask God for light/illumination
2. Give thanks
3. Review the day
4. Face your shortcomings/limitations
5. Look forward to the day to come

"This practice shapes us into people who are aware of how we move through this world...and what is the action we are being called to take..."

This practice shapes us into people who are aware of how we move through this world, where God moves too, and what is the action we are being called to take as we build together the kingdom of God on earth. As you open the pages of this *Centering*, you will hear and see many invitations into what may feel like more busyness, or through engaging in the Examen with us as a congregation this Lent, you may find that with more mindfulness comes more discernment and more discernment leads to greater balance.

Pastor Melissa

Presence and Discernment in 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.

Homeless Day on the Hill 2024

Homeless Day on the Hill is March 20, 2024. This is a day where people experiencing homelessness and their allies join forces to go to our legislators to let them know what we need to end homelessness. Organized by the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless (MCH), it is a full day where we begin with a rally at Central Presbyterian Church in St. Paul and then hop on the light rail up to the hill to meet with our legislators. Central Lutheran provides a bus to get us there and back. MCH does all the appointments, planning, and education so you feel prepared to speak to what needs to change. **To ride the bus:** please register on Realm or at the Welcome Desk on Sundays or at Street Voices on Thursdays. **To sign up for the day:** visit Homeless Day on the Hill webpage at mnhomelesscoalition.org.

Ignatian Spirituality Project (ISP)

Every Monday at noon a small group people gather in Nativity and share what they are grateful for, listen to a poem or some scripture, and then discuss what they noticed. It's an Ignatian spiritual practice of stopping and noticing. You are invited to join us any Monday when the Community Meal is served. Twice a year this group is invited on an all-expense paid, one night retreat in Buffalo as a part of the Ignatian Spirituality

Project (ISP). ISP is designed for people in substance use recovery and/or homelessness who have a desire to deepen their spirituality and are open to sharing their story and listening to others. If you have questions, please reach out to Pastor Melissa.

C3 Team Electronics Recycling Event

The Central Cares for Creation (C3) Ministry Team is getting ready for Earth Day! Many home electronics contain dangerous metals and recyclable ones too. Instead of making a special trip to dispose of them, just bring them to church with you the weekend of April 20-21. Bins will be available at the loading dock before and after worship services that weekend. If you have any questions about what we will be able to take, please check out getrepowered.org.



Folks from Central attend Homeless Day on the Hill 2023.

Fine Arts Invites You to Share Art

Due to the fabulous response to the Central Community art show in the Fall of 2023, the Fine Arts Ministry Team will be looking to the community again for your great taste in art. The last community show was only open to art *created* by folks in the Central community. This spring we will be asking you to loan us your favorite pieces of art *that you own*. Some of us are appreciative of art, but not artists ourselves. Consider loaning us one, ready to hang, two-dimensional piece. More details forthcoming in the *Spirit*.



StreetSong MN performs at the 2023 Align fundraiser.

Prepare for 2024 Legislative Session

This year, the state legislature is scheduled to convene on February 12, 2024, and adjourn on May 20, 2024. As we begin to prepare for the session, we encourage you to take the following four steps:

1. Find out who your state legislators are

If you don't already know who your State Senator and State Representative are, this tool provides an easy way to look it up based on your address: <https://www.gis.lcc.mn.gov/iMaps/districts/>

2. Get to know your state legislators

Familiarize yourself with your legislators and where they stand on key issues. Your legislators' contact information is easy to find using the website above. Reach out to them with an email or phone call asking what bills they are already thinking about for this upcoming session, what committees they are on, and if they chair any committees.

3. Learn to talk about housing issues

Develop your own 'elevator pitch' to share with your legislators on why you care about housing issues. Spend a few minutes thinking about your "why"- what got you interested in homelessness and housing, what grounds you in this work (maybe through your faith tradition), and what are the most important values you hold around housing?

4. Learn about proposed legislation

Learn about the proposed constitutional amendment for housing. This proposed legislation would put a constitutional amendment on the ballot which, if passed,

would make significant, dedicated, ongoing investments in housing opportunities across the spectrum to serve the needs of people experiencing homelessness and housing instability (including youth experiencing homelessness). Find out more below.

Proposed Constitutional Amendment for Housing

Align and Street Voices of Change have signed on to endorse the campaign for a Constitutional Amendment for Housing, which would create a dedicated source of funding for housing through a Constitutional Amendment. This initiative comes out of recognition that as a state we have significantly underinvested in housing.

Why a Constitutional Amendment?

"Because we need to ensure the state is making the investments required to truly address our current housing crisis."

What would this legislation do?

It would put a question on the ballot in 2024 to ask voters to decide to amend our State Constitution to create 3 specific funds for housing- Homeownership Fund, Rental Opportunity Fund, and Household & Community Stability Fund.

What are the guiding principles of this campaign?

"Our campaign principles include race equity, sustainability and climate resilience, uplifting rural voices, accessibility, and ensuring frontline leaders and grassroots groups are decision-makers and campaign leaders."

You can learn more at ourhomesmn.org.

Save the Date

The spring season is full of opportunities for us to worship
and be together in community.

February 14

Ash Wednesday

noon and 7 p.m.

Ash Wednesday Services

1 p.m.

Soup and Salad Lenten Lunch

February 17

Saturday Service

5 p.m.

Service of Healing for Illness

February 18

First Sunday in Lent

noon

Empowering Conversations

February 19

Monday

11:30 a.m.

Restoration Center Volunteer Appreciation Lunch

February 21

Wednesday

noon

Lenten Midweek Worship and Lunch

6 p.m.

Examen Prayer Practice



*Both Easter Sunday services at Central are festival-style
worship services (image from Easter 2023).*



*Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan and
Gov. Tim Walz (seated), spoke
during the 2023 Homeless Day
on the Hill Rally.*

February 25

Second Sunday in Lent

4 p.m.

Concordia Choir and The Singers,
Minnesota Choral Artists Concert

February 28

Wednesday

noon

Lenten Midweek Worship and Lunch

6 p.m.

Examen Prayer Practice

March 3

Third Sunday in Lent

10:30 a.m. service

Carthage Choir joins Central Choir

March 6

Wednesday

noon

Lenten Midweek Worship and Lunch

6 p.m.

Examen Prayer Practice

March 13

Wednesday

noon

Lenten Midweek Worship and Lunch

6 p.m.

Examen Prayer Practice

March 17

Fifth Sunday in Lent

noon

Empowering Conversations

3 p.m.

North Dakota State University Choir and St.
Michael - Albertville High School Concert Choir



These kiddos celebrated their First Communion in November 2023.

March 20
Wednesday
Homeless Day on the Hill

noon
 Lenten Midweek Worship and Lunch
6 p.m.
 Examen Prayer Practice

March 23-24
Palm Sunday Weekend
9:30 a.m.
 Intergenerational Learning Event



The midweek Lenten worship and lunch is a great opportunity for prayer and fellowship.

March 28
Maundy Thursday
noon
 Worship
7 p.m.
 Worship with hand/foot washing

March 29
Good Friday
noon and 7 p.m.
 Worship

March 30
Holy Saturday
5 p.m.
 Easter Vigil and Fellowship

March 31
Easter Sunday
8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.
 Festival Worship

April 20-21
Fourth Weekend in Easter
C3 Team Electronics Recycling Event
noon
 Empowering Conversations

April 28
Fifth Sunday in Easter
10:30 a.m. service
 Rite of Confirmation



Central's Casavant organ (in need of repairs) is in the midst of the design process.



The kids get creative with Peeps as they recreate scenes from the Bible.

Practicing the Examen

with prayer-filled presence and discernment

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14 and thus begins our journey toward Holy Week and beyond. For centuries, Christians have marked the season of Lent by adopting and engaging in some new kind of spiritual practice; a practice that reminds us of our humanness and our mortality. For some, it's giving up things like chocolate, wine, or curse words. Many give up eating meat or another self-sacrificing human endeavor. As Lutherans, our piety does not ask us to

"give something up;" we are drawn toward the opportunity to learn and encounter something new or different.

This year, in addition to daily devotions and a Sunday morning study of the Psalms, the pastors will invite you to learn about the daily practice of the Examen.

This invitation comes to you as just that – an invitation. It comes without expectation or anticipated outcomes. The Examen is simply a



Who is Ignatius of Loyola?

Born in 1491, Ignatius (born Iñigo Lopez de Loyola) of Loyola was the youngest of 13 children to wealthy noble parents in Spain. In 1517, he became

a knight in service to one of his relatives. While defending a citadel in Pamplona in 1521, he was hit by cannonball in his legs, ending his military career.

During his treatment and recovery for his injuries, he did a lot of reading about Jesus and the Saints. He felt called to the priesthood and began his many years of training, during which time he was repeatedly in trouble with and questioned by religious authorities in Spain and France, traveled to Palestine, and spent a year living as a beggar in Manresa.

Loyola was ordained into the priesthood in 1537. In 1539, he and a group of his companions formed a new order called the

Jesuit Order or the "Society of Jesus," which Pope Paul III approved in 1540. Loyola was chosen for the office of general of the new, all-male order.

Ignatius of Loyola developed and composed the *Spiritual Exercises*, a book meant to guide people toward following Jesus. His daily prayer practices (what we call the Examen) were later added to this publication.

Loyola died in 1556, still holding the office of general for the Jesuit order. He was beatified by Pope Paul V in 1609 and canonized as a saint by Pope Gregory XV in 1622.

Though the Jesuit Order was nearly abolished in the 1700's, they have grown to be the largest male order of the Catholic religious community. Pope Francis was the first Jesuit to be elected pope in 2013.

"St. Ignatius of Loyola." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. 1 Jan 2024. Web.

"Jesuit." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. 18 Dec 2023. Web.

prayer-practice that may enhance your prayer life and your connection to God.

So why the Examen?

In a culture that rarely invites us to slow down for anything, the Examen calls for us to stop, to experience a moment of sabbath, rest and reflection. What a gift. The Examen is a five-step practice that encourages us to intentionally slow down and center ourselves on five unique thoughts or ideas for the day. These include:

1. Ask God for light/illumination
2. Give thanks
3. Review the day
4. Face your shortcomings/limitations
5. Look forward to the day to come



Try to find a quiet space when practicing the Examen.

Each week, one of these elements will be the topic and focus of our Wednesday services and learning. As we get ready to learn about the Examen together, here are a few things you may want to know about this time-honored practice:

Set Time Aside

It's best to set a specific time and place for your prayer. This will encourage a cadence that will draw you toward God each day.

Find the Quiet

A quiet space, free of distractions and noise is best.



The Examen is a daily prayer practice, so find a routine time each day to pray.

Connection to Community

Remembering that Christians have practiced the Examen for centuries invites you to a community practiced and shared by thousands.

The beauty of this practice is that it encourages a daily time with God that is structured and contemplative. God longs to be in relationship with you, and one of the ways we do this is through daily contact with God.

We look forward to sharing the Examen with you as we journey through Lent.

You can practice the Examen with Central's Pastors on Wednesday nights at 6 p.m. during Lent (February 21-March 20).



When you practice the Examen, you are a part of an entire community of people, including friends at Central.

Presence and Discenment in *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.

Confirmation Day 2024

With April in view, so too is Confirmation Day for the 8th grade students here at Central. This year, the students are working with mentors during Lent to explore the ways in which faith takes shape in everyday life. With caring adults, the 7th and 8th grade students will explore themes in scripture and how they apply to the world today. The group, who will be confirmed this spring on April 28, is well prepared. They have spent time learning virtually, in class, and on retreat over their three-year confirmation journey. Working with these amazing young ones is a weekly privilege that offers insight and a glimpse of where the next generation may take us. They are thoughtful, compassionate, and we celebrate this step in their journeys of faith.

Intergenerational Learning

Throughout the year, we have paused seasonally for Intergenerational Learning on Sunday mornings. With conversation prompts and community crafts and activities, the intent of these sessions is to inspire and encourage connections across the generations. In the fall, participants were invited to create



For Palm Sunday each year, the kids make dioramas using Peeps.



The 2023 confirmands in worship on Confirmation Sunday.

suncatchers using leftover tiles from the baptismal font. In Advent, we encouraged young and old to gather around treats, art projects, and Advent decorations across diverse cultures. This spring, we will gather again in late March to mark and celebrate Palm Sunday with old photos of Palm Sunday parades from years gone by. Together we will organize this year's Palm Sunday procession with intergenerational participation and pageantry. We'll also celebrate the 106th Palm Sunday at Central.



Confirmation youth on retreat in the fall of 2023.



Wednesday night Bible study can be attended in person or online.

Adult Formation Sunday Adult Forums

Throughout Lent, the Sunday morning forums will explore the Psalms as a Lenten practice. Professor Rolf Jacobson from Luther Seminary will be at Central on Sunday, February 18 to open the Psalms for us, and we will continue on Sundays through Lent to investigate the many ways the Psalms have been used in worship, formation, and daily life and art. Come and explore the Psalms with fresh eyes.

In the Easter season, we'll explore Fruits of the Spirit, Wisdom Literature, and have an end of the year wrap up.



Sunday morning Adult Forums cover a lot of topics. They occur most Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

Wednesday Night Bible Study

Wednesday night Bible study will offer a combination of scripture study and the Ignatian practice of the Examen. Each week we'll explore one element or spiritual practice of the Examen and make connections to Mark 4: the Parable of the Sower.

The invitation will be for you to learn about and then incorporate the Examen into your daily prayer life.



Second Sunday for Youth often involves packing boxes for folks in need.



The Older Wiser Lutheran Seniors (OWLS) go on fun monthly trips throughout most of the year.

Empowering Conversations

The remaining Sundays for Empowering Conversations include speakers who will draw us into meaningful dialogue about our neighbors in the Rondo neighborhood, neurodiversity, youth, and the LGBTQIA+ community. These powerful sessions are always on the third Sunday of the month, and all are welcome to come for lunch and participate in meaningful conversations that lead to peace with justice.

Presence and Discernment in

Worship

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

Midweek Lenten Worship Schedule

The 40-day journey of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2024. You are invited to Ash Wednesday worship at noon or at 7 p.m. The first of the Wednesday soup and salad luncheons is offered on Ash Wednesday following the noon service. The adult choir will meet for a short rehearsal after the Ash Wednesday evening worship.

Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, February 14, noon and 7 p.m. worship with an imposition of ashes and Holy Communion.

Midweek Lenten Worship and Lunch

Noon services each Wednesday in Lent (excludes Holy Week) followed by a soup and salad lunch at 12:30 p.m.

Midweek Lenten Prayer and Conversation

6 p.m. each Wednesday in Lent (excludes Holy Week) in person or on Zoom.

Service of Healing for Illness

A service of healing will be offered for all who have walked with or are in the midst of cancer and illness at this moment. The service of healing will be offered within the 5 p.m. Saturday evening worship service on February 17. During the service, pastors and members of the Prayer Ministry Team will offer healing prayer and the laying on of hands for healing. All who have walked

with or are in the midst of cancer personally, and/or with a family member or a friend, are invited to worship. Following worship, we will gather for the Saturday night fellowship time to support one another.



Soup and Salad lunch is served after the Lenten Midweek services.

Contemplative Prayer in Lent

This year the journey of Lent is shaped by St. Ignatius' prayer practice, the Examen. St. Ignatius of Loyola encouraged prayer-filled mindfulness. He offered what is called the Daily Examen. The Examen is a technique of prayerful contemplation on the events of the day to listen for God's presence and to discern God's direction for

us. There are many versions of the prayer. Jesuit training follows 5 invitations: ask God for light/illumination, give thanks, review the day/the moment, face your shortcomings/limitations, and look forward to the day to come in hope.

Each week in the season of Lent we will highlight one of these invitations as we enter the prayer practice of Examen. Lenten midweek worship at noon or evening contemplative prayer at 6 p.m. will help ground us as we prayerfully tend to mindfulness and listen for God. The **prayer labyrinth** will be set up for you to explore before or after worship on the weekend of February 17-18, 24-25, and March 9-10, 23-24. It will also be available before and after worship on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. The prayer area will have two Examen

based prayer stations for you before and after all Lenten worship services.

Holy Week and Easter Sunday

Holy Week begins with Jesus' triumphant Palm Sunday entrance into Jerusalem. The worship during Holy Week leads us to the Last Supper, foot washing, Good Friday's cross, the Easter Vigil, and the joy of Easter Sunday. You are invited to each of these essential worship services as you tend the invitation to ask for illumination, give thanks, review the day, face shortcomings and limitations, and look forward in hope.

Palm Sunday Weekend, March 23-24

Saturday, 5 p.m. worship with palms; Sunday, 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. worship with procession of palms

Maundy Thursday, March 28

Noon service of Holy Communion; 7 p.m. service with foot/hand washing and Holy Communion

Good Friday, March 29

Noon service at the foot of the cross; 7 p.m. service at the foot of the cross

Holy Saturday Easter Vigil, March 30

5 p.m. service of light, readings, Baptism, and Holy Communion

Easter Sunday, March 31

Festival Worship at 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., with coffee and rolls at 9:30 a.m.

Guest Choirs this Spring

Central Lutheran has become a regional destination for choirs. During February and March, we are privileged to host several fine academic, professional, and community choirs.

Concordia Choir and The Singers, Minnesota Choral Artists February 25, 4 p.m.

Twin brothers and conductors Matthew and Michael Culloton bring together two of Minnesota's finest choirs for a concert that celebrates mentors, great choral works, and the meaningfulness of singing communities. For tickets and more information, visit the website.

Carthage Choir March 3, 10:30 a.m. worship

From Kenosha, WI, we welcome the Carthage Choir under the direction of Dr. Margaret

Burk, to sing with the Central Choir in worship. Founded in 1927 as a choir that performed only a cappella sacred choral



VocalEssence and St. Olaf perform at Central October 2023.

music, they now perform music from the full expanse of choral traditions. They have toured domestically and internationally, and premiered numerous compositions.

North Dakota State University Concert Choir and St. Michael - Albertville High School Concert Choir March 17, 3 p.m.

The NDSU Concert Choir and STMA Concert Choir will present their annual touring programs featuring a varied repertoire of sacred and secular literature. The STMA Concert Choir is led by Central's Interim Choir Director, Joe Osowski; the NDSU Concert Choir is led by Dr. Jo Ann Miller. This program is free and open to the public.

Presence and Discernment in 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.

Annual Meeting Highlights

The congregation met for the annual meeting on Sunday, February 11 at noon. President Jeff Block called the meeting to order. Written and verbal reports were shared, celebrating the ministry and mission of the congregation. Updates were shared on the Casavant organ design work and the search for the half-time choir director. The 2023 financial reports and 2024 proposed budget were presented by Treasurer Karl Starr. The budget was adopted. The nominating committee report was shared, and the congregation voted to elect new council leaders, renew current council leader's terms, and elect members to serve on the audit and nominating committees and for the Synod Assembly. The meeting ended with deep gratitude for all who serve, sharing their time and abilities, specifically Jeff Block for serving as the president these past two years and Rod Richter who has served on the council for the past four years.

Choir Director Search Begins

The Choir Director Search Team has formed and has posted the newly developed job description for the half-time position. We will seek applicants over the next weeks and set up interviews for specific candidates. The members of the team are Susan Troselius, Andrew Heintz, Barbara Anderson, Phil Holst, Sara Klomp, Martin Ho, Elsa Ehley, Nancy Tykwinski, Isaac Drewes, and



Joe Osowski has served as interim director since December 2022.

Pastor Peter. Watch the *Spirit* for updates as the process continues. The hope is that we can secure a new choir director by this summer. We continue to be grateful for Joe Osowski as he serves as the interim choir director!

Casavant Organ Updates

The Casavant organ design process is off to a good start. We approved a design contract with Richards, Fowkes, and Company last November and design work began this year, including a site-visit February 6-8. We expect the design process to take 12 months. Meanwhile, we will continue to offer opportunities to learn about the project.

The morning of January 21, the organ gave us a rather unwelcome, but not surprising, reminder that it needs help. The previous week had averaged 10% relative humidity in the sanctuary, and that dryness had caused the separated glue joints to open up. For the morning's service, several of the organ's sounds weren't heard, but we also had a pipe which made noise when it was not supposed to. Going forward, we expect similar behavior during periods of prolonged dryness.

For now, the organ remains viable in all but the driest conditions. This allows us the time for a thorough and complete design and construction process. In the meantime, we will have some days that require workarounds, and others that require a quick jump to the piano.

If you have questions about the organ project, please contact Isaac Drewes or Pastor Peter.

Why Confirmation?

Recognizing this valued Lutheran rite of passage

There is something about Confirmation that sets a unique and lasting transition in motion for our children.

In youth ministry, we mark milestones in each child's journey when we baptize, present Bibles, teach the Lord's Prayer, and invite the little ones to take their First Communion. Each of these milestones is practiced in community with other children and families at the same developmental stage. There is a beautiful spirit and energy

that pours out of each landmark moment, marking the passage of time and the beautiful knowing and growing of the children.

By the time kids reach confirmation age, they are well into their teens, and they are developing their own ideas and beliefs. Some are open and some are more reserved but the fact that the community (the church) stops to recognize and celebrate this milestone has

more meaning to these teens than they will ever disclose.

Each April, we ask the students to pause and reflect on their faith formation. Each writes a



Central Confirmation class of 1926.

Faith Statement or creates a Faith Expression that helps them embody and articulate what their faith means. The opportunity to ask questions, to express themselves, and to be heard and seen as forming adults is a holy and sacred moment for the kids and they recognize it in ways that are indescribable.

In the coming weeks, the 7th and 8th grade students will be meeting with Confirmation mentors as they prepare to be confirmed this spring or next. Each is preparing to cross the first of many thresholds, transitions that take them from childhood to adulthood. Keep these remarkable young people in your prayers this season.



Central Confirmation class of 2023.



2023 confirmands celebrate with Pastor Stephanie.



Confirmands are surrounded in love by their faith community.



Central Lutheran
MINNEAPOLIS

333 South 12th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55404

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Ash Wednesday
services:
noon & 7 p.m.

Maundy Thursday
services:
noon & 7 p.m.

Good Friday
services:
noon & 7 p.m.

Easter Vigil:
5 p.m.

Easter Sunday
services:
8:30 a.m. &
10:30 a.m.

