

Centering

SPRING 2026

NEWS OF CENTRAL LUTHERAN | MINNEAPOLIS



*Common
Elements of Home*



“For we are them and they are us,
all created in God’s image.”

-“Who is Your Everyone?”
from *Remind Me Again* by Joe Davis

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Cover art:

Meal volunteers serve the Monday community meal.

Photo credit: Brenda Blackhawk



Common Elements of Home

We have more in common than we could ever imagine. We are made of star dust formed from the clay of the earth into bones and sinews and brain matter. Hair and hearts and skin and eyes, all different in their own way and shade and form.

We have more in common than we could ever imagine. The breath of life moves in and out of each one of us, labored after a run, sucked in for the first time and released with the scream only a newborn baby can make, released one last time as we breathe our last.

We have more in common than we could ever imagine. We hurt and cry and rejoice and laugh. We eat and drink and gather with the people we love. When we gather and share, we call that place home. It has some common elements no matter who we are. We invite all God's people (who are *all* people) to find a home here at Central.

This whole big, beautiful world is our home. We have more in common than we could ever imagine.

We have more in common than we could ever imagine. We gather around tables for meals and learning and the very body and blood of our Jesus. We hurt and cry and rejoice and laugh. We pray and we sing and we eat. We do all this with the very common and simple elements of bread and wine and tater tot hot dish. We talk about being salt and light and peace. We practice seeing what we have in common here in this home so that we can see what we have in common when we leave these walls and encounter the rest of God's people out in these streets. This whole big, beautiful world is our home.

We have more in common than we could ever imagine. We are called to care for the whole beautiful mess all together.

Pastor Melissa

Common Elements 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.

Homeless Day on the Hill

Please save March 11, 2026 for Homeless Day on the Hill. As in years past we will charter a bus and leave Central around 8 a.m. and return to the church around 4 p.m. that day. We will meet with our legislators and advocate for funding for building new (and updating current) deeply affordable housing.

With the projected state budget shortfall and the focus on accountability in social services and health and human services contracts, we will have a tough session ahead of us. The kind of wins we have been working on securing include: the Shelter Residents' Bill of Rights from Street Voices of Change, a statewide ombudsperson for shelter accountability, and more funding for programs that keep families housed. These are goals that don't happen in one session, but they are goals we work on building momentum toward, year after year.

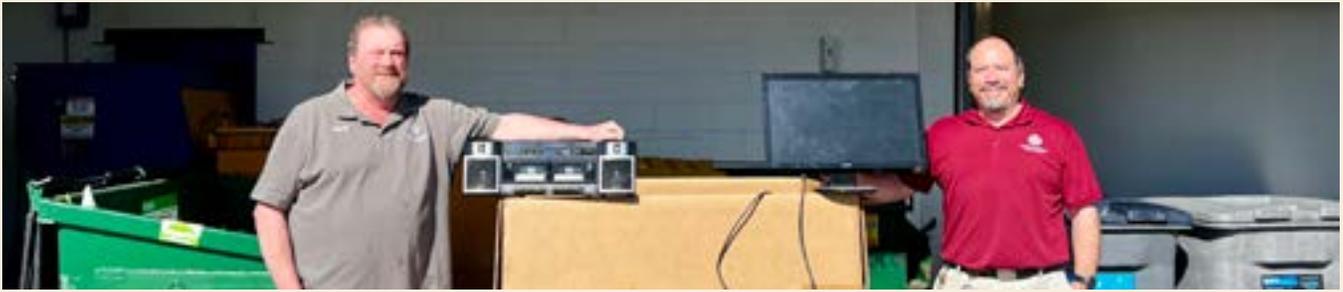
After many, many years of telling our stories of fraud and abuse in the Housing Supports program, formerly known as Group Residential Housing (GRH), many other programs that have helped people get into housing are being scrutinized. While it is good that folks are looking to protect people who are struggling with basic

needs, programs are being suspended in ways that make vulnerable people even more at risk.

All of that is to say, sign up at the welcome desk for Homeless Day on the Hill, reserve your seat on the bus, and be ready for a day of advocacy that works toward solving long-term problems for our houseless neighbors.



We visit the Capitol to advocate for housing rights at Homeless Day on the Hill.



Once again, Central will host electronics recycling and document recycling in April.

Restoration Center Easter Break

The Restoration Center will take a break the week after Easter from **April 6 to 9**. With all of the great gatherings and worship services that happen during Holy Week, we close the building on Easter Monday. The Community Meal, Free Store, Health Commons, Emergency Rental Assistance, and Street Voices of Change will not be available for the week following Easter. We will not be able to take Free Store donations that week, but we will be back at it on Sunday, April 12.



Restoration Center volunteers get a much needed break over Easter Week.

April is Earth Month at Central

April is Earth Month at Central and this year we will be learning from the Rev. Jim Antal and his book *Climate Church, Climate World: How People of Faith Must Work for Change*. Updated in 2023, he goes into depth on what churches can do about our call to care for all of creation.

This book will be the Central Book Club selection for April. There will be copies of the book for sale at the welcome desk, so please watch the *Spirit* for those days and times. **The Book Club will meet on April 9 at 1:30 p.m.** in Nativity.

On **April 19, at noon** please join us in the Lower Narthex for Empowering Conversations. We will have the author, Jim Antal, with us on Zoom. He will speak about his book and his work and we will have time for questions.

In celebration of Earth Month, we are also hoping to have our electronics recycling and paper shredding event. Please watch the *Spirit* for those dates as well. We know that this earth is a gift for us to care for as a part of God's good creation. Spend April with us figuring out what that means in the context of Central as we strive to be Christ's body in the world.



StreetSong MN performed at the Homeless Day on the Hill rally in 2025.



The Central Cares for Creation (C3) Team celebrates Earth Month every April.

Save the Date

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

February 18
Ash Wednesday
Noon and 7 p.m.
Worship

1 p.m.
Soup and Salad Lunch

February 22
Sunday
3 p.m.
Voices United Choir
Concert
Iowa State Singers, Cantus, and STMA Concert Choir

February 25
Wednesday
Noon
Lenten Midweek Worship and Lunch
6 p.m.
Bible Study 

March 4
Wednesday
Noon
Lenten Midweek Worship and Lunch
6 p.m.
Bible Study 

March 11
Wednesday
8 a.m. (Bus Leaves)
Homeless Day on the Hill
Noon
Lenten Midweek Worship and Lunch
6 p.m.
Bible Study 



Homeless Day on the Hill 2025.

March 14
Saturday
9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Lenten Prayer Retreat

March 15
Sunday
Noon
Empowering
Conversations with Jan
Malcolm

March 18
Wednesday
Noon
Lenten Midweek Worship and Lunch
6 p.m.
Bible Study 



Everyone processes on Palm Sunday with palms or something bright.

March 25
Wednesday
Noon
Lenten Midweek Worship and Lunch
6 p.m.
Bible Study 

March 28-29
Palm Sunday Weekend
Sunday, 9:30 a.m.
Intergenerational Learning
Event



The confirmands of 2025 had fun with their pastors.

April 2
Maundy Thursday

Noon
Worship
7 p.m.
Worship with hand/foot washing

April 3
Good Friday

Noon and 7 p.m.
Worship

April 4
Holy Saturday

5 p.m.
Easter Vigil and Fellowship

April 5
Easter Sunday

8:30 and 10:30 a.m.
Festival Worship

April 6-9
Restoration Center Closed

April 8
Wednesday

6 p.m.
Five-week Spring Bible Study Begins 

April 9
Thursday

1:30 p.m.
Central Book Club discussing Jim Antal's *Climate Church, Climate World*

April 19
Sunday

Noon
Empowering Conversations with Jim Antal

May 2
Saturday

2 p.m.
Rooted and Rising Choir Concert
National Lutheran Choir and St. Olaf Choir

May 3
Sunday

10:30 a.m. service
Rite of Confirmation

May 16-18
Generosity Thank You Weekend

May 17
Sunday

4 p.m.
Family Concert: A Royal Treat
Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra

Around the Table:

Invitation, Connection, and Home

By Pastor Stephanie Friesen

The essence of the lives here at church are most profoundly experienced at the many tables we gather around throughout the week. Our dear Charles Smith is highly aware of this reality because he helps move tables daily. Great Room tables are set up and taken down. Conference room tables are swapped out for children's tables in Sunday school classrooms and in the nursery. Learning tables are positioned and repositioned and repositioned once again for business meetings, Bible studies, adult forums, and a myriad of other activities.

Starting early Sunday mornings, children arrive to experience tables with their parents and families. Their first stop is often the cookie table. In addition to the kitchen's amazing cookies, children experience the wonder of worship while sitting at kids' tables in the sanctuary with activity bags and treats that keep them curious and content while in church. The littlest among us sit at a wonderful blue and green table in the nursery where there are always crayons and pictures to color and take home. In Sunday School, tables are filled each week with shepherds and children who come to have the stories of God's people and Jesus told in ways that work best for them.



The Sunday School children gather around tables for learning and play.

The Great Room tables center members and friends six days a week. The community gathers for meals on Sundays and Mondays in a setting where friendships and fellowship take root. Ask any of the Monday volunteers about the guests and people they've met, and you will hear story after story of friendships and connections that were moments in the making, yet they've lasted for decades. Volunteer Cheri

Moe says that, "the people I've met at lunch have become some of the most treasured relationships of my life." On Thursdays, Street Voices of Change meets for breakfast and advocacy work, and on Saturdays, the community gathers after worship

for refreshments and conversation. These Great Room tables anchor us in the vocational work of loving and serving the neighbor.



Adult formation has us gathering at tables for fellowship and discussion.

Working and learning tables are essential to our lives together as well. When considering Bible study, adult forums, Central Book Club, and other learning invitations and opportunities, we gather over 100 people each week

to grow and expand our understanding of God and God's work in the world. Regular forum participant, Nancy Tykwinski often comments on what she learns saying, "I'm so thankful for the lessons and learning on Sunday mornings."



We gather at the table for Holy Communion each week.

During Lent this year, the Wednesday Night Bible Study will explore a Lutheran understanding of the sacraments. For new members and for those who've migrated to the Lutheran church from another denomination, this is a wonderful opportunity to explore the nuances of what makes a Lutheran a Lutheran. Each of the pastors will be teaching a session or two and you are invited to gather at tables at church or from a table at home to learn something new or be reminded of something you learned a long time ago.

Then, there are the tables we visit often yet often overlook. These include the sorting room tables where volunteers come throughout the week to ensure donations are properly unpacked and prepared for display in the Free Store. The staff



All are welcome at the Community Meal tables.



Once a month, the Free Store volunteers eat lunch and make plans around a table in the sorting room.

meets at tables each week for devotions and prayer and to tend to the business of communication, building issues and concerns, upcoming events, worship planning, and all the details that require attention and care. We meet at tables to plan weddings, baptisms and funerals. We meet at tables to help our neighbors with Emergency Rental Assistance. We meet at tables to offer words of encouragement and hope when neighbors come in for a word of grace.

We are a community anchored in a life together around tables, big and small, where many come each week, and where the invitation is always open.

And finally, there is God's table – a table set in love by Jesus just for you. It is a table filled with God's goodness and grace; it is a table filled with forgiveness and reconciliation. It is a table of unconditional love for you.

The invitation to the table is open and we're saving a seat for you.

Common Elements of Worship

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

The Journey of Lent

This year the journey of Lent will be guided by the theme “Common Elements of Home.” Expanding on this year’s program theme, “Stories of Home,” we will be grounded in Martin Luther’s reflections on the Sacraments from the *Small Catechism*. A Lenten devotional with daily reflections written by members, pastors, and staff will be available in print and will be emailed each day during the Lenten season. We will also reflect on ways we understand the common elements of home during the Lenten midweek worship at noon and the 6 p.m. class offered in person or on Zoom. Prayer stations will also be available on the weekends around worship, as well as before or after the midweek worship service.

Midweek Lenten Schedule

Ash Wednesday, February 18

Noon and 7 p.m. worship with imposition of ashes and Holy Communion. A soup and salad luncheon follows the noon service. The Central Choir will lead worship at the 7 p.m. service.

Midweek Worship and Lunch

Wednesdays during Lent at noon followed by soup and salad lunch at 12:30 p.m.

Lenten Bible Study

At 6 p.m. on Wednesdays in Lent (beginning February 25) in person or on Zoom, led by Pastors Stephanie, Melissa, and Peter.

Holy Week and Easter Sunday

Palm Sunday Weekend, March 28-29

Saturday, 5 p.m. worship with palms; Sunday, 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. worship with procession of palms. At the 10:30 a.m. service, following the procession of the palms, the Sunday School children will present their Palm Sunday Program.

Maundy Thursday, April 2

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

Good Friday, April 3

Noon and 7 p.m. services at the foot of the cross. The noon service will include Ian Snyder on violin. The 7 p.m. service will be led by our section leader quartet, including sung reproaches.

Holy Saturday, Easter Vigil, April 4

5 p.m. service of light, readings, and Holy Baptism and Communion. One of the oldest services in the church, the Easter Vigil takes us through the foundational scripture of our faith, with musical responses by the Central Choir and others, leading to the proclamation of Jesus’ resurrection.

Easter Sunday, April 5

Festival worship at 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., with light continental breakfast at 9:30 a.m.



Ash Wednesday services include the imposition of ashes.



Easter worship at Central is a celebration of our risen Lord.

Both Easter morning services will feature the Central Choir, Bell Choir, brass quintet and percussion, as we celebrate Christ's resurrection in this festive worship service.

Spring Musical Highlights

On **February 22**, the **Iowa State University Singers** will join us for the **10:30 a.m. service**, with a concert that afternoon (details below). The following Sundays in Lent, the Central Choir will offer a series of choral psalm settings.



Central Choir on Easter.

On **May 17** we celebrate **Ascension Sunday**. After his resurrection, Jesus walked the earth for 40 days. On Ascension Day, we celebrate Jesus' return to heaven. This is traditionally the 40th day of Easter. The Central Choir, joined by a jazz trio, will present Bob Chilcott's *Nidaros Jazz Mass*, and Vaughan Williams' setting of Psalm 47 "O Clap your Hands." This will be the last Sunday of the choir season.

Spring Concerts at Central

Voices United

February 22, 3 p.m.

Iowa State Singers, Cantus, STMA Concert Choir

This collaborative performance celebrates the power of choral music to connect generations of singers, blending the artistry of professional musicians with the passion and dedication of student performers. This concert is free and open to the public.

Rooted and Rising

May 2, 2 p.m.

National Lutheran Choir, St. Olaf Choir

In the turning of the season, we rise—rooted in memory, reaching toward the future. This program bursts forth in song, celebrating the sacred bonds of community. Joined by Anton Armstrong and the St. Olaf Choir, we honor the living legacy of the Lutheran choral tradition in the United States. Former NLC Artistic Director David Cherwien joins us as guest organist as we mark 40 years of the National Lutheran Choir.

Family Concert: A Royal Treat

May 17, 4 p.m.

Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra (MSO)

The MSO is thrilled to welcome back MSO artistic collaborator and gifted storyteller, Kevin Kling, for a performance of his enchanting *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*, commissioned by the MSO in 2019. Victor Zupanc's music masterfully brings this fun-loving story to life, featuring New York City singer/actress, Emily Kristen Morris.



At Central, we love hosting guest choir concerts.

Common Elements 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.

Intergenerational Learning

On Palm Sunday, the community will gather for the last of our Intergenerational Learning events for the year. Like last year, we will build Bible story dioramas with Peeps and other Easter candy treats. Using our hands and imaginations, parents, grandparents, and children decide on stories and then build a model to tell the story they've chosen. Over the past several years, we've seen everything from God creating the heavens and the earth to Jonah to The Last Supper and more. It's not too early to begin thinking about what story you'd like to share! Following the diorama extravaganza, the children will lead us into worship in a wonderful Palm Sunday opening with a great parade and a musical offering.



There is a lot of intergenerational fun to be had on Palm Sunday.

will work with mentors throughout Lent to have conversations with trusted adults in their lives. These conversations will help them experience God and faith through the eyes of another person whose faith may have been shaped differently from their own. The coming weeks will be an essential time of formation for these young people so please keep them in your prayers as they prepare for this great milestone moment in their faith: Clementine, Natalia, Elsa, Melanie, Rose Beth, Ben, Caroline, and Lucy.

Summer Youth Trips

This summer the high school students are heading south to Atlanta, Georgia and Montgomery and Birmingham, Alabama to experience the amazing history and museums that tell the story of the Civil Rights movement in America. At the end of June,

we will travel to Atlanta to experience the King Center, a remarkable national park established in Martin Luther King Jr.'s childhood neighborhood. From there, we will visit Birmingham to learn about its history, and toward the end of our trip, we'll finish

Confirmation

The great group of 7th and 8th graders who started their confirmation journeys three years ago are getting ready for confirmation. These students have been listening and learning and are ready to affirm their baptisms on **Sunday, May 3**. Before then, students



Confirmation or "Affirmation of Baptism" is an important milestone in these young people's lives of faith.



It's time for our youth and families to start preparing for summer trips.

in Montgomery to explore the Civil Rights Memorial Center and Legacy Sites. The trip is scheduled for **Friday June 26 to Thursday, July 2.**

A middle school trip to Amnicon is also in the works for **July 12-17.** Our great partners at Amnicon are ready to introduce a whole new group of students to wilderness fun!

Adult Formation

Adult learning for spring begins with a deep dive into the Lutheran understanding of the Sacraments during Lent. Learning will **begin on Wednesday, February 25.** The Gospel throughout the season will explore texts from the Gospel of John and our Wednesday night Bible studies will focus on Holy Baptism, Holy Communion, and we will consider the sacramental underpinnings of Confession and Forgiveness as a formative practice of our faith. For anyone seeking to understand more about Lutheran theology and tradition, this series of Wednesday night Bible studies would be a great way to learn about the similarities and the differences in denomination understanding of the sacraments.

And we continue our Empowering Conversations with speakers who generate thoughtful conversation about topics around

justice that leads to peace. Upcoming speakers include former health commissioner of Minnesota, Jan Malcolm and environmental author, the Rev. Jim Antal (learn more about events related to Antal's book on page 5).

Lenten Prayer Retreat

You are invited to sign up for the annual Lenten Prayer Retreat. This year we will gather at Central for a day-long retreat on **Saturday, March 14, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.** We will gather under the theme of "Common Elements of Home" and be led by a series of videos from the Center for Action and Contemplation. Pastor Kathie Nycklemoe and Pastor Peter will help facilitate the worship and reflection times after each of the video presentations by Fr. Richard Rohr.

At the retreat there will be large group video presentations, as well as smaller group conversations and individual time for prayer and reflection. There will be coffee, continental breakfast, and lunch as a part of the retreat time together. The cost for

the retreat is \$25. You can sign up today on Realm or after worship at the Welcome Desk each weekend. The deadline for signing up is Sunday, March 8. If you have any questions, please talk to Pastor Peter or email him at pnycklemoe@centralmpls.org.



The Central Book Club is an engaging opportunity for adult learning.

Connection Stories

from the Caring Crew

A recharged and renewed Caring Crew is at work once again bringing fellowship and friendship to Central's members who are not getting to church as often as they used to. Volunteers met twice last fall for learning and assignments and the results have been heartwarming.

Here are just a few stories of what's been happening:

Maintaining Connections

Carol Rieger and Roger Sorbel visited Bud and Arlis Prescott before Christmas. Imagine the stories and fun shared in that visit between old friends who spent over an hour reminiscing and catching up on life. Bud and Arlis, longtime members of Central, live in assisted-living and, in addition to periodic visits from Pastor Brian for pastoral care, Carol and Roger have made a connection and will visit regularly now to talk about things happening at Central. And to keep a longtime friendship in motion for all – a blessing for everyone.

New Connections

Sue Reid lives close to Jones-Harrison Care Center, which is a new home for Ardis Jacobson. While the two had never met at church, Sue now periodically visits Ardis and the two of them are getting acquainted and becoming friends. For Ardis, this Caring

Crew visit is a beautiful way to stay connected and hear about things happening at church. The balance between a friendly visit from a church member and a pastoral care call from Pastor Brian on a regular basis keeps Ardis connected to the community she loves.

Connection Amidst Change

Martha Rasmussen recently moved from Runnstone (Augustana) to Abitan in downtown Minneapolis. As Martha's family prepared her to move, they reached out to church to see about someone who could regularly visit Martha in her new place.

While Martha has many friends who will visit from Central, Caring Caller Marie Wiegert will visit regularly to make sure Martha's connection to Central is regular and meaningful. What a gift to Martha and Marie for connection and meaning.



Carol and Roger visiting with Bud and Arlis.

These connections for our homebound are so important. Central has over 25 volunteers who visit, make phone calls, and send cards every month to ensure we stay connected and serve as reminders of God's love for all.

The Caring Crew meets quarterly to share stories, compare best practices, and learn from one another. If you'd like to learn more about becoming a visitor, or if you know someone who would enjoy a regular visit from a friend at Central, contact Pastor Stephanie.

Common Elements 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.

Annual Meeting Highlights

The congregation met for the Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 8 at noon. President Rexanne Spicer called the meeting to order. Written and verbal reports were shared, celebrating the ministry and mission of the congregation. Updates were shared on the Strategic Task Forces, the Casavant organ, and projects completed that are part of the Sanctuary Renewal. The 2025 updates to the Constitution were presented and approved. The financial reports and 2026 proposed budget were presented by Treasurer Ron Fiscus. The budget was adopted. The Nominating Committee report was shared, and the congregation voted to elect new leaders. The congregation elected Allison Eger to serve as president, Susan Troselius to serve as vice-president, Sara Gunsch to serve as secretary, and Phil Holst and Jenna Harvieux to serve as at-large council members.

The meeting ended with deep gratitude for all who serve, sharing their time and abilities. The congregation specifically thanked Rexanne Spicer, Heidi Tysk-Poppe, Rachel Moeller, and Julie Anderson who served on council. Thank you to all who attended this annual gathering when we give thanks for God's abundance and our shared ministry on this corner of the world.

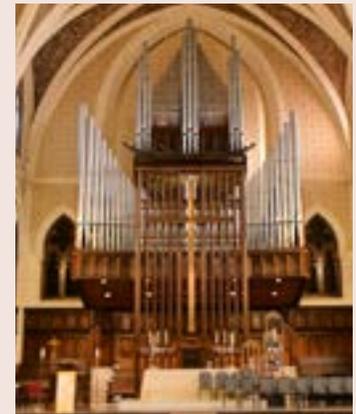
Generosity Thank You Weekend

The Generosity Team invites you to save the weekend of **May 16-18** for a time to say "thank you" to you for all the gifts shared here at Central and in your daily life. A special

continental breakfast will be served on Sunday morning at 9:30 a.m. to thank all, with specific emphasis for those who serve in worship, formation, community, and generosity. On Saturday night, there will be a "thank you" following the 5 p.m. service. On Monday, there will be a thank you time for all who share their time and gifts after the community meal. Save the date and watch for details in the *Spirit* around Easter.

Organ Update

Richards, Fowkes, and Company, have completed the organ designs which we have now received. However, they have informed us of a significant setback to the original production timeline. As always, we are committed to doing this project *well*, even if it takes additional time, but the shift does raise additional questions for the committee to consider. More information is available in the Annual Report.



Casavant organ

As for the state of the organ, it is very similar to last year. Year round, about 15% of the organ is unusable due to electrical issues. During the winter, that number goes up to about 25% with winter dryness. For more information, please see the videos on our website.



Central Lutheran
MINNEAPOLIS

333 South 12th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Presorted
First-Class Mail
U.S. Postage PAID
Twin Cities, MN
Permit No. 3197

Ash Wednesday:
February 18
Noon & 7 p.m.

Maundy Thursday:
April 2
Noon & 7 p.m.

Good Friday:
April 3
Noon & 7 p.m.

Easter Vigil:
April 4, 5 p.m.

Easter Sunday:
April 5
8:30 & 10:30 a.m.

Exploring the promise of God for all

AN EVERYDAY CHURCH FOR EVERYONE

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