



# Central Today

August 2017

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## SUNDAY WORSHIP

10:30 AM

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In the course of just one week at Central in July, we witnessed and participated in two very different events. The emotions these events triggered were quite opposite, but both spoke to the power of a congregation – a community of faith – to offer support and compassion and caring actions.

On a Monday morning, the sanctuary was filled with friends, and colleagues of elder and the chair of our Personnel Committee, Douglas Knowlton. And people from this congregation jumped to help and to grieve alongside family and friends. Doug's death was both sudden and unexpected – and he will be deeply missed here at Central. May we continue to support one another and offer continued support to Sharon as she grieves.

Then on Sunday, we celebrated a successful co-sponsorship of a refugee family from Afghanistan. We offered prayers of thanksgiving for a safe journey and for friendships that formed and new understandings. And while that official four-month sponsorship period has concluded, we know that friendships will continue both with the family and between church members who met through refugee sponsorship activities.

We remembered a line initially voiced by Central member Mel Leach. Playing on a well-known (and true) phrase that it takes a village to raise a child, Mel said that to do the things we have planned, "it takes a congregation."

I am so glad to be part of this community of faith, and I am looking forward to a number of exciting events and opportunities in the coming months.

See you at Central!  
David Colby

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## Upcoming Worship August

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**JOIN US FOR  
WORSHIP!  
SUNDAYS AT  
10:30 AM**

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### SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE

**9:30 ADULT BIBLE  
STUDY**

**10:30 WORSHIP**

**11:30 FELLOWSHIP,  
COFFEE**

#### **Sunday, August 6**

On this first Sunday of the month, we will celebrate communion. Rev. Colby will preach on the parable of the ten bridesmaids (Matthew 25:1-13). This parable suggests that being alert to opportunities is a key element of faithful living. Tenor Bill Haugen sings in worship.

#### **Sunday, August 13**

Maureen Smith will preach on "Seventy Times Seven," based on the parable in Matthew 18:21-35 in which a slave who is forgiven a huge debt then refuses to forgive a much smaller debt from another slave. We will look at how the parable addresses issues of both forgiveness and economic justice.

Everyone is welcome to participate in a Drum Circle! You do not need a drum, nor do you need any special musical skills. Lucy will teach a few simple beats (or you are welcome to do your own). We will rehearse at 10 a.m. and then play in worship at 10:30. This is a great intergenerational activity, and is low-stress. We have plenty of drums to share.

#### **Sunday, August 20**

The Rev. Bill Davnie will speak during the 9:30 education hour on "Islam for Christians." Bill Davnie is a Presbyterian minister currently serving the Presbytery as stated clerk. He was first exposed to Islam as a living religion in 1974-75 when he spent a year on the staff of an Islamic Teacher's College in Indonesia. After several years as a pastor in rural North Dakota, he joined

the U.S. Foreign Service, and during that career had a posting in Tajikistan, a Muslim country in Central Asia. He and his wife Charlotte have two daughters, one of whom is now posted to Sri Lanka, where she is a Foreign Service Officer with the U.S. Agency for International Development. The other daughter is a nurse in Florida; her husband is currently posted in Kuwait as an Army warrant officer.

Davnie will also preach during worship, tackling the teachings of Jesus about what defiles a person (Matthew 15:1-20).

Our ensemble-in-residence Ars Nova Brass Quintet will provide music today.

#### **Sunday, August 27**

The Rev. Anna Kendig will preach. Rev. Anna Kendig is a staff chaplain at the University of Minnesota Medical Center. Anna offers spiritual care to people in chemical dependency detox and behavioral health intensive care, as well as to Spanish-speaking families at University of Minnesota Masonic Children's Hospital. When not at work, she can be found exploring used bookstores or off on road trip adventures.

## “Welcoming Strangers” –by Jessica Jones

I pulled up to the skyway connecting the gold ramp to the airport ticketing area. "Okay, Mohammed, can you take the kids into the bathroom and I'll go park the car?" I said, watching the cars queue up behind me as I blocked a lane of traffic. "And, Cora, hold Mohammed's hand and stay together!"

As I jumped back into the car and watched them make their way down the skyway – my daughter, my new friend from Afghanistan, and two of his children – I felt the moment expand as I realized how much had happened in four short months. I had parked in the same ramp on the cold March night when Mohammed and his family arrived, exhausted but gracious toward the large and energetic welcoming committee assembled in the baggage claim. We had exchanged formal greetings, handshakes, and words of welcome. We had been strangers. But now, here I was entrusting him with the safety of my own child without a second thought.

It was another family of refugees, also from Afghanistan, also arriving with help from Minnesota Council of Churches, that brought us back to the airport. But this time Mohammed's role was different. As we waited, he swapped job leads with another Afghani in the welcome party. I broke out snacks for his kids and mine and kept them from riding the baggage carousel.

"I arrived at a different terminal, right?" Mohammed asked. "No," I said. "We waited for you in this very same spot. You don't recognize it?" He looked at me with eyebrows raised and laughed the way he often does when aspects of American culture or the price of things in the U.S. astound him.

"I was so tired that night," he remembered. "Waris was too tired to walk, so I was carrying him, holding Adiba's hand, and carrying some bags. It was like all that training I had to do in the U.S. military, wearing body armor and carrying heavy packs, prepared me for that moment." He laughed again.

When the new family arrived, we repeated the ritual of welcome for them. We shook hands, offered water, carried exhausted children and heavy luggage. Eventually, we walked them out to a waiting car of strangers and watched them drive away.

"Just think," I said to Mohammed, once all our own kids were buckled into my van. "Think of all the stuff that they will have to do in the next few weeks, all the appointments, introductions, and new information." He just laughed and shook his head. "A lot has happened in just four months."

On the long drive back to the apartment, we talked about job opportunities, how to pass the driving test, and the cost of parking in the city. And after Mohammed had had some tea and said prayers, he left for his job at Target. Awesta and I talked about our kids, looked at pictures from my recent vacation, and swapped birth stories. And when English words failed us, we just smiled at each other.

That day felt like a testament to the idea of "welcoming the stranger" and the beauty that if you do it right, they don't stay strangers for long.



## Mid-year update from Finance & Stewardship

It is hard to believe that we are halfway through 2017! The Finance & Stewardship committee wanted to provide an update on how the church's finances are tracking at this point in the year.

A few points to highlight:

### Contributions

- Pledge and ACH contributions are coming in as expected, with 47% of our annual contributions budget received at the year's halfway point.
- In addition to ongoing support for Central's mission, special contributions have been made to support the Ahmady family, fund projects through One Great Hour of Sharing, purchase new choir robes, and through VocalPoint to provide funds and supplies for One Heartland camp. Such terrific generosity!

### Expenses

- Overall expenses are under budget by \$3000 for the year to date. Staff and committees are prudently managing expenses, and to date we have had no significant unexpected surprises.
- Several projects have been funded by special gifts and cash reserves, including the new sound system, a new fire protection system, and new carpeting and furniture for the upstairs Lounge.

### Investments & Reserves

- To date, we have used \$30,000 from our investments to fund operations. This is down significantly from past years, as we move toward using income from investments only instead of principle. We are on pace to stay within our 2018 target of \$57,000.
- Central has received three bequests totaling \$73,000. These have been split according to our policy: 2/3 adding to our investments and 1/3 to our cash reserve.
- Session recently approved the creation of a "Necessary Building Improvement Fund" within our cash reserve, to help us cover the unexpected (but likely!) repairs to a 100+ year old building and the many systems inside. This fund is holding \$8,000 for this type of expense.
- Our investments, managed by RBC, have been performing well.

Overall, we are pleased to report that the generosity of Central's members and friends have helped to strengthen our financial position. We are grateful for these gifts and continue to work to be wise stewards for the church's future.

## “Three Months in Minnesota” by Maureen Smith

On July 16 we celebrated the completion of our official sponsorship of the Ahmady family, but we know our connection to them will continue. Many of us have formed friendships with them that will be lasting, and Mohammed has told us that is what the family wants.

In June I had the chance to sit down with Mohammed and Awesta and talk with them about how they felt after three months in Minnesota. Both of them have warm memories of their arrival at the airport on March 9. “I was very tired” after coming such a long way, Awesta said, but then at the airport “I saw a lot of people who said ‘Welcome.’ I was happy and excited.”

Mohammed also talked of the kindness of Pat Lyall and Arum Hejmadi, Shanta’s parents, who hosted the family the first night. “I will never forget them,” he said. “They are beautiful, wonderful. If I say something about that family it would take a page.”

What was most surprising about Minnesota? Awesta’s answer was simple: “Minnesota is very cold.” Mohammed talked about cultural differences. “The lifestyle is different. Everything is by the schedule. Everything is by planning. I am new to this.” In Afghanistan when people want to see their friends they can drop in on them without an invitation. In Minnesota it’s much more complicated.

What do they like best about Minnesota? “The school for my daughter, and the people,” Awesta said. “The people have been very nice.” Mohammed said something similar. “The people have been very good. I have found a lot of very good friends.”

Before he got a job Mohammed would have said the most frustrating thing for him was how hard his job search was. At the time we talked, he had been offered an entry level job at the Target store in Coon Rapids and was planning to start June 22, with a good possibility that there would soon be a job for him at corporate headquarters in asset protection, which he had experience with in Afghanistan. “My job makes me feel very happy. It decreased my bad feelings,” he said.

What has been hardest about life in Minnesota? Awesta and Mohammed said the same thing. They don’t like living in Coon Rapids. “Being far from the city” is what Awesta said she doesn’t like. Mohammed said he is a city person and feels isolated in the suburbs. He added that he knows the Coon Rapids location was not the choice of people at Central or the Minnesota Council of Churches.

All of the Ahmadays miss their family and friends in Afghanistan, and Awesta said she is bored because she doesn’t have anyone she can talk with in her language, Dari. Mohammed says he wants to make a connection with Afghani people in the Twin Cities and hasn’t been able to do that in Coon Rapids. When they have a car they look forward to going to a mosque in Fridley where Afghani people attend. A mosque that is within walking distance of their home in Coon Rapids is Shiite, and they are Sunni.

They want to be good Americans, Mohammed said, but “We cannot forget our country. We need Afghani friends. We shouldn’t forget our culture.”

Mohammed and Awesta both said they are very thankful to the people of Central for sponsoring them. “Other families did not have what we have,” Mohammed said. “They ask me, ‘How come these people are helping you? Why are they taking you to the Como Zoo?’ We have been blessed by Allah.”

Mohammed said the family never could have made it without the support they have gotten from Central. “I don’t want to talk about you in front of you to make you feel good, but that is the reality.” The Ahmadays are grateful for the money they have been given to help them get started, but “it isn’t enough to have money if you don’t know how to use it.” People from Central have offered guidance, practical help, and—most important—friendship. Money is money, but it’s the people who matter most. “You are our family,” he said.

## Sound System Installations and Updates

In the June and July newsletter, we provided an overview of the new sound system in the sanctuary. In this edition, we want to give more details about the Hearing Loop technology that has been installed and how you might take advantage of it.

To anyone wearing hearing aids or planning to acquire hearing aids, we have installed a "hearing loop" in our sanctuary. This is the latest technology in hearing assistance. The loop transmits sound directly from the microphones of our new sound system into your hearing aids. Most hearing aids today have as one of their settings what is called a "T-Coil" setting. Simply switch your hearing aid to this setting and you will instantly be connected to the hearing loop of our new sound system. If you do not know how to activate your "T-Coil" visit your audiologist or hearing aid technician and ask them to activate your "T-Coil." Tell them your church has installed a hearing loop. Other churches and public spaces are starting to add this state-of-the-art technology, or adapt their hearing assistance devices to it, so you will find increasing opportunities to make use of the feature once your "T-Coil" setting is activated.

*"If no one is talking into a microphone will I hear ambient sound?"* (music, talking, etc.) Perhaps not. When your hearing aid is set on the "T-Coil" setting, our hearing loop transfers sound directly from the microphones of our system into your hearing aid. Our microphones, by design, do not amplify the ambient sound in our room, so you may need to switch out of your "T-Coil" setting for music and singing. Many of us are learning to do this.

*"I don't have hearing aids, but I like to use the personal hearing assistance devices our church has available."* You may find that our new system's sound quality and clarity is improved, to where you no longer need an assistive device. If, however, you like the experience of having sound delivered directly from our microphones into your ears, our ushers will provide you with a personal device that receives the sound transmitted from our hearing loop into either personal earphones or ear buds (you choose); simply ask an usher. (Some folks prefer to bring their own ear buds or earphones to plug into the device the ushers can provide.)



## Community News & Events

### Women's Networking Dinners

We have enjoyed great conversations and good food all year! Please join us at our upcoming events!

August 16 – Ox Cart Ale House

September 12 – Black Sheep Coal Fired Pizza

October 10 – Herbie's on the Park

Meet at church at 5:15 PM to walk over to the restaurant, or meet us at the restaurant when it is convenient for you. Child care can be provided at Central, upon request. Reservations for child care are required two days prior to the event.

Here are photos from some of our recent events, at Barrio and Louis!



## Music News!

### August 13 Drum Circle!

Everyone is welcome to participate in a Drum Circle! You do not need a drum, nor do you need any special musical skills. Lucy will teach a few simple beats (or you are welcome to do your own). We will rehearse at 10 a.m. and then play in worship at 10:30. This is a great intergenerational activity, and is low-stress. We have plenty of drums to share.



### Why do people sing in the Central Choir?

I asked folks this question in May as we were wrapping up our program year together. Here were some of their responses:

"My favorite part of singing is working with a group to create something that none of us could do individually. There's beauty even when there are imperfections."

"Choir is the best laughs of the week. An amazing faith community/family. The sparkplug of the church."

"Music takes me to places that delight me, energize me and make me a happier person."

"Choir is a whole lot of fun! As we sing together, we become a support group and a happy family."

"Music allows me freedom, joy, satisfaction, connection.... it allows me to be who I really want to be."

"My favorite part of singing is creating beautiful sound and words together to inspire others to feel God's love."

I was deeply touched by their answers; it reinforces what I believe about singing in community (and what the research has said about the benefits of choral singing!) I absolutely adore working with the choir here at Central church, and I sincerely invite you to participate as well. All are welcome! Our first rehearsal this fall is Wednesday, September 6 at 7:15 pm.

Please contact me if you have questions, or if you plan to join us (I'll save a folder for you!)

Jennifer Anderson, Director of Music



## Vocal Point Corner

Wow! Campers at One Heartland are going to love all the goodies that Central and VocalPoint Chorus folks donated during our Camping Drive! Thank you, thank you! So many wonderful donations came in for One Heartland's Summer Camp, including:

13 Beach towels

11 Sets of sheets

Bag of Costumes

25 pairs of goggles

19 games and toys

Life jacket

BBQ set

Box Fan

Tennis Racket

Craft paint

Tent

Fishing equipment including bait bucket, tackle box, net, poles, and even a boat motor!!!

We've received word that this summer is the **LARGEST CAMPER ATTENDANCE EVER!** We feel like we might have helped make that happen in a small way – VocalPoint and Central church (and our very generous audiences!) raised over \$25,000 for the camp, allowing them to welcome more kids than ever before!

What's next?? We will be making the 2018 Announcement very shortly; stay up-to-date by following VocalPoint on Facebook, or by signing up for the e-newsletter at [www.vocalpointchorus.org](http://www.vocalpointchorus.org)

Thank you!

Jennifer Anderson

Artistic Director, VocalPoint



## August Calendar

**Book Group** will meet Tuesdays, August 8 and August 22 at 10:30 am in the Fireside Room. The August selection is *Still Life* by Louise Penny.

**Martha's Closet** is having a sale of summer clothing. Circle the date--August 17, 11 am – 2 pm. Racks need to be cleared to make room for fall donations. Prices range from \$1-\$7. Bargains are plentiful!

**Peaceful Presence** meets Wednesday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> from 10:30-11:30 am. The Ignatian Associates invite all who would like to gather for a time of silent prayer. You are invited to then stay for our Wednesday Community Lunch.

### 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Knitting Group

We are continuing our work on prayer shawls. The 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday knitting and crocheting group meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month (except November and December) and everyone who wants to knit and/or crochet is welcome! We meet from 11:45 AM – 12:45 PM in the upstairs lounge. Donations of yarn, needles, patterns are always welcome too! There are knitting and crocheting materials available for people who want to participate in the ministry. Contact Sally Mortenson or Sue Hoffman with any questions.



And, we are working on hats and mittens for the winter. We donate these to the Family Place. Patterns are available from Sally. Thanks to Casey Wells for creating and providing the patterns for hats!

In July, we donated a beautiful Afghan to the Ahmady family. The squares were made by our group and the afghan was assembled by Sally Mortensen. Here is a photo of the completed afghan.

## Happy Birthday!

Erika Kelly-Kennedy	8/1	Kate Pearce	8/10
Emily Ross	8/2	David Gustafson	8/11
Scott Schlittenhart	8/2	Gabe Talley	8/11
Joseph Ehling	8/5	Mary Miller	8/13
Roger Zopfi	8/5	Andrew Lonergan	8/16
Kendall Peterson	8/6	Constance Smith	8/16
Scott Klaehn	8/7	Stan Turner	8/18
Jeffrey Olson	8/8	Taylor Runkel	8/23
Joey Engeswick	8/9	Jacqueline Vosecky	8/26
Richard Binger	8/10	Thomas Klaehn	8/29
Rebecca Lee	8/10	Jack Toikka	8/29
Russell Lundeen	8/10	Jeff Jones	8/30



*If we erroneously missed your name, please send us a note so that we can correct our records:  
office@cpctestpaul.org*

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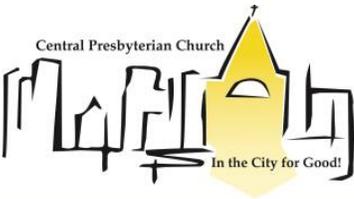
## Thank You's!

**Thank you** to all the people who helped keep the church office running smoothly while I was out on maternity leave – receptionist Mary Lange, Fluryanne Leach, Jim O'Neill, and Ned Taylor for on-call building issues, Bill Zopfi for accounting and finance tasks, and the Central staff for graciously picking up any slack. I am doing great, and feel happy to be back at work! -Anna Sanchez, Church Administrator

**Thank you** so much to everyone who so generously contributed to the new choir robes. We have received enough donations to purchase the robes, and we were able to buy many of them at a discounted price (several sizes were on clearance.) Because we could make the purchase so quickly and take advantage of the sale, we were able to save over \$1000 -- THANK YOU! Please mark your calendars to be in worship on World Communion Sunday (October 1) when we will dedicate the new robes! -- Jennifer Anderson, Director of Music

**Thank you** to those who gave gifts in memory of Shirley Pratt and Douglas Knowlton.

**Thank you** to everyone that helped make Vacation Bible School a success! Laura Nichols-Endres for arranging a time at the Children's Museum. Kati Berg for providing a vegan lunch for everyone on Friday. Sue Hoffman, Linda Johnson, Avis Tilden, Laura Williams, Lily Miles, and Stefan Gherghelegiu for helping make lunches. Finally a huge thank you to the crew from St. Stephens Church for coming all this way to put on VBS for our community!



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