



CONNECT CENTRAL

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FEBRUARY 2022

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2022 SESSION LEADERSHIP CENTRAL INSTALLS NEW ELDERS AND DEACONS

[BY REV. CAROL REED]

Martin Luther King, Junior said:

“Everybody can be great, because anybody can serve. You don’t have to have a college degree to serve.

You don’t have to make your subject and verb agree to serve.

You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.”

At the Session meeting in January, Mia Wintheiser was meeting with the Session, a requirement in the process towards ordination as a Deacon. When asked why she had

answered the call to serve as a Deacon, Mia said she was pleased to have been asked – that it was a good time for her to serve. What a joy to hear that answer!

Central continues to be blessed by many people who serve God by serving the church. It takes a lot to keep a building like Central’s operating, to support the programs and activities that will help us have meaningful worship, help children and youth grow in the faith, and to help us live out our faith and the church’s mission.

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 6]

UPCOMING WORSHIP

WORSHIP IN-PERSON SUNDAYS AT 10:30 A.M.

SERVICES STREAMED LIVE ONLINE ON SELECT SUNDAYS

The church calendar says we are in what is called the month of Epiphany. It is a time when we hear scripture of people experiencing God in a different way. Of people following a star and the Holy Spirit appearing in the form of a dove.

We may not have those dramatic experiences today, but we are still encouraged to stay open to how God is moving in our world, our lives, and our church.

Sunday, February 6

ISAIAH 6:1-8
LUKE 5:1-11

Rev. Carol Reed will preach "Listening for God's Voice" and we will celebrate communion.

Sunday, February 13

PSALM 1
LUKE 6:17-26

Rev. Carol Reed will preach "Seeking God's Ways" and we will welcome musician, digital producer and activist Garrett McQueen as he plays bassoon with resident musicians Steve Swanson, piano, and Central Choir.

After worship, stay for a short program and commentary as Garrett McQueen shares some of his important work as the producer of the podcast TRILLOQUY, which New York Times describes as a "thrilling",

"open-minded and omnivorous approach to music" that is "required listening for industry leaders and listeners alike." (Learn more about Garrett on page 3.)

This worship service will be streamed live on our website.

Sunday, February 20

PSALM 37:1-4, 39-40
LUKE 6:27-31, 37-38

Rev. Carol Reed will preach "Listening for God's Voice in the Midst of Difficult Times" and Central Choir will sing. During the worship hour, there will be a congregational discussion relating to our search for a permanent pastor.

This worship service will be streamed live on our website.

Sunday, February 27

PSALM 99
LUKE 9:28-36

Rev. Carol Reed will preach "Watching for God Always" and Central Choir will sing.

New to Central?

Drop us an email and
say hello. We'd love to
connect with you!

office@
centralforgood.org

CENTRAL STAFF

(651) 224-4728

PASTOR

Rev. Dr. Carol Reed,
Transitional Pastor
carolr@centralforgood.org, ext. 102

ADMINISTRATION

Anna Sanchez, Church Administrator
office@centralforgood.org, ext. 100

Christie Rachelle,
Director of Communications
christier@centralforgood.org, ext. 105
(952) 564-4472

Matt Ehling, Treasurer
William Zopfi, Treasurer Emeritus

Mary Lange, Evening Receptionist
Lavar Jones & Peter Evarts, Custodians

PROGRAMS

Jennifer Anderson,
Director of Music & Youth Ministry
jennifera@centralforgood.org, ext. 103

Laura Walls, Sunday Connection
Coordinator, ext. 109
lauraw@centralforgood.org

Music Staff: Shanta Hejmadi, Abbie
Betinis, Laura Krider, Adam Van der
Sluis, Steve Swanson, David Winkworth

Megan Beese, Preschool Teacher
Maureen Smith, Bible Study Leader

COMMUNITY MEALS

Barb Westman, Chef & Manager
barb.westman@gmail.com

Sue LeClaire, Sous Chef

MARTHA'S CLOSET

Sandy White, Director
martha@centralforgood.org, ext. 112

WELCOME GARRETT MCQUEEN

[FROM JENNIFER ANDERSON]

On Sunday, February 13, Central will welcome bassoonist Garrett McQueen to worship. After worship there will be a short music program with commentary from Garrett as he shares some of his important work as the producer of the podcast TRILLOQUY. New York Times describes it as a "thrilling", "open-minded and omnivorous approach to music" that is "required listening for industry leaders and listeners alike."

A proud native of Memphis, TN, Garrett is a bassoonist who has performed as a member of the South Arkansas Symphony, Jackson Symphony, American Youth Symphony, Memphis Repertory Orchestra, the Eroica Ensemble, and most recently, the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra. He has also collaborated with ensembles including the Sphinx Symphony Orchestra, Memphis Symphony Orchestra, the Southeast Symphony, the Artosphere and Gateways Festival Orchestras, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Louisville Orchestra,

and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

Garrett's musical career has also included solo recitals and chamber music performances across the country, master classes, guest instruction, and adjudication. Garrett has been heard as both a performer and guest host on APM's "Performance Today," and is featured in a number of commercial recordings of orchestral and "pop" music widely distributed across the music industry. On camera, Garrett has appeared in a wide array of television programs, including Oxygen's "Snapped: Killer Couples," TV One's "Fatal Attraction," and Fox's "Glee."

Giving voice and offering space to music by Black and contemporary composers drives his passion for the art form, and continues to be his primary interest when it comes to playing the bassoon and advocating for "classical" music. In addition to remaining active in performance spaces, Garrett is the host and producer behind a



number of nationally-syndicated radio programs, including "The Sound of 13" and "The Sounds of Kwanzaa," and continues to work as a guest radio host in a number of American markets. Off the clock, Garrett spends most of his free time with his friend and podcast co-host, Scott Blankenship, and his boyfriend, Dell.

Happy Birthday to You!

Join us in wishing a joyous Happy Birthday to all who are celebrating birthdays this month.

- Ingrid Bollman 2/3
- Marlena Haugen..... 2/3
- Laura Varanasi 2/4
- Veronica Amarteifio..... 2/5
- James Bergman 2/7
- Kris Baird..... 2/9

- Ryan Kimani..... 2/9
- Melissa Varanasi 2/9
- George Lonergan..... 2/10
- Margo Nicoll..... 2/10
- Victoria Pyan 2/11
- Ned Taylor..... 2/13
- Christopher Amarteifio..... 2/14
- Laura Williams 2/15
- Ian Berg..... 2/17
- Jon Juffer 2/17

- Eddie Sanders..... 2/18
- Barbara Swanson 2/19
- Ellie Schlittenhart 2/20
- Lynne Severson 2/23
- Nora Welch 2/24

If we missed you, send a note to office@centralforgood.org so we can update our notes and share birthday wishes with you, too!



VocalPoint's 11th Season
February 5 & 6, 2022



Driven by Dignity

Supporting low-cost car repair through the work of The Lift Garage

*Featuring Chastity Brown
and Cadex Herrera*



VocalPoint uses the power of people, art, and collaboration to tell the stories of organizations doing life-changing work.

Come hear the story of The Lift Garage, a Minneapolis non-profit aimed at moving people out of poverty and homelessness by providing low-cost car repair, free pre-purchase car inspections, and honest advice. Learn how they are committed to the community and the people it serves.

In collaboration with visual artist Cadex Herrera (an artist of the iconic George Floyd mural) and blues/soul/folk/jazz singer and songwriter Chastity Brown, let your spirits be lifted by hope and generosity!

WHEN

Saturday, February 5 at 4:00 p.m.
Sunday, February 6 at 4:00 p.m.

WHERE

Central Presbyterian Church
500 Cedar Street, Saint Paul, MN

TICKETS

Tickets may be purchased in advance from a chorus member or at www.vocalpointchorus.org.

- \$15 advance / \$20 at the door \$10 for ages 5-18
- This concert is not geared for children under 5.
- A free-will donation will also be collected at the concerts with 100% of those gifts supporting The Lift Garage.

- All attendees will be required to present proof of full COVID-19 vaccination or a negative test taken within 72 hours prior to the event. All who enter must also be masked.

Both concerts will be streamed live at 4:00 p.m. However, to view it, you will be required to purchase a streaming ticket from the VocalPoint website. Once ticket purchase is made, the link to view the video will be sent via email.

Please note, the video will only be available while the event is running live. You will not be able to view it later or share the video.

HAVE QUESTIONS?

Go to www.vocalpointchorus.org or speak with Jennifer Anderson.

2022 SESSION LEADERSHIP CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Thank You!

There are so many tasks that happen behind the scenes, and if the job is done well, most of the congregation would not even be aware of it, unless they have also served. One example would be Charrie Willis who in January stepped down from communion preparation, something she has done for six years, only missing three Sundays! Over the years she has also done the set up for Ash Wednesday, polished silver trays, put out candles for All Saint's Day, and headed the decorating of the church for Christmas. Our thanks to Charrie for those countless times you have done these tasks!

Our thanks as well to so many others. Those who have served on Session and completed their term:

- Matt Ehling
- Carl Willis
- Sharon Zopfi-Jordan

And to those who have served on Deacons and completed their term:

- Chris Bremeker
- Solomon Haile
- Laura Hutton

It is always hard to imagine how work will continue when good leaders leave, but God provides new leaders.

Our thanks to those who have agreed to serve on Session:

- Wendy Flinger
- Jackie Klaehn
- John Lee
- Lynne Severson

Those who agreed to serve an addition term:

- Sally Mortenson
- Marcia Robert

Our thanks to those who have agreed to serve as Deacons:

- Peter Knapp
- Maureen Smith
- Mia Wintheiser

2022 Committee Assignments**WORSHIP, MUSIC, AND ARTS**

Co-Chairs: Kiera Faye & Dennis Reimer

This committee oversees big-picture worship and arts planning and coordinates the work of ushers and communion preparation.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Chair: Phyllis Brashler

This committee oversees all the programs that Central offers for children and youth, including Sunday School programming, family and youth outings and events.

WELCOME & FELLOWSHIP

Chair: Lynne Severson
Assigned: Wendy Flinger

This committee will engage visitors, host inquirers' classes, and help new members get more involved. This committee is charged with recruiting and training people for ongoing hospitality tasks in the church.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Chair: Mel Leach

Assigned: Jackie Klaehn

This committee is responsible for ensuring effective staffing for the church, and to oversee an annual evaluation process for each staff member. Some aspects of the work of this committee are highly confidential.

FINANCE AND STEWARDSHIP

Chair: Ernest Lloyd

Assigned: Cindy Jesson, John Lee & Phyllis Brashler

This committee encourages generous and faithful stewardship and analyzes and recommends the strategic use of financial resources. With the treasurer, this committee interprets income, expenses and financial realities and priorities to the boards and to the congregation.

COORDINATED MISSION

Chair: Chris Smith

Assigned: Sally Mortenson & Marcia Robert

Central does lots of mission, or community outreach, through the use of our building, our dollars, and our volunteer time. The job of this committee is to coordinate, implement and execute our community serving efforts so that we can be most effective.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT AND RISK ASSESSMENT

Co-Chairs: Vinai Vinlander & Craig Foss

Working with the Church Administrator, this committee

addresses building, grounds, and safety issues.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Chair: Wendy Flinner
Assigned: John Lee

This is a committee, not of the Session, but of the entire congregation. It is charged with discerning whom God is preparing to serve as elders and deacons.

Get Involved!

There are non-Session members serving on every committee in the

church. And there is always more work to be done and more need for volunteers. Please prayerfully consider how you, too, might serve. If there is a committee on which you would like to serve, reach out to the chair or Rev. Carol Reed to explore how you might put your gifts to work.

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.

[FIRST PETER 4:10]

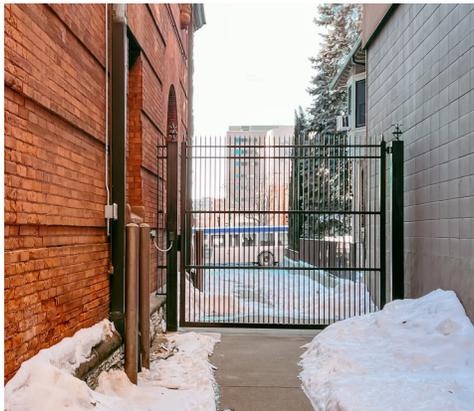
SECURITY UPDATES HAVE BEGUN AT CENTRAL

[FROM ANNA SANCHEZ]

With the approval of a loan for necessary security upgrades, work has begun on several building projects to better protect Central’s historic building, staff, and visitors.

New gates are installed at the back of the “Central patio” and by the alley where our air conditioning equipment and garbage receptacles are located. Work will soon begin on adding new interior and exterior cameras, as well as re-keying the interior locks.

Thank you to Project Managers Carl Willis and Fluryanne Leach for their dedication and expertise, and to the entire Facilities Management Committee for their efforts over the past year to make this happen.



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VOLUNTEER TO HELP
centralforgood.org/volunteer

CENTRAL FINANCE UPDATE:

Looking Back, Moving Forward Together

[FROM FINANCE & STEWARDSHIP]

The Finance Chair and Treasurer want to express their gratitude to Central's generous congregation, who rallied at year-end to provide much-needed financial help. In response to Central's end-of-year appeal for financial assistance, church members contributed over \$21,000 to help close out 2021. This helped to shore up the church's balance sheet at a critical time - as Central continues to move toward full programming after two years of pandemic-related challenges.

Ending One Year, Budgeting for the Next

We are delighted by the ongoing support from this devoted congregation. At the same time, there are still challenges ahead for 2022, as overall giving was down last year, and the church ended the year \$19,000 in the red, even with the late influx of contributions.

Central's day-to-day expenses are largely funded by member contributions, with some support from Central's investment funds. Those funds were replenished through an unprecedented gift the church received several years ago, and Session has worked hard since to only draw down investment income at a sustainable level, so as to ensure Central's long-term financial stability.

Hence, the importance of pledge and other contribution revenue in paying

for church operations.

However, for this budget year, that long term stability is threatened.

A Need for Increased Giving

To fix a projected budget deficit of over \$53,000, we will need to cut some programming expenses, and draw on previously-restricted Program Account funds. To help avoid this, we ask all members and friends of Central to increase their giving beyond that already pledged.

The church is currently planning for the future in many ways - including searching for a permanent pastor, and working to formulate long-range plans in finances, facilities, and other areas.

Central was recently confronted with the need to make some urgent repairs and upgrades to our aging, historic building, and was able to use its investments as collateral for a \$200,000 loan to fund those needed repairs. Thanks to the good work of the Facilities Committee and Fluryanne Leach, Central was also able to secure a \$120,000 grant to support additional building repair work.

Learn More

The Finance Chair and Treasurer are currently compiling the church's year-end financial report, which will be available at the annual meeting.

In the meantime, please contact us with any questions you may have about Central's financial position. If you wish to pledge or increase your pledge please inform Church Administrator Anna Sanchez via email to office@centralforgood.org or call (651) 224-4728 ext.100.

Sincerely,

Finance & Stewardship Committee,
Ernest Lloyd, Chair (incoming)
Christine Smith, Chair (outgoing)
Matt Ehling, Treasurer





UNEXPECTED VALUE OF ACTS OF KINDNESS

[FROM REV. DR. CAROL REED]

In mid-December a friend texted me that she was feeling a bit down. Like so many, she had had been through a tough year. She had lost her only brother as well as her closest friend. Because of Covid and living in Canada where there were travel restrictions in place at the time, she was unable to attend either memorial service. Not surprising that during the holidays my friend found herself feeling discouraged and sad.

I shared with her something I learned from a wise friend years ago. When I feel down, I go out and do something for someone else.

A week later I received another text from my friend that she had taken my advice and had been doing

things for others – and was excited to report that it worked! She shared a photo of the recipient of one of her acts of kindness, a ninety-year-old friend to whom she had taken roses. I saw in the photo her friend Julia with a big smile and heard of Julia's gratitude for the unexpected visit. My friend said it was such a joy to see Julia so happy.

It seems like it would be contrary, but I have found more often than not when I do something for another, I leave suspecting I have been blessed more because of the act of giving and serving. The author, Rabbi Harold Kushner, wrote: "When you carry out acts of kindness you get a wonderful feeling inside. It is as though something inside your body

responds and says, yes, this is how I ought to feel."

But there is more to giving than helping us feel good. I believe reaching out to serve another is a spiritual practice. Jesus himself modeled serving others. The Gospels are filled with accounts of Jesus helping others. Jesus shared the love of God by serving and asked we do the same.

In this wintertime when the cold and the dark can sometimes cause one to feel a bit out of sorts, I encourage you to join me in the spiritual practice of serving God by serving others. Watch for opportunities to reach out to another, share the light of God's presence with another, and see how the light shines for your spirit as well.

"...give, and it will be given to you.

A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

[LUKE 6:38]

REFLECTIONS FROM MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR

[FROM ELDER DR. ERNEST LLOYD]

On Sunday, January 16, Elder Dr. Ernest Lloyd shared a sermon honoring Martin Luther King, Junior, reflecting on how his leadership might speak into the issues of today.

Following you will find an excerpt from that sermon as you reflect on how to apply that insight to your daily life.

Dr. Martin Luther King's overarching point is will you remain awake, participate, and strive to make a positive impact in whatever way you could, or did you sleep through important changes occurring in society by remaining silent?

Let me say, since that fateful and yes, transformative day in May 2020, when the world was exposed to the violent and tragic death of George Floyd, I suggest we have been in a new revolution. A worldwide revolution to outwardly and openly challenge the status quo, to challenge racist policies, to speak the truth of history, and indeed, to cry "freedom now." The key now is to keep the momentum.

And since the George Floyd murder, we have seen thousands of people across the nation joined together, representing all races, gender identities, nationalities, ethnicities and of all ages protest the systemic policies that allowed the unlawful killing of African-American men, and the subjugation of Native Americans and other persons of color.



The Question Is

Are you awake for this revolution? To assist you to frame a position, I can tell you that as a man born to Sharecroppers in NC, of African descent, I have been awake during the revolution, since birth. I have been awake while learning to cook at the age of 9 on a wood-burning stove for a family of 10 who worked in the fields 12 hours a day, harvesting tobacco, peanuts, corn and of course, cotton in torrential rainstorms and sizzling heat and humidity. I have been awake as a youngster to strive toward school achievement, saving up the loose change from my father to subscribe to and reading everything that I could; *Newsweek*, *Time*, *Black Enterprise*, *Ebony*, and other monthly magazines. During the most difficult times of my life, and the joys as well, I assure you I have remained awake.

I do not say this to put myself above others in the strive for freedom or equality, but to say we must never

sleep through a revolution, of any nature or any kind.

Stay Awake

All of us must remain awake if we are to experience in our lifetime, or to pave the wave for our children and communities, to breathe freedom and equity. To redress wrong, fight for reparative justice to uncover and accept the truth of history, and to fulfill God's work by:

Loving thy God with all thy might;

Loving your neighbor as yourself;

Forgiving others who have wronged you;

Loving your enemies;

Praying to God for forgiveness; and

Avoiding being maniacal or hypocritical.

Then ask yourself: What can I do to support this revolution to make a difference?

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 11]

Create an Action Plan

Be honest and willing to listen and acknowledge truth & reconciliation;

Be open to taking action, peacefully marching, writing letters to your representative, volunteering, driving, working at the poll during elections; and as a springboard, reading others' stories of their life experiences;

Support Central's Anti Racism Task Force - where Rev. Lou Bender is doing a magnificent job as our chair - in its recognition of "Land Acknowledgement" of Native-

American land in MN or simply participate in a similar task force or committee that will give you joy and fulfillment; like the deacons - thank you deacons;

Be proactive by demanding that your employers review their policies to ensure that they are anti-racist;

Financially support non-profits or other groups you believe are making a fundamental difference in society;

Listen to the words of those old cartoons and literature we loved so much. How did the words of the characters in cartoons, books,

music, and the literature we read in school shape our understanding of others and support our privilege;

Ask questions; form affinity groups, unpack lived experiences surrounding race, ethnicity, gender identity, immigration status, and related attributes of people and cultures;

Be kind and forgiving for we all carry burdens; and

Do not be afraid "... to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God" because He is always with us to the end of the ages.

BRING IT HOME, MINNESOTA!

[FROM CHRISTIE RACHELLE]

Families are Barely Hanging on to Home

Over 550,000 people in Minnesota - from every corner of the state - are at risk of losing their home every month because they pay too much of their income toward rent. When a family is struggling to keep their home, it impacts their work, their children, their health, and the entire community. We need a solution as big as the problem. It's time we ensure every Minnesotan gets the rent support they deserve.

Funding Opportunity

In the 2021 legislative session, Rep. Michael Howard and Sen. Kari

Dziedzic introduced legislation (HF40/SF333) to fund rental support for all Minnesotans who qualify. The Bring It Home, MN campaign is working closely with Rep. Howard and Sen. Dziedzic, and many other supportive legislators, to pass this bill.

Powerful Together

Central's own Beacon Leadership Team is hard at work this month to support Bring It Home MN, including attending "Rent is Due" training and preparing to take action on February 14 to kickoff this 2022 legislative session strong! With a \$7 billion surplus, there is opportunity to bring housing stability to all Minnesotans, but it will only happen if we show up.

Congregations with the Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative will meet with legislators throughout the week, asking them to prioritize Bring it Home, Minnesota in 2022. The more people we have in these virtual visits, the more positive support legislators will feel to pass this important funding.

Get Involved

The Central team is identifying legislators representing our member districts and signing on volunteers to participate in lobbying visits and letter writing campaigns.

If you are interested in supporting this important effort, please speak with Barb Swanson or Leon Oman to learn more or reach out to the office to be connected.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH NEWS

[BY JENNIFER ANDERSON]

Greetings!

Some of you might be surprised to see me providing the update for Children and Youth news when you know me best as Central's Music Director for the past 11 years. Well, today I am happy to share with you that I will be taking on a new role at Central – that as the Director of Music and Youth Ministries!

A Shift in Positions

Laura Walls, who joined us on staff in the fall of 2021, has decided to realign her role to a part-time position. This change will focus her work to Sunday mornings and allow her more time with her family and other commitments. Moving forward, Laura serve as the new Sunday Connection Coordinator. (Keep reading to learn what that means.) You'll see Laura with our elementary-age children on a weekly basis, and her hours will be focused on Sunday mornings only.

I will now be overseeing the larger vision of the Children and Youth Ministry (along with parents, the Children and Youth Committee, Session, and clergy). Laura is a gentle, kind person who clearly loves children and has a deep faith. I am thrilled to continue working with Laura, and that our children will continue to be guided and nurtured by her.

I will still be making music with the choir and directing the music programming. We are simply making some adjustments so that we

can better support children and youth programming in a way that makes the best use of our respective strengths. Moving forward, if you have a question or idea to share for our children and youth, you will now contact me or the Children and Youth Committee.

Music Ministry

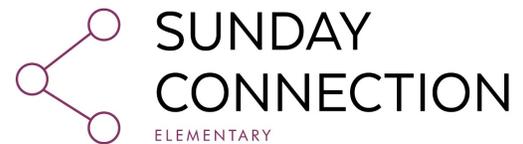
Stepping into this role will allow me to provide some consistency and vision. You might also be asking, "But you are the musician!" Yes, and I will continue to be the Director of Music. But did you know that I have served several churches in the capacity of Director of Music and Youth Ministries, as well as multiple internships in this area? I have even written curriculum for rotation-model Sunday School? I have a heart for youth ministry and am looking forward to serving in this way again.

In some of the planning conversations for this position change, staff and Session members have pointed out, "You can't do it all! You'll burn out!" First, thank you for caring for me and being concerned about how this will work. And, you're right! I can't do it all. Fortunately, I don't need to. We have an incredible music staff here at Central, and our talented pianist Steve Swanson is willing and able to be more involved in the weekly music, along with guest organists. We also, as you know, have amazing volunteers, and will be in very capable hands as I shift some of my energies.

You might also remember that we received a grant from the Presbytery for \$20,000 to hire a year-long position to help us learn more about the depths and breadth of Black sacred music. That will also take some of the weekly tasks off my plate. This isn't necessarily a long-term solution. We will need to see how it goes, learn what works and what doesn't, and re-evaluate as time goes on.

Children's Ministry

So, what does this mean for our children and youth as we look forward? Here are some things we will be working on in the near future:



This activity will take place on Sunday mornings following worship's Time for Children. Typically led by Laura Walls upstairs in the education wing, this will involve our elementary-aged kids learning about the Bible story, doing an activity or craft, praying together, and talking together about what may be on their minds.



Think of this like long-term preparation for confirmation through graduation, equipping our children on their faith journeys. This begins with blessing the birth of a baby with

a rose on the communion table, and continues through Baptism, nursery care, receiving of Bibles, and learning important elements of our faith, such as:

- Bible Basics
- Stories and characters of the Old Testament
- Jesus's life
- Parables and Leaders of the New Testament
- Sacraments and Elements of Worship

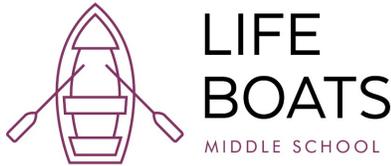
This is obviously not an exhaustive list, but sample concepts that we believe are good building blocks to understanding our faith.

We will provide expectations and opportunities for our children to learn these concepts and then share them in worship. An example of this may be that we help our 3rd graders learn The Lord's Prayer and then invite them to lead it in worship on a specific Sunday. This would provide the opportunity for us all, as a community of faith, to encourage our children and celebrate with them.

Youth Ministry

I have only known youth ministry to be effective and meaningful when it is offered separately to age-appropriate groups (in other words, separate Middle School and High School groups) and also on a

regular, consistent basis. Starting in March, we will begin this approach with the following:



Following the service on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month, middle schoolers are invited to a time to learn, play, pray, and be perhaps a little silly together. Typically, this would be for 6, 7 & 8th graders. However, during this transition year, we will also be inviting those in 5th grade to join.

Together, we will dive deep into things that are important to the faith lives of middle schoolers and find community and connection together.



In the evenings of the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month, from 6:30 – 7:30 pm, our high schoolers (9 – 12th graders, and current 8th graders as we have a transition year) will meet – sometimes at church, sometimes out in the community. I look forward to hearing what is on the hearts and minds of these teens and finding

ways we can support them on their faith journeys.

Share Your Gifts

It goes without saying that the last few years have been tremendously difficult for our children. They have had to take on the burden of COVID-19 in unique and challenging ways, and parents have had to navigate a way forward making extremely difficult decisions, often unsure of what the next days bring. I know that as a faith community Central Presbyterian Church is ready to step up and be a part of the lives of our young people.

Are you a storyteller? Do you enjoy playing games with children? Do you like craft projects? Do you like to bake goodies to share with teenagers? Do you have a heart for the very young? If so, please let me know if you are willing to embrace this time and offer yourself as a volunteer. (Please note that all staff and volunteers that work directly with our young people will need to be fully vaccinated and undergo a background check, per Session policies.)

As we embark together on a new chapter in the life of Central, I ask that you keep the Children and Youth Ministry in your prayers, and that you offer what you can to ensure our young people know how very much they are loved.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Food Shelf Drive

[FROM LEON OMAN]

Central's Coordinated Mission Committee is sponsoring a donation drive at Central this month to benefit the Department of Indian Work food shelf, a program of Interfaith Action (our partner in Project Home).

High priority needs for donation are:

- Health(ier) Snacks – like nuts, granola bars, real fruit snacks, and popcorn
- Cooking oil, flour and sugar

Please bring donations to church on Sundays, February 13 or 20. Financial donations can also be made in the form of a check made out to Interfaith Action. Please write "Dept. of Indian Work" on the memo portion of your check. Thank you!

Thank You Charrie!

[FROM DENNY REIMER & KIERA FAYE, CO-CHAIRS OF WORSHIP, MUSIC & ARTS COMMITTEE]

The Worship Music and Arts Committee wants to thank Charrie Willis for everything she has done for the committee and the congregation for the past six years, especially in preparing for communion.

Charrie has set up the table for communion for six years, sometimes with help from her husband Carl, and has only missed three communion Sundays in her tenure. Now she is stepping down, and a team of volunteers will take over the task on a rotating basis. Thank you, Charrie.



Where is Central in the Search Process?

[FROM REV. DR. CAROL REED]

The committee of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area that reviewed the work done on our Mission Study late last year has asked that we dig deeper into who Central is and where we believe God is calling us. This needs to be completed before we continue the search for a called permanent pastor.

STEPS SINCE THEN

In January there was another informational meeting about what it means to serve on the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC).

There was also a meeting in January of key leaders of the congregation (Elders, Deacons, ministry leaders actively serving), to address some of the questions that will help us prepare a supplemental report.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

There are weekly questions that are being included in the worship bulletin for a series of weeks that ask for the congregation to reflect on issues around Central's identity

and mission. (They are also posted online for those viewing the live-stream.) If you have not been in worship to see these or do not have access to a computer, you can still participate. Call the church office and we will get the questions relayed to you.

Watch the bulletin and e-connect throughout February to see the responses we are receiving.

SAVE THE DATE

Mark your calendars for Sunday, February 20 when the entire congregation is invited to share hopes and dreams for the church and the next called pastor. That day there will be a shortened worship service. Then, we will gather in small groups to work on the questions during the normal worship hour. If you are not comfortable or unable to worship in person that day, please let us know in the church office and we will get the questions to you.

Finally, as always, please prayerfully consider if you would be able to serve on the Pastor Nominating Committee or if you have a recommendation, please speak to Rev. Reed.

ANTI-RACISM FOR ALL AGES

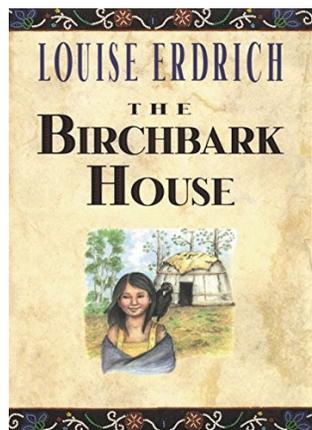
[FROM LOU BENDER, CONVENER
OF THE ANTI-RACISM TASK FORCE]

The Anti-Racism Task Force launched a project in January that features a congregational reading of *The Birchbark House*, a young adult historical novel by Minnesota's own Louise Erdrich. The book features Omekayas, a young girl of the Ojibwe, who grows up on an island in Lake Superior in the mid-1800's.

The ARTF chose the book to inspire a multi-generational exploration of the values and lifestyle of one of Minnesota's most prominent indigenous groups. Through the reading and associated events, we hope to know at a deeper level a people whose history has intertwined with the history of North American colonists in profound and often tragic ways. The Task Force believes developing a basic understanding of the Native American people will be helpful as we move into the more difficult conversations about issues such as land recognition and boarding schools.

Any individual or family who would like to read along is welcome to join at any time. Reading can be done alone, with a friend, or with family, and continues through the end of February or even beyond. The book is available at local and online bookstores, through local libraries, and as loaner copies to borrow from the church office.

During February, ARTF is sponsoring three activity options associated with *The Birchbark House*. You are welcome to participate in one or all as you continue to read!



Book Discussion

First, ARTF will lead an open discussion on Zoom for anyone who would like to talk about or hear about the book. Central members and friends of any age are welcome. The discussion will begin at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 17. We will keep it to 45 minutes to make sure everyone has time to get plenty of sleep.

To receive the Zoom link and participate in the discussion, email office@centralforgood.org. All ages are invited to share their thoughts, impressions, and learning.

Intergenerational Gathering

The second activity is strictly hands-on! An intergenerational in-person gathering immediately after worship on Sunday, February 27 will feature exploration of color and story through the creation of an Ojibwe bandolier bag. A basic design is provided by Cheryl Minnema, Waabaanakwadookwe (White Cloud Woman), a member of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, through the Minnesota Historical Society.

As you learn about the bag, you will add color and designs to reflect your own story. Materials are provided, and the bag is yours to keep. Just as for worship and all other gatherings in the building, we will remain masked for the safety of all who attend.

An Display of Art

Lastly, we will find a space to share an art exhibit - with YOU as the artists! We will take some pictures of the shoulder bags you make, and we also welcome other media of your choice.

As you read, put your impressions into an art form. Create a drawing, painting, sculpture, or whatever media you choose that expresses what you are learning or how the book makes you feel. Share your art with any ARTF member on or before February 27, and we will create a display to share your work with other readers, and with others in the church who may be listening in.

Have Questions?

The church office can put you in touch with Lou Bender or Leon Oman for more information. But really, just do it your way, and join in the activities you find helpful. The only expectation of the Anti-Racism Task Force is that we will all learn something helpful about Native American history and culture that we can take with us as we read the news, engage with people, and bring change to the racial climate in our community.



CENTRAL

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Thank You, Volunteers!

[FROM SHARON ZOPFI-JORDAN]

Thank you to everyone who volunteered last month to serve lunch at the St. Paul Opportunity Center.

Save the date to join us for our next date on Saturday, March 8. To learn more and sign up, go to www.centralforgood.org/volunteer.

CENTRAL IS *in the city for good!*