



the Spirit

DECEMBER 15/16, 2018



life together



“What shall we do?”

John the Baptist is blunt, his strong statement and stronger question in this weekend’s gospel reading is unsettling: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath that is to come?” How is that for an opening line

in this holiday season. Try that out at your next open house, “Merry Christmas, no, wait, who warned you to flee from the wrath that is to come?”

We easily sympathize with the crowds as they ask, three times in the verses that follow in Luke: “What shall we do?” It is our human reaction to stress and anxiety, What do we need to do to solve this problem? What needs to happen, so we do not face this, feel that or have to honestly tend to this moment? What if it is less about what we do, or what we expect others to do? What if it is more about who we are and who we are called to be?

John the Baptist’s answer to the “What shall we do?” questions must have surprised them. If you have two coats, give one away. In your work life, serve with integrity. In your personal life, live with a sense of satisfaction. Maybe John was guided by the deeply centering word we hear from the prophet Zephaniah, where the Lord proclaims: “At that time I will bring you home.”

Your home is in God, in the presence of the One who promises to be with you, always. During all of life’s ups and downs, when our first instinct is to do something, maybe the deepest perspective is not found in doing, but rather in being at home in God.

Yours in Christ Jesus,
Pastor Peter

100th Anniversary Year Highlights

Here are the upcoming key dates of celebrating our 100th Anniversary for you to note:

January 2019

12/13/14: Guest Preacher: Rev. Kristine Stedje and potluck on Sunday

February 2019

10: Annual Meeting
17: Historical Hymn Sing

March 2019

3: Family Fun Event - 2DefyGravity

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Worship

Please note the change for the early Christmas Eve worship. The early Christmas Eve worship is moving up an hour. The earlier time for this service will allow families to get home for celebrations and it provides the staff more time to gather with family and friends before returning for the late service.

- **Saturday, December 22**, 5:00 p.m. – Saturday Evening Worship
- **Sunday, December 23**, 9:00 a.m. – Advent/Christmas Festival in the great room; 10:00 a.m. – Holy Communion (one service)
- **Christmas Eve**: 3:00 p.m. Twilight Service of Blessing
10:30 p.m. Candlelight Holy Communion
- **Christmas Day**: 10:00 a.m. Contemplative Christmas Day Communion

PLEASE NOTE: Next Sunday is the 4th Sunday in Advent and we will have one service at 10:00 a.m. See the schedule above.

worship and formation

Guide to Prayer

Listening for God

The season of Advent continues. The prophet Zephaniah speaks God's good news into our anxious and often busy lives. In a culture that often drives us to constant problem solving, Zephaniah, chapter 3 speaks a word of restoration that begins in the notion of "home."

And I will save the lame
and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into
praise
and renown in all the earth.
At that time I will bring you home,
at the time when I gather you;
for I will make you renowned and
praised
among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes
before your eyes, says the Lord.

What does it mean to be "home" for you?
How can God's unconditional love be
your "home?"

Listening to your life

Dwelling in God as "home" is another way to celebrate the season of Advent. When we are "home" in God, we move from needing to do and enter the peace of being. Pause for a moment each day, light a candle to welcome God's presence. Take time to listen for God's word of unconditional love for you. Each day prayerfully ponder the question: how is God "home" for you? Where do you need God's unconditional love to be "home," a place where you experience restoration and renewal? Offer all of this to God in daily prayer.

Sunday Morning Adult Forum - December 16

Bangladesh Mission Trip Report

This Sunday the adult forum is led by the group that traveled on our behalf to renew and celebrate the long-term partnership with Lutheran Healthcare Bangladesh. Join Pastor Stephanie, Pastor Melissa, Bonnie, Sara, Carol, Tyra, Sara and Maddie as they share their insights and joy from the November trip this Sunday at 9:30 a.m. in the lower narthex. You can access the lower narthex by the elevator, or the welcome desk stairs and lower hallway. Coffee, water and tea is served in the lower narthex for the forum learning time.

The schedule for the rest of December is:

- **December 23**, 10:00 a.m.: Worship only, Advent/Christmas Festival in the great room at 9:00 a.m.
- **December 30**, 10:00 a.m.: Worship only, no adult forum

Advent Prayer Station and Companion Cards

You are invited to visit the prayer station in the prayer space in the back of the sanctuary. There you will find a nativity scene for your meditation and Advent Companion Cards. You are invited to deepen your Advent experience by choosing a companion (a nativity character like a shepherd, Mary, or wiseman) to journey with you. Select a card from one of the packets available in the prayer space and pray with it and/or take it home with you. Let God speak to you through your new companion and see what emerges as you listen. This week we will have healing prayer.

Sunday Community Lunch Discussion Tables

This week during the community lunch after the 10:30 a.m. service, there will be special discussion tables that you can join: dwelling in the word table; inquiry table; and ministry teams table. If interested, get your lunch and sit at any of these marked tables.

Tree of Life Christmas Party

Sunday, December 16, 6:00-8:00 p.m., MAVEN, 1621 E Hennepin Ave, Minneapolis

Come celebrate the season. There will be cookies, carols and a really bad Christmas pageant! Ugly sweaters welcome. If you have questions, contact Pastor Marissa at pastormarissa@treeoflifempls.org.

Family Camp

January 25-27

Looking for a fun, all-family weekend? Join us for Family Camp at Camp Wapo in Amery, Wisconsin the weekend of January 25-27. Families are encouraged to drive themselves to the camp and gather in the evening for fun and games, and maybe even a little sledding. On Saturday we spend the day skiing or snow-tubing together at Troll Haugen. We enjoy family time and fellowship at the end of the evening on Saturday night and gather for worship on Sunday morning at 9:30 a.m. The cost is \$70 per adult; \$45 per child ages 12-17; and \$35 per child ages 3-11. Children under 3 are free. (Skiing and Snowtubing are extra.) We would love to have you join us for a weekend of fun and time to get to know each other. Contact Pastor Stephanie if you have questions or to sign up.

community

A Millennial Look at Social Justice

Sunday, December 16 at 12:00 p.m., great room

You are invited to join Pastor Marissa Sotos and Seminarian Danielle Dunasky for lunch and a lively conversation about how the millennial generation is looking at issues of social justice and what they are doing about them. Marissa and Danni will not only share some of their own social justice passions, but will also tell us what is on the minds of their millennial friends. The conversation will be facilitated by Dr. Jim Hart.

Restoration Center Closed

The Restoration Center will close for the holidays on December 24 and reopen on January 7, 2019.

Restoration Center Annual Christmas Appeal

The Restoration Center is raising money for our annual Christmas appeal. Please consider making a special gift this season to help the many people who come through our doors looking for the grace of God, mercy, and assistance. Watch your mailboxes this week for a special blue offering envelope, but you can use an envelope in the pews and put it in the offering plate.

Sand on the Sidewalks and Pillar Painting

You will notice sand on the sidewalks throughout the winter months. We cannot use salt for the first year on the newly poured concrete (if we do it will void the warranty!). Sand is a good substitute for safety on iced walk ways, even if it is a bit messy and does not always look that great. Also, the pillars that surround the new addition do need to be re-painted and touched up. The contractor was not able to accomplish this before the weather turned cold. This will be completed in the spring.

Access Drop Offs

The north curb cut is designed for dropping off family and friends for worship. The loading dock is another designed drop-off location when you need to park and get out of the vehicle to help with the unloading. We are hearing that there are limits and challenges with these drop-off areas and are working to respond to make these options more workable and supported. One idea is to have members volunteer to support the loading dock drop-off area. If you are interested in helping before worship at the loading dock drop-off, please stop at the welcome desk and sign up. We will work out a schedule to help with hospitality and to make the new facility workable for all.

End of Year Giving and Holiday Office Closings

As you look toward your end of the year giving, please note that your gifts need to be postmarked by December 31 to be credited for this year's tax purposes. If you are interested in making a stock gift please contact Obie prior to the gift so we can help facilitate the process. Please note that the church office will be closed on Wednesday, December 26 and on Monday and Tuesday, December 31-January 1 for the holidays. If you or your family need pastoral care over any of the holy days, please call the main office and our after-hours answering service will connect you to the pastor on call.

Sign up at the Welcome Desk

Here are the current things you can sign up for at the welcome desk.



- OWLS January trip to see the Church Basement Ladies
- Pick up 100th Anniversary logo Items purchased online
- Volunteering to help with drop offs on Sundays before worship
- Household/family ushers
- Ushers for Christmas services

eSpirit

Stay up-to-date on the weekend happenings ahead of the weekend, with the weekly eSpirit newsletter. If you don't receive this electronic newsletter, please sign up at www.centralmpls.org or email Sara Masters at smasters@centralmpls.org.

Pastoral Care

When in need of pastoral care, please call the church office at 612-870-4416. In case of emergency on weekends and evenings, please call the church office and our after-hours answering service will connect you to the on-call pastor.

Parking

All three entrances are now open and ready for weekend worship. The automation for the parking entrances will arrive and be installed sometime around the New Year. You can enter off of 3rd Avenue at the south end of the lot, or use 12th Avenue in front of the church to access the new 4th Avenue entrance, or enter through the 15th Street gate. Thanks for your flexibility as this work is completed.

news and happenings

Congregation Council Update

The 2018-19 Central Congregation Council met on November 27. The meeting was called to order by President Sara Stensaas and began with Christ Care Prayers led by Pastor Peter. After adopting the November agenda and the minutes from the October 23 Congregation Council meeting, the Council received the financial reports ending October 31, 2018. Also received were updates on the following informational items:

- Building Renewal Project update
- Reconciling in Christ
- Strategic Planning update
- Nominating Committee update
- 100th Anniversary Year update
- Budget work update
- Program area updates/rostered leaders report: worship, formation, community and generosity.

The Council also heard staff stories from Mark Carroll and Karen Knox.

There were no action items at this time. The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m., after closing with Responsive Prayer for Evening.

Circle of Hope

Thursday, December 20, 11:30 a.m.

Circle of Hope will meet December 20 at 11:30 a.m. at Central with a program of Lessons and Carols, and a Christmas potluck to share.

A Different Kind of Book Club

Thursday, January 10, 1:30 p.m.

In January we will meet to discuss "Out Stealing Horses" by Per Patterson. In this story, an old Norwegian looks at his life and childhood during the German occupation and Norwegian resistance. Ardis Jacobson will be our discussion leader.

No Sunday Community Meals on December 23 and 30

Because of the holidays, there will not be any community meals on Sundays, December 23 and 30. Meals will resume on January 6.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16

- 8:30 a.m. Worship
- 9:30 a.m. Sunday School
- 9:30 a.m. High School
- 9:30 a.m. Adult Forum
- 10:30 a.m. Worship
- 11:45 a.m. Community Meal
- 11:45 a.m. A Millennial Look at Social Justice
- 1:30 p.m. Listening for God
- 6:00 p.m. Tree of Life Christmas Party (offsite)

MONDAY, DECEMBER 17

- 9:30 a.m. Free Store Opens
- 9:30 a.m. Augsburg Central Health Commons
- 10:30 a.m. Mental Health Open Hours
- 11:00 a.m. Worship
- 11:30 a.m. Community Meal
- 12:00 p.m. Bible Study

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18

- 10:00 a.m. Free Store Opens
- 2:00 p.m. Staff Meeting
- 5:30 p.m. Congregation Council

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19

- 10:00 a.m. Free Store Opens
- 1:00 p.m. Bible Study with Preacher
- 6:00 p.m. Bell Choir
- 7:15 p.m. Central Choir

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20

- 8:30 a.m. Street Voices of Change
- 9:30 a.m. Free Store Opens
- 11:30 a.m. Circle of Hope

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21

Building closed

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22

- 5:00 p.m. Worship
- 5:45 p.m. Saturday Evening Fellowship



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"SPIRIT" SUBMISSIONS
Submit items for consideration
by Monday at 4 p.m. each
week for the upcoming issue
to smasters@centralmpls.org

PRAYER REQUESTS
prayers@centralmpls.org

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