

THE CENTRALITE

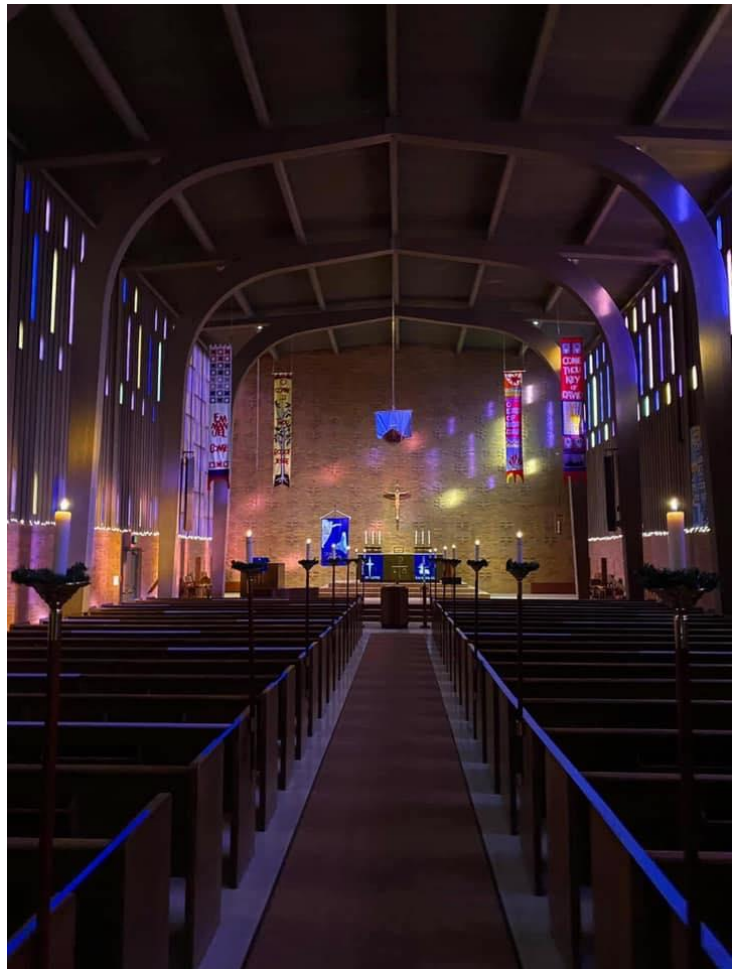
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Celebrating Members & Friends

Coming Up!



Central Lutheran Church, a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Oregon Synod, is a Reconciling in Christ community: We affirm that Christ has made us one body with many members, all sharing in God's wondrous grace and unconditional love.

We celebrate both the human variation and inclusive unity of God's family. Following Jesus' example, we embrace all of God's people regardless of ethnicity, physical and mental abilities, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, economic circumstance, and we firmly commit to racial equity.

With welcoming hearts, we invite you to join us in worship, education, fellowship, and service. Our mission is to be the hands and feet of Jesus by loving God and one another, nurturing faithful living, serving those in need, and sharing the Gospel.

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Celebrating our Ministries

Christ is alive and active among us! In this section of the Centralite, we highlight different ministries at Central and some of the faithful work being done. There will be some focus on things that are new or older teams trying new things, but also there is space to celebrate some of our longstanding ministries that continue to send the message of Christ's love to one another, the community, and the world.

New Members at Central!

On Christ the King Sunday, Nov. 23rd, we were blessed to welcome new members into our family of faith at Central Lutheran. Some were transfers from other churches, others new to Eugene, others who had been worshipping with us for some time, and one newly baptized. Let us welcome these new members of our family of God at Central!

Mary Sue Brown

Adriel Cazares

Tyler Cleveland

Jeanne & Kent Henriksen

Julian Jones

Peggy & Gary Neuhoff

Rose Schlewitz

We give thanks to God that we are one body of Christ together!

Quilting Sunday

This fall the Sanctuary was once again adorned with the beautiful work of Central's Quilters. This year, the quilters completed 175 quilts which were blessed in worship, boxed up after service, and then dropped off in Beaverton to the in gathering for Lutheran World Relief which then distributes them all over the world to people in need.

The value of the quilts for those in poverty, in refugee camps, and other desperate situations are many. First, quilts are often used to keep warm. But more than that, they are used for shelters, dividing rooms for family units,

and much more. What they are most, though, is handmade. When people receive a quilt, it is evidence of the humans hands from other places who have made these quilts. They are a human connection—and to those in refugee camps and in desperate situations, they are a message that others care about them. It is a profound way of being Christ's hands and feet in our world.

Thanks so much to all our quilters and their blessed ministry!



Blessing of the Wild Animals

As is our annual tradition on the feast of Saint Francis on the first Sunday of October, we had our special blessing for animals at both services. People were invited to bring their four-footed companions—or a photo of them if they were less social—to receive a special blessing. Some children even brought stuffed animals. It is a wonderful moment of our theology of our God sustaining the entire creation.

This year, we added something new. After the final hymn, all were welcome to go outside for a special blessing of all of the wild animals. Pastor Ben recognized that most of the animals in God’s creation are not pets but live outside of human control in every corner of God’s creation. We asked John Shields to write a new chant that could serve as a blessing for the wild animals. In it, we blessed the wild animals that we find magnificent like bald eagles, but also animals that we don’t honor highly but are necessary for life such as scavengers. We then had a special blessing for creatures that are struggling to survive like polar bears and honeybees. We then concluded with the promises of creational harmony from Isaiah who prophesied that someday the wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie with the kid in God’s peaceable kingdom.

This blessing emphasizes the miracle of life that persists in nature. Throughout the chant, the congregation continued to repeat the refrain, “God bless them, may they thrive, may they live in peace.”

Thanks John, for adding this rich musical aspect to our blessing of the animals and our worship life together! Watch the whole piece sung by John:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LuHjuLWl7o&list=RD_LuHjuLWl7o&start_radio=1



Fauré's Requiem on All Saints Sunday

Our All Saints Sunday was a deeply moving service. The first Sunday of November is dedicated to all the Saints. At Central our tradition is to remember Central members who have died since the previous All Saints Day. During the service, their names were read and the bells tolled as a candle was lit for each of the beloved saints from our community:

Mitchell Hammerstad (11/28/24)

William Edward Lewis (1/9/2025)

Karlyn E. Campbell (1/14/2025)

Sally Nill (2/5/2025)

Larry Post (2/7/2025)

Vera Margaret Theron (2/17/2025)

Donna L. Espeseth (4/2/2025)

John Alfred Anderson (4/2/2025)

Marcia N. Jarrett (4/6/2025)

Jeffrey Simas (4/17/2025)

Sharon Gubrud (5/17/2025)

John McCarthy (5/18/2025)

Mary Louise Stevens (7/12/2025)

Judith Johnson (8/29/2025)

Richard A. Anderson (9/18/2025)

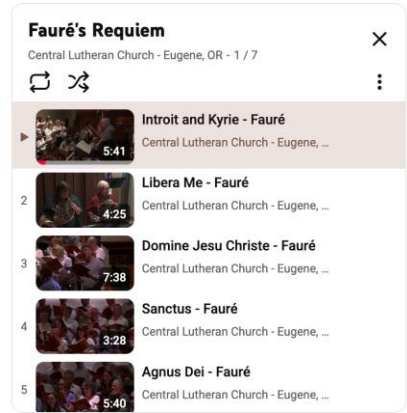
Fran Edman (10/29/2025)

Later in the service, all were invited to come forward and light a candle for the saints in their lives that they would like to remember and then to place the candle on the communion rail. Not only was this service meaningful for its deep theology, but also the music was tremendous. The Chorale was accompanied by various instruments and presented the full Requiem from Gabriel Fauré. It was a moving experience and helped bring expression to our grief over those who have died as well as our hope in Christ.

A line in the Requiem that is sung again and again, "*Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine et lux perpetua luceat eis.*" In translation: "Rest eternal, grant them, O Lord and let light perpetual shine upon them." It is a statement of the hope we have in Christ. But the beauty and power of the music brought alive by our Chorale, soloists, and musicians brought that message home in a way that was beyond words.

Thanks so much to ElRay and Lindsey and all of our musicians who made this wonderful service happen! You can watch the music of the Requiem on Central's youtube channel by clicking on the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82sSaVSOaP8&list=PLxBOBQPXj5L-KcFCatSTaEf3tsnvFz1H9>



A Candlelight Liturgy of Chant: Light & Hope Amid Our Deep Darkness

On October 19th, Central held a new candlelight service in the ancient Gregorian tradition. This service was inspired by the success that we have had with our Advent Lessons & Carols service, which provides an afternoon service with great music but without a sermon or communion. The service was built specifically for outreach—knowing there might be some who are interested in exploring worship in our space, but might not be ready to come to a full Sunday morning worship service.



This is the second time we have offered this service. The first time was during Lent in the Spring as a grand experiment. We hoped that it would draw many in the community. The service was a remarkable success. Our attendance increased from 120 in the fall to over 150 in October. Further, this time, the service was partially funded by a “Creative Ministry Grant” from the Oregon Synod.

ElRay says the goal of the service was “Experiential – to help meditate and get away from our daily lives and hear ancient medieval chants that have continued in churches for 1500 years.” The peace and hope in the space was remarkable. As worshipers gathered, they discovered a very dark sanctuary – aside from some lights on the side of the building, there was no artificial light at all—everything was candles. The programs were made so that people could take them home and reflect upon the service—because it was too dark to read them in the sanctuary itself.

The service began with a candlelight procession from the *schola* with 9 cantors. There was no accompaniment aside from a few handbells to provide the singers their pitches. Worshipers experienced the purity of sound that comes from the mystery of God in a worship space. You can watch the recording of the service here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=83lmEsn3lz4&list=RD83lmEsn3lz4&start_radio=1

This service will happen again! Join us on February 8, 2026 at 7pm for another experience of light and hope.

Chi Rho Series

November 21-22 our annual Chi Rho Series was held at Central and Bushnell University. Our speaker this year was Dr. A.J. Swoboda who spoke on the topic of “Slow Theology: Thinking About God at the Speed of Love.”

Dr. Swoboda emphasized the value in the Bible of slowing down. He made the case that God is often depicted as slow, such as being slow to anger. He also looked at the way in which God’s time can seem rather slow to humans, such as in the deliverance from slavery

in Egypt. He further looked at how much time Jesus spent being slow – walking, sitting, and separating himself in prayer.



This year, the Chi Rho committee changed the structure of the series. In the past, Chi Rho has been known as a series of “lectures.” This year, the term “lecture” was dropped as we wanted to emphasize that this was an opportunity to really interact with a scholar, not just hear a lecture. This was most exemplified in the Saturday morning workshop held on Bushnell’s campus which was a 3-hour discussion where we spent time not only having a more interactive conversation with Dr. Swoboda, but targeted discussion at our own tables to try and bring Slow Theology to our lives in a direct way.

Thanks to the entire Chi Rho Committee for organizing this event: Erin Mueller, Reed Mueller, Elizabeth Uhlig, & Gary Wolfe.

Confirmation in 2025

Our collaboration with United and Emmaus continues in a robust way with our Confirmation program. This year, Central has five confirmation students, three of whom are second year students who will be confirmed next October on Reformation Sunday, and two who are first year students. Joining with United and Emmaus, there are a total of 12 teenagers who are bonding with one another, supporting each other in life and learning, and just having fun with each other in fellowship.

In this iteration of Confirmation there is another element which is incredibly valuable. In addition to learning from staff, each confirmand has a “confirmation mentor.” This is a lay person from their own congregation who has agreed to meet with the confirmand a few times per year and share what living a life of faith is like as an adult.



Update your Details and Photo for the 2026 Directory

The 2026 Directory of members and friends of Central will be available in January. Please be sure we have your most up-to-date contact details and a photo of your household. You can email your information to churchoffice@welcometocentral.org or use the QR code to submit it. And, if you would like us to take your photo, please reach out to schedule a time for us to do so, or send us a jpeg of a picture you'd like to submit.



Women's Bible Study

The Central Women's Bible study is currently Central's only truly Hybrid meeting (in person and on Zoom). The group was our "pioneer" in this format and has found the place and system to make it work well. They meet 11am-noon each Thursday in the CLCW room (opposite the kitchen) as well as on-line via Zoom ([link here](#)). The group uses the ELCA Bible study series published in ELCA's *Gather* magazine. The group says it is an important support of one another and their life together in faith. All are welcome! No weekly preparation is required. Want more info? Contact Sally Diehm (sdiehm330@gmail.com) or Arlene Dietz (dietzal@aol.com).

From the Archive:

Written by Associate Archivist, Drew Haugen

My name is Drew Haugen, and I'm a life-long member of Central Lutheran. It's been my pleasure to assist Central's Archivist, Elizabeth Uhlig, with the sorting, cataloging, and storing of materials this past year.

Having been born into two Central families, I thought myself well acquainted with our church's history, but the Archives have taught me a great deal! They even reacquainted me with parts of my own history. Just last weekend, I came across a photo of myself taken nearly two decades ago when I was a student in the Confirmation Class of 2008. Some of our assignments had been saved as well (ungraded, mercifully) and reading through them placed me right back in the Terrace Room, pencil in hand. In adjacent folders, I found photos of my dad, aunt, uncles, and cousins, all of whom were confirmed at Central.

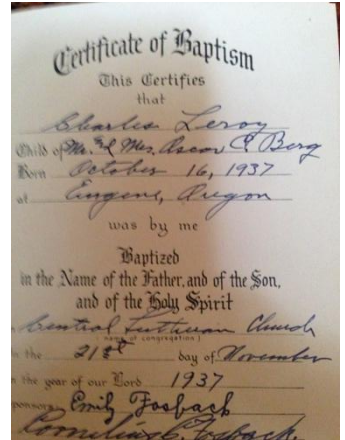


Simple artifacts like these take on significance when they're added to the Archives, where they link us to generations of members through the ages. I'm currently serving as Confirmation Mentor to Alex Hougland, a student in Central's 2026 Confirmation Class. Alex's photo will soon join mine as part of that collection, which now spans over 120 years.

If you have original Confirmation photos in your own family's archive—especially those from the 1960s and earlier—please consider sharing them with us! We can be reached by e-mail at archives@welcometocentral.org.

Archival Item from Lisa Berg:

Here is the baptismal certificate of her father, Charles Leroy Berg who was baptized at Central on Nov. 21, 1937. What a joy to know the legacy of the family of God at Central yesterday, today, and into the future!



Celebrating our Members & Friends

This section of the Centralite celebrates accomplishments in the life of members and friends of Central. Do you have something you would like to celebrate in the next issue of the Centralite? If so, you can submit it to the church office.

Clarine Bremer's 100th Birthday Party at Central!

Clarine turned 100 on October 11th and on October 12th, we had an incredibly festive celebration of her and her life between services in the Parish Hall. We give thanks to God for Clarine and who she is in our lives!



Tyler Cleveland's Baptism

Tyler, a student at UO, was baptized into Christ on Nov. 16th at the 11am service. We give thanks to God for who Tyler is and welcome him heartily into our community of faith!



Kiersten Knebel is Engaged!

Kiersten got engaged to Alex Willand! They're both "flying high" as Pilots, where currently New York City is their home-base. Congratulations Kiersten and Alex!



It's Birthday Season at the Koscho Household in November

Matthew's Birthday is Nov. 6th, Sandra's is Nov. 18th, and Michael's is Nov. 26th. They are going to be making (and eating!) an awful lot of cake this month! Congratulations and Happy Birthday!



Jenn Martin is Eugene Ballet's New Artistic Director!

With Toni Pimble's retirement, Jenn has stepped in as the new artistic director of Eugene Ballet! Congratulations, Jenn! She was the feature of a piece in *LookOut: Eugene-Springfield* that explains what she will be doing in her new role. Read that piece [here](#).

Upcoming Events

Advent Midweek Series: Light in Our World: Tuesdays Dec. 2nd, 9th, and 16th. Join us for Soup Supper at 5:15pm, Adult Education and Children's Music at 6pm, and Holden Evening Prayer Worship at 7pm. (Note: Please let the church office know if you can provide a crockpot of soup for one of our Together Tuesdays during Advent.)



A PROCESSION OF *Lessons and Carols* FOR ADVENT

Sunday, December 7, at 4:30 p.m.

welcometocentral.org

Featuring the Central Chorale, Handbell Ensemble, Brass Ensemble
Children's Choir, Harp, Violin, and Cello

Central Lutheran Church
18th and Potter Street, Eugene, Oregon



Bach Memorial outside St. Thomas Church, Leipzig, where Cantata 140 was composed and first presented in 1721. Picture taken during my visit visiting there where hugging the memorial was a frequent sight. AESC

Cantata 140 Wachet auf (Wake, Awake)

Johann Sebastian Bach

Adagio for Organ and Strings - Albinoni

Sunday, December 14, 2025
8:30 & 11:00 a.m. services

The Central Chorale with Soloists and Chamber Orchestra
Dr. A. ElRay Stewart-Cook, conducting

CENTRAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
18th and Potter Street
Eugene, Oregon

**Blue Christmas
Service, Saturday
Dec. 20 at 7pm in the
Sanctuary or via
Livestream**

This special service is designed for those for whom the holidays are a difficult time - especially those experiencing grief and loneliness. Join us for a service of acknowledgement and healing with the light of the Christ child guiding our way.



**Join us for
our
Christmas
Services**

- Christmas Eve Manger Service at 4:30pm, Dec. 24 in the Sanctuary or via Livestream
- Christmas Eve Festival Worship at 9:30pm in the Sanctuary or via Livestream
- Christmas Day Worship at 9am 12/25 in the Sanctuary or via Livestream

