



Blessing of the Backpacks Sunday, August 11

It is that time of year again! Pencils, paper, crayons and other school supplies are flying off the shelves as families prepare for a new school year. On Sunday, August 11, all students – young and old – are invited to bring their backpacks, school bags, or lunch boxes to worship for a special blessing as school begins. Together we will pray for God's blessing on those bags, as well as the students who carry them. We'll be reminded that God goes with us wherever we go and whatever we do – even school – and kids will receive a special reminder of that promise! (Yes, this is for college students too.)

Middle & High School Youth Pool Party Friday, August 23, 6:30 p.m.

Middle AND high school youth are invited to a swimmingly good time at Pastor Mari & Gary's house as we kick off another fantastic year of youth ministry with a pool party! We'll eat, swim, and talk together about plans for the year. Parents are also invited and encouraged to be there. Join us at Pastor Mari & Gary's house (15849 E Stratford Row – about 2 blocks northwest of Central and 159th) on Friday, August 23, at 6:30 p.m.



Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord! Psalm 150

It is always time to worship our Lord in song in the Reformation Lutheran Worship Choir. Our choir is volunteer, no audition is necessary. The voice you are born with is God's gift to you; the use of your voice is your gift to God!

Rehearsals are scheduled between services on Sunday mornings at 9:45 a.m. by the piano in the Sanctuary. We will praise our Lord in song on select Sundays throughout the year from September through May at both the Traditional and select Rise services. Make plans to attend our first Fall rehearsal on Sunday, September 8. In addition to Worship Choir participants, we are seeking 3-4 vocalists for special vocal ensemble performance opportunities throughout the year.

Our Reformation Lutheran Handbell Choir welcomes youth and adults to rehearse and ring with us on Wednesday nights in the balcony at 6:30 p.m. beginning Wednesday, September 4. Our Handbell choir performs regularly at the Traditional and select Rise worship services as well as special events throughout the year from September through May with a break during December. Contact Director of Choirs, Kristal Cutler, for more information.

Big God!

One of the sessions I attended at the Wild Goose Festival was led by John Pavlovitz (a pastor, author, and the blogger of “Stuff That Needs To Be Said”). He started by leading us in singing, “Give me that old time religion; it’s good enough for me” and asking, “What do you do when it’s no longer good enough?”

Over the next few minutes, he led us through some of the comments he received when he asked this question of his blog audience: “What are some phrases Christians say that don’t make any sense?” These ranged from “God never gives you more than you can handle” and “God is so loving to forgive all our sins, except...” to “Love the sinner, hate the sin” and “I was blessed (when my neighbor’s house was destroyed by the tornado but mine wasn’t).”

At the end of that list of phrases, Pavlovitz said, “That God is too small!” This immediately reminded me of the J. B. Phillips book, *Your God Is Too Small*, which was first published in 1960 and was on my father’s bookshelf when I was growing up. Phillips wrote about destructive depictions of God (the policeman, the old man sitting in heaven, the perfectionist who demands perfection in all of us, God of the contract who blesses us). At one point, he wrote some cultural beatitudes:

Happy are the pushers: for they get on in the world.

Happy are the hard-boiled: for they never let life hurt them.

Happy are they who complain: for they get their own way in the end.

Happy are the blasé: for they never worry over their sins.

Happy are the slave-drivers: for they get results

Happy are the knowledgeable men of the world: for they know their way around.

Happy are the troublemakers: for people have to take notice of them. (p. 92)

Compare these with the beatitudes of Jesus in Matthew 5:1-12. (Go ahead, open your Bible and look at these again!)

Pavlovitz clearly is on the same journey as Phillips, but takes the argument much further. Pavlovitz explains that he grew up with two different simultaneous Gods. “One we want to be endlessly patient with our vacillation, to forgive our broken promises and perpetual failures, to tolerate our defiance and doubts, to be always ready with another chance... But when it comes to the sins of other people, we’re far more willing to believe in a Maker who sends traitors to sleep with the fishes, who puts them on ice and makes them disappear without warning or reprieve. We seek for ourselves the kind of mercy that we are so very hesitant to give to those who cross us” (*A Bigger Table*, p. 31). As we read those words, we can easily see the flaw in defining God(s) like that, but we are also convicted of doing just that.

When the psalmist tells us, “[God prepares] a table before me in the presence of my enemies,” the purpose of that is not to stick out our tongue at our enemies and say, “I’m here and you’re not!” Rather, I am invited to God’s table in spite of what my enemies may think, and my enemies are here in spite of what I may have thought.”

Junior Asparagus of the animated *Veggie Tales* series had the right idea when he sang, “God is bigger than the boogeyman.” But God is not just bigger than that which terrifies us, God is bigger than us, than our love, than our comprehension. It is an important lesson, and it’s worth repeating repeatedly!

Pastor Mari



The Church Council invites you to attend a cottage meeting this month. These meetings are an important step in our process of filling our vacant ministry position. Watch for more information.

Open Door Food Pantry



Thank you for your faithful contributions of food that continue to make a difference in the lives of others. Our focus food for August is:

Peanut and Other Nut Butters and Jelly

Because peanut allergies abound these days, consider bringing almond or cashew butter as well as peanut butter and your favorite flavors of jelly. Deposit your items in the grocery cart located by the door in Parish Hall.

Don't forget we ALWAYS have a need for canned meat and fish, canned vegetables and fruit, boxed macaroni and cheese, dried beans, cereal and oatmeal, sugar and flour, soup and crackers.

Women of Reformation Calendar

August 5 Blanket Makers, 9:00 a.m.

August 19 Blanket Makers, 9:00 a.m.

Rebecca Circle and Dorcas Circle
do not meet in the month of August.



Women's Night Out Tuesday, August 27 6:30 p.m.

Women's Night Out will be at Two Olives, 2949 N. Rock Road, on Tuesday, August 27 at 6:30 p.m. We would love to see you there!

Please join us for a fun evening of food and fellowship. If you plan to attend, please contact Martha Deines at 214-4414 by Monday, August 26.



Does not meet in August. See you in September.

Do You Have an Article for the September Ref Life?

Please e-mail us!

Deadline for the September *Ref Life* is August 15.

GOD'S WORK, OUR HANDS



Once again, along with all congregations of the ELCA, we are participating in God's Work, Our Hands. This year we will come together on Sunday September 8, following Traditional Worship, to participate in activities that will benefit our community. One of our projects is to make shopping bags for groceries and other shopping trips out of t-shirts.

To make these bags, we need t-shirt donations: new or used, and clean. The t-shirts do not need to be lovely to be useful. They may even have little holes in them! The big box in the Narthex is waiting for your donation! All donations will be gratefully converted into green alternatives to plastic bags and made available to you for a donation so that you may resist the ever-present plastic bags wherever you shop. So...you give away something that you want to get rid of, and you receive hope for the planet in shopping bags made from old t-shirts. Please donate often and soon.

We hope that you will plan to join us for a light lunch, activities, and fellowship that will lead to hope and help for others. Mark your calendars, grab your God's Work-Our Hands t-shirt, and join us following Traditional Worship.



Stephen Ministry

How can you benefit from Stephen Ministry? Contemporary society tends to take pride in being self-sufficient. We often see needing someone to talk to as a sign of weakness. From a Biblical standpoint, this is far from the truth. Paul wrote, "bear one another's burdens." He isn't asking you to care only for other people, he is also asking you to let other people care for you. Hopefully, should the need ever arise, you might be open to receiving the care of a Stephen Minister. You are not expected to bear a burden alone. Stephen Ministers are here to help. If you or someone you know would benefit from Stephen Ministry, please call Lotus Gerards at 683-8602.

Family Faith Experience

Sunday, August 18, 5:00 p.m.

Do you have a hobby you'd love to share? Have you been curious about learning a new hobby? If so, the Family Faith Experience on Sunday, August 18 will provide everyone with the opportunity to experience fun activities and meet new church friends. **Save the date on your calendar now and watch the church bulletin for more details.** It will be a fun-filled time for all.



Fifth Saturday Potluck

Join us for great food and fellowship each 5th Saturday of the month throughout the year. Our next 5th Saturday is later this month on August 31. Bring your favorite dish to share at a potluck dinner immediately

after the 5:30 p.m. service. Hope to see you later this month!



Just a Reminder...

From Our Church Council

Enjoy your summer vacation time, but please don't forget your church.

During these summer months, offerings tend to decrease and those who regularly volunteer are often absent from worship. We need you! If you're going to be away, we invite you to use bill pay or send your offering to the church office. If you can serve as a Communion Assistant or Sound Technician once (or more regularly) please contact the church office. We will train you and even offer you free refreshments after the worship service!



President Laurel Davis,
Vice-President Chris Steward,
Secretary Tanya Flores,
Treasurer Dulcinea Rakestraw,
Jon Bruntz,
Jane Camenzind,
Ali Davis,
Andrea Fuller,
Suzanne Koch,
Karen Pfeiffer,
Ben Walter,
Camilla Wilson
David Dorf, ex officio member
Pastor Mari, ex officio member



From the Service Board: Thank you, Reformation family, for signing the cards this summer for our sponsored Camp Tomah Shinga counselor, Kate Sundell. We were able to touch her with love and blessings several times each week. And we also sent her two "care" packages to help her through the hot summer. You all are terrific.

Thank you for your donations to Filling the Gap. We delivered boxes full of nutritious food at the end of July so that children would have food during the break between summer school programs and the start of school. We are blessed and we return that blessing!

From the Property Board: We had a good Work Day on Saturday, July 20. Several people worked in the meditation garden pruning trees, removing trees growing out of the shrubs, cleaning concrete and spreading mulch. We finished the day with lunch. The Property Ministry Board thanks those who worked: Susan Bachman, Laurel Davis, Raymond Drake, Kathy Drake, Cam Wilson, David Dorf, Derek Rindt, David Day and Gene Bowers. Our next Work Day for 2019 will be in October, so watch for details in the September Ref Life.

Save Your
Items for Our
Rummage Sale



Reformation Garage Sale

Mark your calendars...
...for an abbreviated Garage Sale on October 3, 4, and 5. The Service Board is organizing a smaller version of our historic garage sales so that you can give away old treasures and find new ones.

We will not be collecting clothing this year. Stay tuned for news on what and when to bring your treasures.



**THRIVENT
FINANCIAL®**

For the first half of 2019 Thrivent members have designated \$209 Thrivent Choice Dollars to Reformation Lutheran Church. If you want to learn more about how to direct Thrivent Choice Dollars or if you are eligible, please contact Thrivent Financial Associate Justin Carlson at 729-2631 Ext. 1

Community Breakfast Donations



A friendly reminder of needs for the community breakfast. As most of you know, Reformation helps to serve the breakfast on the third Saturday of each month at St. Paul's. Part of the event is guests selecting donated clothing etc.

Some of the items needed are as follows: seasonal items for this time of year, such as shorts, jeans, tee shirts, socks, underwear, and sturdy walking shoes. They can also use hygiene items, backpacks, wind-breakers/ponchos, and paperback books. There is a designated green tub in the Parish Hall for donations. Thank you for your continued effort to help in this ministry. It is an important one. If you have any questions, please contact Suzanne Koch.

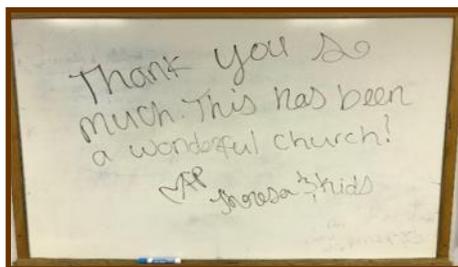


During the week of September 15-22, we will be welcoming guests from Family Promise into our church. I will again be asking for your help. This time, we will be joined by members of the First Wesleyan Church, who have agreed to be our support congregation!

It is important to remember that in order to volunteer directly with the families, you must complete training annually. Our initial training at Reformation was in November of 2018; however, since we will be welcoming First Wesleyan we will be holding our annual training on Tuesday, August 27, at 6:30 p.m. If you have questions or need more information, contact Dulcinea at (316) 737-9759

In the meantime, anyone (new volunteers or those needing an annual refresher) is welcome to attend a volunteer training at Pathway Church (2001 N. Maize Road, Wichita) on Monday, August 12, at 6:30 p.m.. If you are interested in this training, please contact Stacia.

Thank you to the volunteers who have served in the past. Each time, I can tell what a blessing the program is to the families it serves. I continue to be in awe of just how giving our members are of their time, talents and treasures through the support you all have provided. I hope you all are looking forward to another opportunity to serve!



Lessons Learned

From a Year Living Slightly More in the Grey

If you haven't had a chance to see Eric Jensen's most recent newsletter about his YAGM (Young Adults in Global Mission) experience, here are some words of reflection upon his return to the United States:

The return to life in the United States has been a strange journey. It has been nearly three weeks since I flew back into Wichita, Kansas, but I feel like I'm still living in a sort of limbo state. I ease and flow between comfort, maybe even complacency in some ways, and an intense discomfort with the United States and its culture.

Argentina and Uruguay aren't countries lacking in urban development, or Western customs. Argentina is actually the whitest, and likely most Westernized country in Central and South America. In that way, many aspects of life that might appear to be shocking after a year outside of the U.S. feel relatively normal. The food and diet hasn't been much of a transition, it didn't feel strange to get back behind the wheel of my '96 Camry after a year without driving, and my first worship service back at my home congregation, in more regards, felt like I'd never really left.

The differences between Argentina and the United States are subtle, where Argentinian life might be slightly further into the spectrum of grey than the U.S., so that upon our return, many small waves joint together to create a surprisingly large swell. That swell is abundance.

Everything in the United States feels a bit...more. Toilet paper is just a bit thicker, the neighborhoods are quieter, the houses and development are larger, the food waste is just slightly higher. But I see now how the ways we live our lives; the needless excess, is just overwhelming. And through it all there is this intense mentality of "oh well, what are we really to do?" and that's what's been the most disconcerting. The complacency in the face of our racism, xenophobia, and homophobia. The complacency in our consumption of truly massive amounts of food and commercialized material. The apathy towards a rhythm of life, built solely upon material gain, where enjoyment and freedom (supposed pillars of U.S. democracy) trail far behind. It twists me up inside.

I find myself asking why we choose to live this way, but it's frankly because we don't realize that's what we're doing. My return has been full of so much joy and love for my family, friends, and culture here in the United States, but I find myself resolved now against living for achievement. I love people, creation, good food, and playing music. Things that in Argentina, for all its style it's taken from the U.S., still hold higher priority than the Kansas I came from.

If you would like to read the whole newsletter, you can find it on Reformation's Facebook page. You are also invited to read Eric's blog at <https://arquitectodelcambio.wordpress.com>



*^ Mural Completo // Mural Complete (mostly)!
managed to finish my work despite the rain!*

AUGUST 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>28 Christmas in July 7:30 AM Rise Rehearsal 8:30 AM Rise Worship 9:30 AM Fellowship/Craft & Bake Sale 10:00 AM Traditional Worship</p>	<p>29 Church Office Open 9:00 AM Blanket Makers 6:00 PM Rise Team 7:00 PM Back to Basics</p>	<p>30 Church Office Open 8:00 AM Operation School Bell Training</p>	<p>31 Church Office Open 11:30 AM ROMEOs</p>	<p>1 Church Office Open 12:00 PM Primary Early Voting 6:00 PM Youth Ministry Team 6:45 PM New Hope Alateen 7:00 PM Ministry Boards</p>	<p>2 Church Office Open 12:00 PM Primary Early Voting</p>	<p>3 9:00 AM Primary Early Voting 5:30 PM Worship with prayers for Healing</p>
<p>4 7:30 AM Rise Rehearsal 8:30 AM Rise Worship 9:30 AM Fellowship 10:00 AM Traditional Worship</p>	<p>5 Church Office Open 9:00 AM Blanket Makers 6:00 PM Rise Team 7:00 PM Back to Basics</p>	<p>6 Church Office Open 6:00 AM Primary Election Day</p>	<p>7 Church Office Open 11:30 AM ROMEOs</p>	<p>8 Church Office Open 6:45 PM New Hope Alateen</p>	<p>9 Church Office Open</p>	<p>10 5:30 PM Worship</p>
<p>11 7:30 AM Rise Rehearsal 8:30 AM Rise Worship with Blessing of Back Packs 9:30 AM Fellowship 10:00 AM Traditional Worship with Blessing of Back Packs</p>	<p>12 Church Office Open 6:00 PM Rise Team 7:00 PM Back to Basics 7:00 PM Stephen Ministry Supervision</p>	<p>13 Church Office Open</p>	<p>14 Church Office Open 11:30 AM ROMEOs</p>	<p>15 Church Office Open <i>Ref Life Deadline</i> 6:45 PM New Hope Alateen</p>	<p>16 Church Office Open CSS W/ELCA Convention Wichita</p>	<p>17 CSS W/ELCA Convention Wichita 7:00 AM St. Paul's Community Breakfast 5:30 PM Worship - Holden Evening Prayer</p>
<p>18 CSS W/ELCA Convention Wichita 7:30 AM Rise Rehearsal 8:30 AM Rise Worship 9:30 AM Fellowship 10:00 AM Traditional Worship 5:00 PM Family Faith Experience</p>	<p>19 Church Office Open 9:00 AM Blanket Makers 6:00 PM Rise Team 7:00 PM Back to Basics</p>	<p>20 Church Office Open 9:00 AM Veteran Community Partnerships Kick-Off Training 7:00 PM Church Council</p>	<p>21 Church Office Open 11:30 AM ROMEOs</p>	<p>22 Church Office Open 6:45 PM New Hope Alateen</p>	<p>23 Church Office Open Vow Renewal 6:30 PM Middle and High School Youth Pool Party</p>	<p>24 5:30 PM Worship</p>
<p>25 7:30 AM Rise Rehearsal 8:30 AM Rise Worship 9:30 AM Fellowship 10:00 AM Traditional Worship</p>	<p>26 Church Office Open 6:00 PM Rise Team 7:00 PM Back to Basics 7:00 PM Stephen Ministry Supervision</p>	<p>27 Church Office Open 6:30 PM Family Promise Volunteer Training 6:30 PM Women's Night Out</p>	<p>28 Church Office Open 11:30 AM ROMEOs</p>	<p>29 Church Office Open 6:45 PM New Hope Alateen</p>	<p>30 Church Office Open</p>	<p>31 5:30 PM Worship with prayers for healing 6:20 PM 5th Saturday Potluck</p>