

# REFOCUS

As some of you know, this newsletter was renamed “Refocus” about 15 years ago in relation to the Refocus-Recommit-Reach Out Capital Appeal. Those who were members of the congregation at that time remember the significance of that appeal in helping them to not only give in a sustaining way to the congregation, but also grow in their understanding of stewardship. As the years have flown by, fewer members connect with that appeal, so we started thinking of possible new names, and then we came up with the brilliant idea to have a

## **Rename the Newsletter Contest**

Submit your newsletter name choice on a blue entry form and drop it through the mail slot in the finance office door (be sure to include your information on the back of the form so that you can be notified if you win the grand prize). All entries are due by March 15, 2018. The winning newsletter name will be seen on the April 2018 newsletter. Entrants must be at least 0 years of age and a member or friend of Reformation Lutheran Church. All rights reserved, of course.



### **40 For the Future**

The Service Board is once again sponsoring an effort to secure funding for Mision San Juan de Dios, our mission church in Planeview. Pastor Ivan Gonzales shepherds a small but vibrant group of worshippers. Please support this important ministry by contributing \$40 to represent the 40 days of Lent. Checks may be made out to Reformation Lutheran Church with Mision San Juan de Dios on the memo line and placed in the offering plate or brought to the office. Envelopes are available in the narthex and in the entrance to the sanctuary.

The Mision San Juan de Dios members are transient and quite often struggle to obtain the necessities of life that most of us take for granted. Most likely, they will always need the help of other ELCA churches in the area. Someone figured out that if every confirmed member of the Wichita area ELCA churches would give \$40 per year, their expenses would be covered. Please help keep the door open for these children of God by donating \$40 as part of your Lenten pilgrimage.

### **Open Eyes, Hands, Ears, Hearts, and Lives Midweek Lent Worship**

*Continues on Wednesdays at Noon and 7:00 p.m.*

The season of Lent provides us with the opportunity to re-focus our lives of discipleship. On Wednesdays during Lent, you are invited to join us for weekly midweek worship as we ask God to open our eyes, hands, ears, hearts and lives.

Worship begins at Noon and 7:00 p.m. – with lunch following the noon worship and dinner at 6:00 p.m. before the evening service. Join us as we seek together to open our lives to God’s will and work in this world.





*Rev. Dr. Mari Larson  
Senior Pastor*

*Rejoice in hope,  
be patient in suffering,  
persevere in prayer.  
Romans 12:12*



Have you noticed? Words that were once a kind response to someone’s bad news have become a verbal pariah. In the church, we often talk about people and situations being “in our thoughts and prayers.” In some churches, that’s actually the heading title of the prayer request column in the bulletin or newsletter. In our context, it’s a good thing!

Until recently, in the church those words didn’t carry the baggage that they now do out in the world. It’s too bad the new meaning (or the lack thereof) has overshadowed the old, but that’s our present reality. But let’s look a little deeper.

Someone or something is in our thoughts because we care about what is happening, and we can’t get it out of our mind. We remember baptisms and confirmations of those in our congregation. We remember those who are having surgery and those who are fighting cancer. Sometimes we even remember the anniversaries of deaths and funerals without looking at a calendar. Even though I never met Carol Ott, she’s often in my thoughts because Gary and I were in Wichita meeting with Reformation’s Call Committee on the day she died.

In the days after the school shooting in Parkland, Florida, our thoughts were with the victims and the families. Many of us read the New York Times or CNN stories about the victims or watched James and

Kimberly Snead talk about the young man they barely knew who lived with them and, on Valentine’s Day, took an Uber to a school and fired more than 100 rounds in less than six minutes. Our thoughts were with them.

I still believe, “I’m praying for you,” is a nice thing to say and an even better thing to do. When people accuse prayer of being empty, I think they need a refresher course on prayer. Prayer is conversation with God. We begin intercessory prayer by crying out to God. And God responds. Sometimes we are too upset to wait or watch or listen for God’s response, but God does respond. And, in that response, God sometimes calls us to act. Prayer is not passive! There are times when God directs us to make a phone call or write a letter. Other times, God challenges us to see things from a different perspective. Prayer changes situations, and prayer changes us.

While for some, “thoughts and prayers” may be empty rhetoric, these are words of depth and integrity. If you say it, mean it: You are in my thoughts and prayers!

Pr. Mari

*Beloved, pray for us.  
1 Thessalonians 5:25*

## Open Door Pantry Focus for March



It's Spring Break month, so let's help kids who may not have regular meals at this time with ingredients to make their own lunches and snacks. How about:

### ALL THINGS PEANUT BUTTER, JELLY & CHEESE

Peanut/almond butter, (jams and jelly too), peanut butter crackers, cheese crackers and granola bars of all kinds.

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.

Place your items in the grocery cart located by the door in Parish Hall.

## Best Times of Life



BTOL invites those who are 55 and older to attend our March 12 meeting at noon in the parish hall.

Our program speaker will be member Melvin Swanson, who toured "Luther Land" on a trip he took last fall. He will show us photos he took and describe his trip to Martin Luther's home country.

Please bring a covered dish to share and your own table service. To make reservations call Jolene Dougherty (776-2068) or Doris Moden (213-2068).

### Women of Reformation Calendar

*All activities are held at the church unless otherwise noted.*

<b>March 5</b>	Blanket Makers	9:00 a.m.
<b>March 15</b>	Rebecca Circle	10:00 a.m.
<b>March 19</b>	Blanket Makers	9:00 a.m.
<b>March 21</b>	Dorcas Circle	1:30 p.m.



## Filling The Gap

Once again Reformation will provide support to the Partners For Wichita's "Filling The Gap" program during spring break. Here are some ways you can help:

### Donate \$\$

You can donate to the program to help cover the cost of the lunches. Send donations designated for "Filling the Gap Lunches" to Partners for Wichita, 925 N. Waco, Wichita, KS 67203 or to Kansas Food, 1919 E. Douglas, Wichita, KS 67211.

### Donate Snacks

Give fruit or pudding cups, packaged snack bars, chips, or crackers to supplement the packaged lunch. We will have a donation box set up at Reformation through Sunday, March 11.

The Service Board and Partners For Wichita thank the members of Reformation for the continued support of this community project.

## Make Your Voices Heard!



The ELCA has invited us to discuss and offer our comments on "A Declaration of Our Inter-Religious Commitment: A Draft Policy Statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America."

If you are interested in being a part of this or if you need a copy of this statement, please contact Pastor Mari.

## Holden Evening Prayer

Holden Evening Prayer is now offered on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month at our regular Saturday Evening Worship at 5:30pm. The regular Holden service has been expanded to include a confession and Holy Communion. If you love the Holden liturgy, this is for you!

## Stephen Ministry



Lenten Thoughts from  
Martin Luther:

*I am unable with my works  
to redeem myself from sin,  
death and the devil.  
Nevertheless, God has given  
me his Son Jesus Christ,  
who is more precious than  
heaven and much stronger  
than sin, death and the  
devil. Through him you  
take sin and death from me,  
and grant to me all that  
belongs to him. You have  
established a kingdom  
through Jesus Christ. In it  
you will be merciful and  
will help forlorn and  
condemned sinners.*

*Thank you, O God.  
Without cost and out of  
pure grace you have given  
me this boundless blessing  
of your dear son. Amen*

If you or someone you  
know could benefit from  
Stephen Ministry, a  
confidential one-to-one  
ministry for people who  
are lonely, grieving, ill or  
stressed, call one of the  
following Stephen Leaders  
for information:  
Anita Dorf (210-9124),  
David Dorf (208-4064),  
Lotus Gerards (683-8602),  
Marsha Sears (634-6101).

Thank  
  
You

I have been overwhelmed by loving care and kindness in the days following the death of my husband, Tom Cronk. Many thanks for all the support, offered in so many ways by my church family. We are blessed to live together in this community of faith. I am more grateful than I can say.

Dallas Cronk

## ENDOWMENT *fund*

The Reformation Mission Endowment Fund was established in 2000 and the earnings on the fund provide grants. Requests for funding may come from programs that further the mission of Reformation Lutheran Church or the broader ELCA.

Any individual or group interested in requesting funds for 2018 should pick up an application in the Reformation office, complete it, and return it to the office by APRIL 15. Soon after that, the Endowment Committee will meet to consider the applications and award grants based on the amount of money available this year in the fund.

Ruth Ann Koepsel, Endowment Committee Chair

## Lenten Meals

During this season of Lent, we have been blessed by some incredible meals surrounding our midweek worship opportunities. We are still in need of volunteers to cover lunch and dinner on Wednesday, March 21. Would you be willing to make one or both of those meals? There is a sign-up sheet attached to a pillar in the narthex, and if you have any questions, you may contact one of the members of that ministry board – Ken Hobart, Angela Davis, Jane Camenzind, Camilla Wilson, or Pastor Kristin. Thanks in advance for serving in this way!



## Family Promise Training *Sunday, March 11* *2:00 p.m.*

Family Promise is making progress in recruiting others to join us as host congregations in the second rotation, with the most recent addition being Christ Lutheran.

However, they still have a way to go, so it will still be a while before we begin hosting. In the meantime, we have the opportunity to be involved at the day house and through other aspects of their ministry. Training is required before volunteering in any way, so we are offering a training here at Reformation on Sunday, March 11 at 2:00 p.m. Contact Gary Hoepner if you are interested in attending.



## **First Communion Preparation**

***Sunday, March 25***

***12:30-3:30 p.m.***

Christ invites us all to his table! Any young person, regardless of age, who wishes to begin receiving communion is welcome to come and explore this awesome mystery on the afternoon of Palm Sunday! Children and their parents will learn more about communion in engaging ways, including baking the bread that will be used for worship on Maundy Thursday. If you believe your child is ready to receive communion, plan to bring them to the class. RSVP to the church office (634-0586 ) by March 22. If you have questions about first communion, please contact Pastor Kristin.



## **Good Friday Family Faith Experience**

***Friday, March 30***

***4:00 p.m.***

Holy Week is rich with powerful stories about the depth of God’s love for us. But sometimes those stories and the worship services shaped around them can be difficult for little ones to understand. In order for families to fully enter into the wonder and power of this week, you are invited to a special experience on Good Friday afternoon. Together we will talk about Jesus dying for us through hands-on experiences, song, and the Spark Story Bible’s version of the Good Friday story. Join us as we embrace this story in a family friendly way.



- March 24      “Palm Saturday” Worship at 5:30pm
- March 25      Palm Sunday Rise Worship with Procession (weather permitting) at 8:30am  
Palm Sunday Traditional Worship with Procession (weather permitting) at 11:00am
- March 29      Maundy Thursday Noon Holy Communion Worship  
Maundy Thursday 7:00pm Worship with Foot Washing, Prayer, and Stripping of the Altar
- March 30      Good Friday 7:00pm Service of Darkness and Sorrow
- March 31      Easter Vigil Worship at 7:00pm
- April 1        Son-Rise Worship at 8:30am  
Traditional Worship at Brass, Organ, Handbells, and Choir at 11:00am

***(Maundy Thursday and Good Friday offerings are designated for Family Promise)***

**Winter Jam**  
**Friday, March 9**  
**7:00 p.m.**

Christian music's largest annual tour, Winter Jam Tour Spectacular, returns to INTRUST Bank Arena on Friday, March 9 at 7:00 p.m. Doors open at 6:00 p.m.



Grammy-nominated rockers Skillet will headline with special guests Kari Jobe (featuring Cody Carnes), Building 429, KB, Jordan Feliz and the tour host NewSong. Pre-Jam Party artists include emerging artists Dan Bremnes, Mallery Hope and Westover. Author Nick Hall will be the speaker and popular comedian John Crist will add to the evening.

Middle and high school youth are invited to join Pastor Kristin and Ellie Keppy for a fun evening of music and entertainment. Tickets are \$15 at the door. RSVP to PK (634-0586) by Thursday, March 8.



**Mark your calendars!**  
Shipwrecked Vacation Bible School  
is coming to Reformation—  
July 23-27, 2018!

Our VBS team will also be hosting a VBS FunShop on Saturday, March 3 for any area congregations that are also using Group's Shipwrecked curriculum. If you have friends whose churches are also using Shipwrecked this summer, encourage them to sign-up for this informative and helpful training on the Group Publishing website!

**Mulch Day!**  
**Saturday, March 24,**  
**10 am-2 pm**

The Property Board invites you to help spread mulch in preparation for Easter on March 24 from 10 to 2. All are welcome (some of our best mulch spreaders have been under 18 years of age!) Meet by the main entrance of the church.



**Thrivent Choice Dollars**

The Thrivent Choice® program gives eligible members of Thrivent Financial the power to recommend where some of the organization's charitable outreach funds are distributed annually, using a vehicle called Choice Dollars®.



Since its inception in 2010, Thrivent Financial has provided more than \$330 million in charitable outreach funds through the Thrivent Choice program to help support the initiatives of churches, educational institutions and other nonprofit organizations, including Reformation Lutheran Church, Camp Tomah Shinga, Mision San Juan de Dios (listed at Partners Ministry) and the Wichita Children's Home. You can designate all of your Choice Dollars to one organization or split them up between several. **All Choice Dollars must be designated by March 31.**

For more information about the Thrivent Choice program and Choice Dollars, visit [Thrivent.com/thriventchoice](http://Thrivent.com/thriventchoice), call 800-847-4836 and say "Thrivent Choice" when prompted, or contact your Thrivent representative.

**Do You Have an Article for the newsletter?**

Please e-mail Debbie or leave in the office mailbox.  
Deadline for the April newsletter is March 15.

## Welcome to the Table Kitchen Renovation Dinner

*Thursday, April 19, 5:00 p.m.  
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Wichita*

All are invited to the Welcome to the Table Fundraiser dinner on Thursday, April 19 from 5:00-7:00 p.m. at St. Paul's Lutheran Church. The event will also include a silent auction. Tickets will be \$20 each and will be available at each of the Wichita area ELCA churches.

Outback Steakhouse will be preparing the grilled chicken and steak meal and there will be salad and vegetables and dessert. We plan to have a ticket coordinator at each church and tickets will be available beginning March 4. Write ticket checks to St. Paul's with "dinner ticket(s)" in the memo line. People can also purchase tickets through PayPal via St. Paul's website at [stpauls-wichita.org](http://stpauls-wichita.org) and put "dinner ticket(s)" in the comments. No ticket sales "at the door." The deadline to purchase tickets is April 8. Contact St. Paul's at 316-263-0810 if you have questions.



Our fundraising to upgrade and renovate the kitchen where St. Paul's and Area Ministry 5 partner churches prepare the weekly Community Breakfasts serving hungry and homeless neighbors, including a recent boost, has brought our total raised to date to over \$60,000 with many generous donors, individuals and congregation, and friends of the Community Breakfast contributing! Join in the celebration by attending the dinner!

We are counting on our supporters in Area 5 churches to donate items to support the silent auction. (Gary Werbowski has already donated something in wood.) Don't be shy – hit up your friends, places you shop, eating establishments you frequent – anyone or any place that you think would be willing to donate an item or gift card. **Or** you can create a gift basket to contribute. **OR** you can donate money and we will shop for you to make a basket.

On donated items, please indicate approximate value, contents (if a gift basket), donor name and contact information. We need all items by April 15. So that we have an idea of how many items to prepare for, please contact Kris Knuth to indicate what you are donating and to make delivery arrangements (text or call 518-5034).

If you need basket ideas, visit the Gloria Dei Facebook or web page for a list. We so appreciate your help and really need your support to make this a huge success!

## Camp Tomah Shinga

Summer is just around the corner, and camp at Tomah Shinga is a great way to spend part of that summer! Confirmation students will be attending the confirmation camp, July 15-20 (please register ASAP if you have not already), but there are opportunities for students of all ages, beginning at 1<sup>st</sup> grade!

There is also a great opportunity for families to experience camp together through a Family Camp Weekend. As much fun, faith, and camp will be packed into this 3-day mini-camp (July 1-3) as possible.

Tomah Shinga's traditional week-long summer camp is filled with opportunities for youth to have fun while exploring their faith on a deeper level. Worship and bible studies are a key component to the ministry. While exploring our faith is the most important part of camp, there is plenty of time to sing around the campfire, swim in the pool, do high and low ropes, explore 840 acres of beautiful land, and a thousand other things to have fun while building friendships that can last a lifetime and growing in faith.

Plan now for a week at camp to be part of your summer. If you are concerned about costs, scholarships are available. Contact Pastor Kristin (634-0586).

You can see the full Tomah Shinga schedule on their website ([www.tomahshinga.com](http://www.tomahshinga.com)) and can register now!

