

March 2026
Reformation
Lutheran Church



Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

When the Mirror Is Marked with Ash
Rev. Dr. Ralen M. Robinson

A Lenten Reflection

On Ash Wednesday, I step forward and feel the cool touch of ashes pressed on my forehead. Later, when the church is quiet, and my thoughts have settled, I catch my own reflection in a mirror. There it is, stark, undeniable. The cross. The dust. The smudge.

A mirror usually tells me familiar stories. It reflects the face I know so well, the lines I have earned through laughter and pain, the expressions I practice, the image I've learned to carefully manage. It shows me who I think I am, who I present to the world, and who I sometimes feel pressured to become.

But it cannot show me who God is shaping me to become.

The mirror reveals the surface.

The cross reveals the truth.

Ash Wednesday confronts me with what no mirror can fix: my mortality, my brokenness, my desperate need for grace. The ashes are not cosmetic. They are not enhancements. They are honest. "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." The smudge interrupts the polished version of myself I try to show the world. It unsettles my illusion of control. It reminds me, life is fragile and finite. Death is not an "if," but a "when." And yet, even in that penetrating truth, there is promise. Because while the mirror reflects what is fading, The cross proclaims what is eternal.

"Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven." Matthew 6:1

Lent is not about improving my reflection. It is about surrendering my heart. Jesus warns me in the Gospel of Matthew not to turn faith into performance, not to parade my piety or polish my righteousness. The cross on my forehead is not a badge of spiritual achievement. It is a sign of dependence. It is a sign that I am not alone. I spend so much of my life trying to keep the mirror clean spiritually and literally. It can be exhausting. And I know I am not alone. Lent gently says: Let it be smudged. Let the truth show. Let me be honest about my need and my hope.

To bear the cross is not to display it. It is to live it, every day, in my ordinary moments. It is forgiving when resentment would be easier for me. Serving when no one is watching me. Giving without needing credit or applause. Praying quietly, without an audience. The world teaches us to curate an image. Yet, Christ calls us to develop a heart. The ashes have wash away. It's been weeks since I've borne the cross. It's been weeks since I've said the words. But a life formed by mercy, humility, and love that mark endures. Dust becomes you.

So, when I look into a mirror marked with ash, I see both my fragility and my belonging. I see my mortality, and I see grace that holds me. I am not self-made. I am God-made. Formed from the earth. Held by mercy. Defined by love.

upcoming events

Notable Church Events

- Tuesday's in March 9:00 a.m. Blanket Makers
Tuesday's in March 5:30 p.m. Bell Choir Practice
Tuesday's in March 7:00 p.m. Reformation Singers Practice
- March 1 9:45 a.m. Fellowship Board Meeting
March 3 7:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m. Special Sales Tax Voting
March 4 **6:30 p.m. Compline Service**
March 5 6:00 p.m. Worship Board Meeting
March 7 5:00 p.m. BINGO and Baked Potato Bar
March 8 **Daylight Savings Time Begins - Change your Clocks**
March 9 6:30 p.m. Ladies Night Out
March 11 10:30 a.m. InReach Board Meeting
6:30 p.m. Compline Service
March 12 10:00 a.m. Rebecca Circle
March 13 12:00 p.m. Assistance League Committee Mtg.
March 14 4:00 p.m. Mision San Juan Event
March 17 7:00 p.m. Church Council Meeting
March 18 1:00 p.m. Dorcas Circle
6:30 p.m. Compline Service
March 23 11:00 a.m. Assistance League
March 25 9:30 a.m.– 6:30 p.m. Lifeline Screening
6:30 p.m. Compline Service



**HOLY
WEEK SERVICES**

29 PALM SUNDAY
MAR 8:30 AM 11:00 AM

2 MAUNDY THURSDAY
APR 7:00 PM

3 GOOD FRIDAY
APR 7:00 PM

5 EASTER SUNDAY
APR 8:30 AM 11:00 AM

Christ in Your Home

Pick up the latest edition in the narthex.



Take a copy home with you!



If you would like to order an Easter Lily for Easter. The cost will be \$12. Orders must be in by March 22nd.

Interested in becoming a member, or know someone who is?

If you want more information about membership at Reformation, contact Rev. Ralen Robinson at revralen@gmail.com or info@refluthks.org



We have the blessing of incredible music available to us once again this Easter season. Just in case you are not aware, our own ELCA Liberal Arts College in Lindsborg, KS, Bethany College, presents two opportunities. On Good Friday, March 27 beginning at 7:30 p.m. the amazing Bach's Passion According to St. Matthew will be presented at Presser Hall. If you have not gone to this production, place this on your calendar for your Good Friday's remembrance of Jesus' passion. Then on Easter Sunday, March 29, Handel's Messiah will be presented at 3:00 p.m in Presser Hall on the Bethany College campus. This presentation of the Messiah is the longest running continual performance of Handel's Messiah. Together these two performances are the centerpiece of the Annual Messiah Festival. This festival is recognized nationally for the quality of these important oratorios.

In addition this year Bethany will provide two opportunities to see and hear about the *Saint John's Bible*. *The Saint John's Bible* is the first completely handwritten and illuminated Bible to be commissioned by a Benedictine abbey since the invention of the printing press. The Bible was written on vellum and consists of seven volumes. A docent from the Hale Library at Kansas State University will show and talk about this very rare Bible. There is no charge for this presentation.

Plan to drive just one hour to Lindsborg for both the Holy Week musical presentations and the Saint John's Bible presentation. For more information go to www.messiahfestival.org.



Growing in Faith & Fellowship

Food Cart



March is the month that we collect **peanut butter**—all kinds of peanut butter. Our donations help food insecure families feed their children and others in the family. Check out the other products with peanut butter and select something more original, if you like—such as peanut butter cookies, peanut butter crackers, peanut butter bars, etc. Jelly or jam also might be a good addition. We will take your donations to the United Methodist Urban Ministries Food Bank to share with everyone who needs a little support from this ministry.

Community Outreach

We are mourning the loss of St. Paul's for many reasons, one of them being our long-time service of preparing and serving food to the homeless in the downtown area of Wichita. Thanks to Lynette Wetta and Susan Bachman we are searching for a new place in downtown Wichita to cook and to serve. Watch and listen for opportunities to get involved.

Collecting Clothing for the Homeless

Boxes remain outside the office window for your donations of items of clothing for the homeless. The items may be gently used or new. We make the items donated available at the community breakfast. We thank you for your generosity in providing much needed clothing for men and women.

Collecting for Family Promise

While we are not providing meals and sleeping services right now for Family Promise, we continue to be part of the overall program by providing needed home-settling items that you donate. You will find a container on the floor next to the Food Cart for any items you contribute. Think about what you would need as you settle in to a home after not having a home for a period of time. Any items you may be downsizing, such as sheets, towels, bedspreads, kitchen ware, etc., are welcome. We deliver the items you donate to Family Promise headquarters in downtown Wichita. Thank you for thinking of this incredible service opportunity.



Congratulations to Pastor Ralen on her Distinguished Alumni Award from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. She will be recognized at their homecoming in April 2026 as the recipient of the Emerging Voice Award.

February 2026 Council Recap

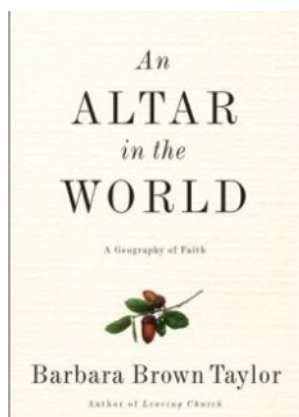
This month we begin the year by looking forward as we carry out the mission of Reformation Lutheran Church. This month we made an adjustment to our Executive Board, Korey Torgerson has stepped forward to take on the role as Secretary, we are extremely grateful for his willingness to serve in this role.

Financial Snapshot:

We have started off the year strong in giving, thank you all for your continued generosity and support. On the expense side we are managing things well and keeping expenses in line with anticipated spending (except for the high expense of the snow clearing in late January - but alas we can not control the weather).

Property:

We have worked with contractors to minimize some roof leaks and are continuing to address issues and they arise. Our own members are taking on some smaller projects. Just this week, thanks to Mark McKinney and Tim Allbritten, we have replaced the damaged handicap signpost and the deteriorating parking stop curbs.



March Book Recommendation:

An Altar in the World
by Barbara Brown Taylor

With warmth and wisdom, Barbara Brown Taylor invites readers to discover the sacred woven into everyday life. Through simple, embodied practices like walking, working, resting, and paying attention. She reveals how ordinary moments become holy ground. A gentle, thoughtful book for readers seeking to encounter God beyond church walls, right where they already are.

Stephen Ministry: The Courage to Receive Care



Stephen Ministry is a one-on-one confidential caregiving relationship with a trained Stephen Minister. Our purpose is to provide Christian caregiving to anyone who is facing a challenge such as illness, loneliness, unwanted change, etc.

Be Still...



Thank you to everyone who contributed to this years devotionals, those who edited the submissions, and especially Marcia and Ken for spearheading this ministry. Lenten Devotionals are available in hard copy in the Narthex, if you need a copy please leave a note or message in the office and we will coordinate getting a copy to you.

Reformation Happenings



March 4th - 6-7:30pm



Thank you to everyone who came out and supported our inaugural RefBistro. Last month the youth hosted an “authentic Italian” Valentine’s Dinner night. Through your generous support of this event the youth were able to raise over \$850 to put toward their travel expenses for the 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering being held in Minnesota.



March Madness Baked Potato Bar & Bingo

Join us on **Saturday, March 7th at 5:00 p.m.** in the Fellowship Hall for an evening of fun and fellowship. Reformation will supply the baked potatoes. A sign up sheet is available in the narthex to help provide toppings and other goodies. Stick around for some fun games of bingo and hopefully win one of the many prizes available!!!



Ladies Night Out

Mark your calendars for Monday, **March 9th at 6:30 p.m.** This month we will be dining at Bubba’s 33 (by the Towne East Mall), Join us for a fun evening of fellowship and food!