

# RE-FOCUS

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Lowell Michelson  
Senior Pastor

*"Love one another" wasn't just about being nice but meant learning to negotiate the real differences between people who were trying to live together."*

It's time to pull out Sonny Rollins *Saxophone Colossus*, Matthew Sweet's *Girlfriend*, and Van Morrison's *Days Like This*. One of the great joys of May is rotating out the "late-winter" music in favor of "springtime" music.

Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* can obviously be listened to all year long, as well as any Ella Fitzgerald, Lyle Lovett, and Ray Charles. But there are some cds and albums that are best listened to when spring is in full swing. Driving around with the windows down, mowing the grass, and eating ice cream outside each beg for appropriate soundtracks.

You may not like any of these recordings, which is fine. I won't make you listen to them. Our relationship doesn't depend on us liking the same music.

You and I are drawn to each other for another reason. And it isn't about what food we like or don't like, how much money we have or don't have, sports teams, education, or cultural heritage. Actually, it isn't about us at all.

In the midst of our differences, we are brought together and learn how to coexist because of Jesus Christ. It sounds fairly simple, but can be difficult to live. Part of the joy – and struggle – of life together is learning to appreciate our differences and to see beyond ourselves.

Soon after moving into the freshman dorm at Wittenberg University, I discovered that my roommate didn't rotate his music.

(Doesn't everyone do this?) I was pulling out my "Moving into College" music, when he mentioned that he didn't really listen to music.

Over the next months, we had to be intentional as we learned how to navigate our little dorm oasis. I wanted to wake up with John Coltrane, while he wanted to wind down late-night with television. Conversations and compromise served us well and helped us understand each other. Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, in his book *New Monasticism*, talks about our need to be in community. He suggests that life lived together is at the heart of Jesus' life and mission.

He says, "Whatever else Jesus may have been about here on earth, it seems pretty clear from all accounts that he came to make it possible for those who believe in him to be reconciled to one another and to God... 'Love one another' wasn't just about being nice but meant learning to negotiate the real differences between people who were trying to live together."

As our world and neighborhoods become increasingly diverse on all fronts, it is imperative that we engage each other with attitudes of hospitality and a willingness to listen in the name of Jesus. It is hard work, but we cannot retreat to ourselves. We need each other. Don't check out – tune in.

Listen – everyone has a story.

Discover what you have in common.

Celebrate how God is at work in others. Recognize that God is at work through you.

Peace.

Pastor Lowell

*The more genuine and deeper our community becomes, the more will everything else between us recede, the more clearly and purely will Jesus Christ and his work become the one and only thing that is vital between us. Life Together, Dietrich Bonhoeffer*





Kristin Neitzel  
Associate Pastor

This is an exciting month when youth of all ages are in front of us for a variety of reasons. During the month of May, we will celebrate the affirmation of baptism of thirteen of our youth, the high school graduation of eleven of our youth, and the participation of countless others in our Christian education over the past

year. It is a month when we cannot help but notice the presence of the youth of this congregation as we celebrate their commitment to God, their accomplishments, and their presence among us.

I was recently asked to serve on a task force with folks from all over Kansas and Missouri, addressing one of the four statements of what we hope to be about in mission together that arose out of the new Central States Synod purpose statement: Changed by Love, Sent in Love, to Serve. Those four missional directions are: igniting spiritual renewal, raising up leaders of all ages for the church, building bridges across the differences that divide our society, and inspiring and equipping people to be a part of what God is up to in their everyday lives.

Those of us called together to brainstorm how we might raise up leaders of all ages for the church had a great time talking about what it means to be a leader. We recognized that leadership comes in all shapes and sizes. Some people stand out as obvious leaders. Others lead in a more subtle way. Some have been leading for years, while others are already leading while they are still learning to walk.

So often, we talk about children and youth being the “future of the church.” And that’s true. They are.

But they are not just the future of the church; they are a vital part of the church right now – today. Youth are often our best evangelists, as they invite friends to come to church with them. They are leaders in worship as they provide music, carry the cross, collect the offerings, and read the scriptures. Their insights to life and honesty in speech (while sometimes concerning for their parents) can open our eyes to new ideas and new ways of thinking.

I was recently talking to a pastor friend about our practice of children’s sermons moving into the sharing of the peace. While I have always treasured that moment and think it is powerful for the kids to be a part of it, that conversation shed new light on the fact that we were offering an opportunity for leadership to some of our youngest members as we invite them to share the peace with the congregation. It isn’t just a “cute” moment during the service, but a moment in which those young voices lead the congregation as they share the great gift of God’s peace.

I once heard that in order for a youth to remain active in church as they grow up, they need three adults, other than their parents, to show interest in them at church. Let this month – when we lift up the youth of our congregation in a variety of ways – be the month that you begin to more intentionally reach out to these young leaders of today and tomorrow. Learn their names, show interest in their lives. Live into the promise we each make at every baptism – to support these youth and pray for them in their life in Christ. Celebrate who these youth are and who they will become, as we all continue to lead and serve together as the body of Christ!

God’s peace & joy,

*Pastor Kristin Neitzel*



## BISHOP’S FORUM

May 14 - 7:00 p.m.  
Reformation Lutheran Church

You are invited to an evening with Bishop Jerry Mansholt – bishop of the Central States Synod of the ELCA – as we discuss the proposed social statement, *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* and the related resolutions.

Bishop Mansholt will give an introduction and overview of the proposed social statement and ministry policy resolutions, followed by an opportunity for conversation and discussion. You can read/download the related documents online [www.elca.org/faithfuljourney](http://www.elca.org/faithfuljourney) or pick-up a copy at the church

office. Please consider attending this informative event and sharing dialogue with other Lutherans from South Central KS.

## **STAINED GLASS WINDOW DEDICATION** **SUNDAY, JUNE 14**

As the stained glass windows get closer and closer to completion, the committee gets more and more excited! With an anticipated completion date of June 1, we have scheduled the dedication of the Stained Glass Windows for Sunday, June 14. Please come and celebrate with the congregation as the windows are revealed and dedicated to the work of the church – sharing God's love with the world! You won't want to miss this!

## **FINANCIAL STATISTICS**

First Quarter 2009

The year-to-date giving and budget for the first quarter of 2009 are as follows:

|                     |            |
|---------------------|------------|
| Budget              | \$ 118,750 |
| General Fund Income | \$ 118,381 |

Rejoice! Keep up the support of God's outreach through Reformation Lutheran Church.

Three guiding principles of our financial stewardship are to give regularly, proportionally, and sacrificially. The sacrificial aspect includes giving cheerfully and giving of the "first fruits" or the best of what we have. Proportional giving is for each of us to give according to our means as Paul describes in II Corinthians. Regular giving promotes spiritual health as we set aside our offering first before addressing the rest of our financial obligations.

As we come into the summer months with vacation and travel schedules impacting worship attendance, please continue with your discipline of regular giving. Whether you bring it to worship, send it in the mail or just set it aside, your spiritual health will benefit.

*Thanks*  
be to  
*God*

## **NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION**

**Wednesday, May 13**  
**6:30 p.m.**

Are you looking for a place to put down spiritual roots?

Do you have questions about the Christian faith?

Are you interested in learning more about Reformation?



Wednesday, May 13, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. we'll have the opportunity to talk about these – and other – questions as we meet for a New Member Orientation. We share some refreshments, get to know one another and have a chance to learn more about the meaning and ministry behind life at Reformation. Childcare is available upon request. Please RSVP to Debbie Stephens at the church office by noon Monday, May 11 at 634-0568).

## **NOON BIBLE STUDY** **ROMANS 12**



**Begins April 22 @ noon**

*Do not be conformed...  
but be transformed.*

Romans 12.2

Please bring your lunch and munch as we learn how God is transforming us.

The Sunday morning women's study group will resume in the fall. Please prayerfully consider joining us we start up in the fall.

Watch for further details later this

Pauline Latham and  
Dorothea Rindt

## Thank You

Hats Off! and Thank You to all who participated in the garden clean-up this past week. We managed to do a lot of weeding and clean up as well as spreading mulch. The following workers shared their time and efforts: Randy & Gale Worrell, Ed Wilks, Marsha Sears, Carol Ott, Jack Metz, Gary Hoepner, and Waldo & Lotus Gerards.

If you would like to "adopt" an area of garden space to keep weeded this growing season, please contact Lotus 683-8602. Your help will be appreciated!

Thank you to Pastor Kristin, Pastor Lowell, Pastor Tom Hallstrom, Larry Ehrlich, Jette, and Barb Lee for their prayers and visits. Also thanks to all at Reformation for your kindness and prayers and to the choir for the beautiful music at the service for Kurt and to all for the luncheon served. God bless all of you.

Amy & Jack Soschinske

Dear Friends at Reformation,  
Thank you so much for the generous donation you gave to St. John's Lutheran Church to honor Marlene. We appreciate your thoughts and kindness.

Dick Hasselwander & Family

What a wonderful moment(s) to see Pr. Michelson walk in room #8-823, to hear the voices of Barb Lee and Pr. Sally, to be visited by Wil Johnson and Parish Nurse, Jette, (twice) and her gift of a Prayer Shawl, knowing it was made by loving hands. For your concern well-wishes and prayers, thank you so very much! It's rather humbling to experience this manner of support and concern.

In this post-Easter time, these words:

*"And by His stripes we are healed."* Isaiah 53:5  
Gratefully in Christ, Pr. Earl Wall

Our heartfelt thanks to our Reformation friends for the prayers and sympathy cards as we mourn the death of our brother, Paul Themer. What a blessing it is to be members of such a caring congregation.

While there are no words to adequately express my gratitude to Pr. Lowell, Pr. Kristin and Reformation Lutheran Church, I will try.

Having only lived in Wichita for 1 year and not yet members of this church, we were warmly welcomed and ministered to as if we were members.

Many thanks to all: those who visited, called, sent cards & food, brought communion, prayer shawls and prayed with Bob and our family.

Thanks also for welcoming our 5 children, spouses and grandchildren and their spouses, Bob's brother & wife and his sister.

Thank you, thank you.

With much love, Joy Skinner

To all of the special people at Reformation,  
Thank you with my deepest love and appreciation for your prayers, Pastor Lowell's visit, to the folks who made the prayer shawl, for all your prayers, cards and phone calls. It really helped me to know you took the time. God loves you and so do I.

Twila Black

Sometime after Christmas last year, I accepted the challenge of producing "mini-dramas" for the Wednesday evening Lenten worship services. There were more than 40 members of Reformation who made the venture possible. To all of you who took part in the venture, whether acting, building the back drop, setting up and taking down, sound control, lighting, music, (even the PB&J sandwiches for me) the whole event wouldn't have happened without the combined efforts by all of you. Your involvement was much, much appreciated! And for any and all who gave "moral support" to our efforts, a great big thanks to all of you also. And to our loving Reformation family, the Lord bless you all!

With sincere appreciation,  
Wil Johnson

To my Reformation Family,  
Words cannot express thank you enough! Wow, what a blessing when I opened my mail this week! I give thanks for the generous donation. I truly am speechless and honored that so much support has been poured out for me. School is going well, classes are keeping me busy and thinking good

theological thoughts. I am excited I will be in Wichita this summer to worship with you all.

In Him, Chris Deines

## COFFEE HOUR HOSTS

Coffee Hour Hosts for the month of May are as follows:

|        |                         |
|--------|-------------------------|
| May 3  | Kalynn Blum             |
| May 10 | Jennifer                |
| Worrel |                         |
| May 17 | Karen McPhee & Kay      |
| Drumm  |                         |
| May 24 | Clarence & Suzanne Koch |
| May 31 | Kalynn Blum             |



During the summer months (June through August), coffee hour becomes Summer Sunday Coffee. The host(s) will provide 4-5 dozen muffins, bagels, donuts or host's food choice to serve 50-60 people.

If you would like to host a Summer Sunday Coffee, please contact Kalynn Blum at 682-6793. What a great way to serve and socialize!

## WHERE IN THE WORLD IS ADAM?

As many of you know, Adam Watkins is finishing up his Army Basic Training at Fort Benning in Georgia.

After several months of intense training, Private Adam Watkins graduated on April 17<sup>th</sup>. Original plans for his coming home for his first furlough had to be scrapped because he was chosen to be part of a select elite Army military group to attend Airborne School, which takes place almost immediately after his graduation. What does that mean? It means he will be parachuting out of airplanes. Wooo! It also means his coming home will be delayed for a few weeks after which we will all get to welcome him back, even for a short time before he goes to his permanent station assignment. I'll let him tell you where that will be. Please continue to keep him in your prayers.

## CHOIR SCHEDULE

MAY 2009

May 3 – Easter 4

Parish Choir

May 24 – Easter 7

Cantor

May 10 - Easter 5

Parish Choir

May 31 – Pentecost

Parish Choir

May 17 – Easter 6

## COMMUNITY BREAKFAST



**Community  
Breakfast**

Have you got that spring-cleaning bug, yet? Please do keep us in mind when you start, for those items you no longer have use of that would mean so much to

someone less fortunate. I'm speaking mainly of clothing. Below is a "reminder" list for your convenience. This past April weekend, we cooked for and served approx. 100 - 105 guests at St. Paul's on Waco in downtown Wichita. Again, all had plenty, thanks to our very capable and professional kitchen staff who kept it hot and coming and to our serving staff that kept the plates filled. As we approach somewhat warmer temperatures, the needs of our brothers and sisters change ever so slightly; for example, no heavy winter coats (save until next year or we will!) Please also save the t-shirts for the summer months.

Our spring list includes:

Backpacks! (or carrying bags/tote bags)

Jackets/Sweaters/Sweatshirts

Pants/Slacks (Blue Jeans, Dockers, etc.,)

Shirts/Blouses - Golf Shirts

Jogging/Athletic Suits

Socks – Belts - Baseball Caps/Hats

Shoes/Boots/Athletic Shoes

Toiletries (Individual)

Sunglasses - Compact Umbrellas

Paperback Books

Insulated hot/cold Cups - Refillable Water Bottles

We are so blessed that so many of you provide us with articles and money, month after month, year after year. This ministry started strictly from your donations and continues to this day without any church or budgetary funding and is self-supporting.

What a tremendous statement of outreach to others in need and you all are disciples of that. Thanks again to each and every one of you who donate your time and skills. We could not complete our task without your labor. Last but surely not least, we want to thank those who pray for this most important ministry.

Until next time, in His Service,

Bob L. Livingston, Community Breakfast volunteer  
Susan Martin, Coordinator



## WOMEN OF REFORMATION

### May Calendar

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

- May 4** Blanket Makers, 9 a.m.  
**May 12** Cornerstone Ministry, 3 p.m.  
\*\*at Cornerstone  
**May 14** Rebecca Circle, 10 a.m.  
Kay Drumm,  
Lesson Leader and Hostess  
**May 18** Blanket Makers, 9 a.m.  
**May 20** Dorcas Circle, 1 p.m.  
Lotus Gerards, Lesson Leader  
Shari Ryding, Hostess  
\*\*at 160 Cardinal Lane  
**May 25** Mary Circle, 9:30 a.m.

*The next meeting of Women of Reformation  
Board is scheduled for 1 p.m. August 24.*

## CHURCH WOMEN UNITED

The May meeting of Church Women United will be held Friday, May 1, at West Heights United Methodist Church, 745 North Westlink. The program begins at 1 p.m. Contact Carol Ott for information.

## BEST TIMES OF LIFE



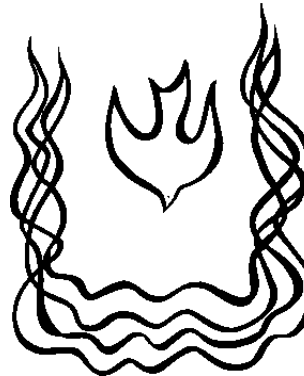
BTOL, (Best Times of Life), our fellowship group for those 55 and over, will meet on Monday, May 11 at 12:00 noon in the Parish hall for our monthly luncheon and program.

This month we will learn more about a pertinent topic during these times. Our speaker will be Brad Kemp, executive director of the Kansas Coalition for Lifesaving Cures who will speak on stem cell research. We hope you will join us for this presentation. Bring a covered dish to share, your own table service and call either Pauline 744-3328 or Betty 682-2030 with your reservation so we will know how many tables to prepare. Please join us for good food, fellowship and an interesting program!

## YELLOW BAG

The food for the month of May is canned meat, which includes Spam, tuna, salmon etc. Thank you to everyone that brought food items in April. All nonperishable food items are always welcomed and appreciated. **Food items are really in need due to the poor economy and layoffs.**

## CONFIRMATION



Andrew Annett  
Hanna Brittain  
Cora Burgoyne  
Kelly Coleman  
Beau Desmarteau  
Halle Hund  
Eric Jensen  
Kerri LaMarche  
Jake Norman  
Paige Peer  
Eileen Vlamis  
Emily Weaver  
Dalton Winters

During worship on Sunday, May 3, these thirteen youth of Reformation will affirm their baptisms by making the promises for themselves that their parents made for them when they were baptized: to live among God's faithful people, to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper, to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, to serve all people, following the example of Jesus, and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth. Join us in worship for this special service, and also in the parish hall during the Sunday School hour that morning as we celebrate these youth of the congregation and their confirmation with a short program and refreshments!

## LAWN CARE

Thank you to all who have volunteered to help do the lawn care of our property. There is



## SENIOR BREAKFAST



Congratulations to our students who will be graduating from high school this spring: Alex Applegate, Brian Cornwell, Joe Davis, Derek Folkerts, Shelby Johnson, Ethan LaMarche, Tyler McDiffett, Ryan Norman, Preston Peer, Ashley Waswick, Bryan Watkins, and Allison Wegner.

Plan to join our graduating seniors on Sunday, May 10 to enjoy a delicious breakfast, hear some words of wisdom from Korey Torgerson and Katie Johnson, celebrate our graduates' accomplishments, and wish them well as they transition from high school into the next phase of their lives. The whole congregation is invited to join the seniors and their families for this special event, beginning at 9:00 a.m. Please take some time in the coming weeks or that morning to check out the table with a memory book for each student, which members of the congregation can sign to offer words of congratulations and encouragement.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL RECOGNITION

A huge thank you to everyone who has been involved in Sunday School this year, whether as student, teacher, or supportive parent! On Sunday, May 17, we will celebrate another great year of Christian education. We will sing, recognize the students, teachers, and leaders, have some fun with crafts, and enjoy a tasty snack. Join us for this fun morning during the Sunday School hour in the Parish Hall, beginning at 9 a.m.



## CAMP TOMAH SHINGA

### CAMP TOMAH SHINGA



It's not too late to register for Bible camp at Camp Tomah Shinga! There are awesome opportunities for 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> graders, and

senior high! There are even mini sessions for the two younger groups if this is your first time at camp and you are a little leery of going for a full week.

*"For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

Mark 10:45 is the Bible verse that is the basis for the theme of the summer: "Love to Serve." Just like our Vacation Bible School, there is a different theme to focus on each day. Over the five days at camp we will learn what it means to be freed, created, called, saved, and sent to serve! And you'll learn about that all while you are swimming in the pool, hiking in the woods, cooking outside, and maybe even sleeping out under the stars!

Our Confirmation students are attending June 14-19, and a group of our 4<sup>th</sup> graders are registered for the mini-camp the very first week. Sign up to join them or find another week that works into your summer schedule! Don't let money be an issue – scholarships may be a you want or need more about scholarships. You Tomah Shinga by checking out [www.tomahshinga.org](http://www.tomahshinga.org)



## "CROCODILE DOCK" VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Mark your calendars now for the week of July 12-17, 2009 and plan to join us for Vacation Bible School on the Crocodile Dock, "where fearless kids shine God's light!" We'll meet at the dock (aka the church) each evening from 6:00-8:30 p.m.



