

# RE-FOCUS

A Publication of Reformation Lutheran Church

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Number 1



Lowell Michelson  
Senior Pastor

*Like recycled tires  
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## Old Stuff

“Out with the old and in with the new.”  
Nice phrase, except I really like the old.

Our home is filled with old furniture, collected at auctions and garage sales throughout our married life in Minnesota, Ohio, Oregon, Iowa, and Kansas. The well-worn Appalachian kitchen table, the stressed cherry headboard and the trash picked hall mirror transform our house into a cozy home.

And while digital downloads are all the rage, I still enjoy my mom’s college copy of Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers *Drum Suite* jazz album on black vinyl. Giving it a spin on the turntable – crackle and all – fills our living room with small combo sound that could only be a 1957 era Columbia Records LP.

There is comfort in the old. Nostalgia in the old. The old fits us well and transports us to another time and place, reliving moments and seasons in our lives. We know what to expect with the old. But there can also be pain and suffering in the old. There are scars that leave a trail on us physically or emotionally. There are memories of loss and regret that we would like to release or forget.

“Out with the old and in with the new,” some say. At home, the floors creak and the plumbing leaks. The 33<sup>1/3</sup> albums warp, crackle and skip. Each needs a renewal or an update. A restoration.

God frequently uses language of restoration throughout the Bible. God is about renewal – new creation. God takes our old and makes it new. But instead of pitching all the old in the garbage, God embraces all that we are and all that we’ve been and creates something new. We are transformed.

The apostle Paul, writing an encouraging letter to Titus, says, “When the goodness

and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, Jesus saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to the mercy of God, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. (Titus 3.4-5).

Rebirth and renewal. In love, God transforms the past by recycling it into what we are becoming. God takes our creaks and warps, and all the other tired parts of our lives and renews them. Like recycled tires and tennis shoes that are converted into pavement for roadways, our histories are melded into a larger fabric of what is to come. Along with so many others before us, God uses our experiences to share and shine God’s love to the world, paving the way for what is to come. We share our journey of faith – lives of brokenness and healing, lives of struggle and discovery – so that others might learn of God’s great love.

A song from the Iona Community in Scotland sheds light on this encompassing love of God:

*Take, O take me as I am;  
Summon out what I shall be;  
Set your seal upon my heart  
and live in me.*

As our healing continues, I am grateful for the new year. It is a fresh page, a clean start, a time of renewal. As God journeys with us from 2009 to 2010, I am eager to see where God will lead and how our witness will support and encourage others in their lives of faith. I can’t wait to find out what is ahead and how God will continue to change and use each of us, drawing out what we can be. We are marked with the seal of Jesus Christ and our very lives, old and new, are held by the One who will never let us go.

In hope,

## A special thank you!

+ Thanks to everyone who chose a child from Oaks Indian Mission and bought them Christmas presents. This year we had half as many children as usual but each child had two families buying presents for them which makes for a very merry Christmas for each of them! And a Big Thank You to Ron and Kalynn Blum for taking all the Christmas presents down to the Oaks Indian Mission in December. Also thanks to Karen McPhee and Kay Drumm for taking down the extra presents two days later. The children certainly had a brighter Christmas as a result of everyone's generosity! Thanks!

*Service Ministry Board*

+ As we bid farewell to 2009, we give heartfelt thanks to all who have served in many ways at Reformation throughout the past year. We thank God for each of you, and the numerous things you do – both seen and unseen – as we serve and worship together. What a joy it is to walk with you as servants of God, guided by the Holy Spirit, to make Christ known.

*The Reformation staff*

+ Thank you for your outpouring of blessings over the Advent and Christmas season. Your many cards, well wishes, and generous love gift amazed and humbled us. We continue to be grateful for your lives and the numerous ways you encourage and support us in our mission together.

With gratitude,  
*Pastor Lowell, Pastor Kristin, Marlene Hallstrom*



### Prayer Partners

Are you interested in connecting with another member of our Reformation family in a one-on-one setting? The Fellowship Board is planning to start a new prayer partner ministry soon. This is a ministry for all ages and interested participants will be paired up with each other in order to pray for one another on a regular basis. We are planning a prayer workshop kick-off event on January 31 that will showcase different types of prayer. Look for details on that event in the learning insert.

### Women of Reformation Calendar

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

- Jan. 4 Blanket Makers, 9 a.m.
- Jan. 12 Cornerstone Ministry, 3 p.m.  
@ Cornerstone
- Jan. 14 Rebecca Circle, 10 a.m.  
*Dallas Cronk, Lesson Leader*  
*Clarice Peters, Hostess*
- Jan. 18 Blanket Makers, 9 a.m.
- Jan. 20 Dorcas Circle, 1 p.m.  
*Barb Everson, Lesson Leader*  
*Carol Ott, Hostess*
- Jan. 25 Mary Circle, 9:30 a.m.  
Executive Board, 1 p.m.

### Women of Reformation Officers

2010 officers for Women of Reformation were elected at the Annual Meeting on December 1. They are: **Carol Ott**, President; **Kathy Drake**, Vice President; **Mary Ann Mercer**, Secretary; **Judy Carlson**, Treasurer; **Doris Moden**, Action; **Dallas Cronk**, Community. Circle leaders for 2010 are **Jolene Dougherty** (Rebecca), **Shirley Metz** (Dorcas), and **Laura Nott** (Mary).



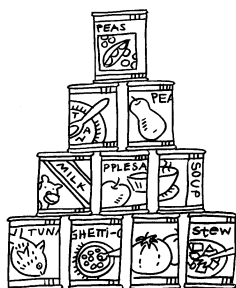
### Stephen Ministry Informational Meeting

Are you interested in reaching out to others who may have suffered a loss, need a Christian friend or who are struggling with a life changing event? Please join us for an opportunity to learn more about becoming a Stephen Minister.

We will meet on **Sunday, January 24 at 5:00 p.m.** in the church conference room for about an hour. Information on the training, schedule and commitment will be shared and any questions you may have will be answered. We hope to start a training class by mid-February. We would love to visit with you about becoming a Stephen Minister.

Stephen Leaders: Lotus Gerards 683-8602  
Rich McDiffett 282-0598

Together We CAN!  
**Yellow Bag January Food Challenge**  
**Canned Foods**



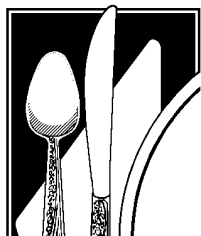
It is a new year! 2010 is full of hope and promise. As partners in ministry with Open Door, a food pantry for people in need, we CAN work together and make steps to feed Wichita's hungry.

This month, Reformation will collect canned foods for delivery to the pantry. **Canned fruits, veggies, soups, and meats** are always needed to fill the shelves. Donations may be deposited at the Yellow Bag collection bins, located just inside the doors of Parish Hall.

Your donations will be delivered with a smile at the end of the month. Together, we CAN make a difference!

Contact Tera Michelson with questions or to partner in this ministry, 733.1760.

**Lenten Meals**



Once again the Fellowship Board is seeking individuals and groups willing to prepare and serve the Lenten meals. Ash Wednesday is February 17 this year, and Chris Cakes will be serving us pancakes on that evening. We are requesting congregational members to serve the

remaining lunches and suppers during the Lenten season. Each Wednesday a noon lunch is served as well as an evening supper in conjunction with the Lenten service. The Wednesday lunches usually have about 25 in attendance, and the evening meal is generally about 60. All paper goods are available at the church, and you can be reimbursed by submitting your receipts. There are 6 Lenten lunches and 5 Lenten suppers. These are lovely times of fellowship and sharing of food.

Any groups or individuals willing to participate in this effort should please contact Suzanne Koch, 688-0553.

**Reformation Lutheran Church**  
**Financial Results through**  
**November 30, 2009**

	Budget To Date	Actual	Favorable (Unfavorable)
Income *	\$439,175	\$444,481	\$5,306
Expenses	\$493,861	\$471,000	\$22,861
Net income/ (loss)	\$(54,686)	(\$26,519)	\$28,167

\* Includes pledges, loose or unpledged offerings, interest income and all other sources of income. Pledges to date are \$383,335, of which \$371,988 has been received as of 11/30/09.



Best Times Of Life, (BTOL), our fellowship group for those age 55 or more, will hold its monthly get together on Monday, January 11 at 12:00 noon in Parish hall. Our

program will be on *In My Home*, presented by Shannon Castillo and will give suggestions about how one can stay in their own home even with health, mobility or ability issues. Bring a covered dish to share, your own table service and call either Betty 682-2030 or Jolene 776-2068 with your reservation so we will know how many tables to prepare. Come and join us for great fellowship, good food and an informative program!



**January Choir Schedule**

- January 3 - cantor/soloist
- January 10 - Parish Choir
- January 17 - Handbell Choir  
Parish Choir
- January 24 - Parish Choir
- January 31 - Parish Choir

**January's Semi-Annual Meeting of the Congregation**

January 24, 2010 is the Semi-Annual Meeting of the Congregation. We will convene immediately after morning worship. Plan now to attend!

# New POSSIBILITIES

January is a time for resolutions. It is a time to reflect on the year gone by and on the limitless possibilities of the new one. Do you want to make a change in your world? Our church? Your life? I invite you to make a resolution this January to begin making that change by getting more involved here at Reformation.

You may wonder if you have the time to volunteer on a committee or board, but rather than asking yourself if you have the time, consider instead how your actions could change the life of this church.

- ◆ It could be you who sparks the mind of a child.
- ◆ It could be you who invites someone to join the Reformation family.
- ◆ It could be you who is the vital linchpin to a community project.
- ◆ It could be you who has the idea that prompts a new outreach for our congregation.
- ◆ It could be you who touches the heart of someone seeking comfort and healing.
- ◆ It could be you who makes new friends.

There are many ways to engage your mind and body at Reformation. Whatever your preference, whatever your inclination, you are likely to find something that fits you. To learn more about the opportunities available to you, please see the summaries listed below, and let us know how you would like to start to be the change that you wish to see in our church, in the world and in your life!

## **Fellowship Ministry Board**

Time together is important stuff. This ministry focuses on weekly hospitality around worship times, special social events and celebrations, as well as cultivating small group ministries that connect people with one another and God through interpersonal relationships.

Contact: Judy Winters – 733-4358

Pastor Kristin – 634-0568

## **Learning Ministry Board**

There's always more to learn. This ministry provides learning opportunities for children and adults on Sunday mornings and throughout the week, as well as Vacation Bible School, First Communion and Confirmation classes, Soul Food events, youth ministries, and oversight of the church library.

Contact: Susayn Brandes – 733-6011

Pastor Kristin – 634-0568

## **Service Ministry Board**

Serving those in need is at the forefront of the mission of Jesus. This ministry engages in prayer, addresses issues of local and global hunger, human suffering, and works for justice and equality for all God's children. They also initiate support for those who are experiencing illness, death, economic challenges, and other life crises.

Contact: Jennifer Worrel – 733-0388

Pastor Kristin – 634-0568

## **Stewardship Ministry Board**

God asks us to care for all that we've been given. This ministry educates and encourages care for God's creation, maintenance and enhancement of the church property, financial giving to the work of the Church, and use of spiritual gifts toward God's mission and ministry.

Contact: Gary Hoepner – 684-0796

Pastor Lowell – 634-0586

## **Witness Ministry Board**

God's love and forgiveness is for all people. This ministry seeks to welcome worship guests, active and inactive members, partner with new members, train greeters, and wrestle with sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ in modern society.

Contact: Barb Lee – 684-5434

Pastor Lowell – 634-0568

## **Worship Ministry Board**

Worship is central to our lives in Jesus Christ. This ministry collaborates with a whole host of people in planning worship – pastors, musicians, worship leaders, the altar guild, homebound communion teams, ushers and others, as well as exploring new resources for our times of Word and sacrament ministry.

Contact: Bob Livingston – 788-4845

Pastor Lowell – 634-0568

## To Serve... and wish a Merry Christmas!



### Community Breakfast

Wow, what a crowd at this month's Community Breakfast at St. Paul's. It was a delight to see so many of our youth give up their sleep time and come to help us feed those less fortunate brothers and sisters in our

community. Let's see if I can get them all named or at least their relationship to our member volunteers. Gary and Linda Hoepner's grandkids, Sandy and Teven Wendt's grandkids, Judy Winters with Dalton, Morgan and Braeden, Heidi Jensen with Eric and Sarah, Ken Hobart with his daughter Katie, Hillary and Roman Hund with their daughter Halle and last, but never least, Allison Wegner and Brian Watkins; all working to serve breakfast and pass out goodies and homemade treats to approx. 150 of our guests. Pastor Lowell cracked eggs (one at a time!) and serviced coffee while Pastor Fulton also made a guest appearance. (I think he really came to eat!) All had a humbling but fun time

as we served a hot meal and wished everyone there a Merry Christmas, even though, in our hearts, we know, many will not.

Thank you to all of our wonderful and dedicated volunteers. We love you all and please come back soon and often. Thank you to those who donate needed items, money and prayers for this crucial ministry. Again, this ministry could not be self-supporting without your generosity.

From Susan, Keith, Sally and Bob and the entire Community Breakfast staff and volunteers, we wish you all a Blessed and Happy Holiday Season as we together celebrate the coming of our Savior, who is Christ, the Lord. Also please continue to prayer for this ministry and for the homeless, wherever they may be. God Bless.

Until next year, in His Service,

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

"LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE..."



M A T T H E W 5 : 1 6

### We Are Called

Come! Live in the light!  
Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord!  
We are called to be light for the kingdom,  
to live in the freedom of the city of God.

#### *Refrain*

We are called to act with justice,  
we are called to love tenderly;  
we are called to serve one another,  
to walk humbly with God.