

THE SPECTRUM

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. PAUL-REFORMATION LUTHERAN CHURCH

MARCH
2025

Liturgies
8:00 and 10:30 a.m.

Sunday School
Confirmation
9:30 a.m.

Adult Forum
9:10 a.m.

Nursery
Staffed by Attendant
9-11:45 a.m.

Livestream video via
SPR's FB page or look
in your e-mail on
Sunday mornings.

Visit us on the web!
www.stpaulref.org

St. Paul-Reformation is
a congregation of the
Evangelical
Lutheran Church in
America (ELCA).

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The Spectrum items, articles
and columns need to be to
the Parish Office by the 12th
of the month. The Spec-
trum goes to print on the
15th and this date is hard
and fast. Articles received
after the 12th may or may
not be included. ter.



Above: SPR's Wings of Grace Handbell Choir rehearses diligently, gracing us with their work the third Sunday of every month. In Lent, music is greatly reduced...to return again with Easter joy!

LENT BEGINS MARCH 5

The church's season of Lent begins on **Ash Wednesday, March 5**. A time of preparation for Easter, Lent centers around three "disciplines" that call us to "clean house" on our spiritual lives: fasting (lessening what we consume), almsgiving (increasing our generosity of time and talent), and prayer (some serious time in self-examination and with God). The goal of Lent is not a faux-penitence; the goal of Lent is an honest inventory of our lives, making adjustments where necessary, making corrections where necessary, and returning ourselves to a right balance.

IF YOU CALL TO MIND HOW a gymnast at the Olympics (or some other sporting venue) does their work (and yes, this is a vocation...), much of their training and athleticism depends upon a careful balancing of their weight and the forces of gravity. By learning how their body works, and how their body works within the spheres of physicality (gravity is a physical force, but so is the balancing bar, for example...), they are able to make what is extremely difficult look...almost...easy?

The key here is “balance,” the careful weighing of one thing against another. As we move toward Lent’s beginning, it might be helpful for you to imagine this time of preparation as “re-balancing” things that have become unbalanced.

For many, the Lenten exercises are almost comical. “I’m giving up Lent for Lent this year” is a joke I hear *ad nauseum* amongst clergy and church-y types who love to poke fun at what is actually an amazingly grace-filled opportunity for regrowth and renewal. In addition to this, I hear (every year) a great deal of clergy chatter about what the “theme” for Lent is. The theme is simple, and it never changes: preparation for Easter. That’s it.

But, back to balancing. If you take a step back and look at the grand survey of things in your life, what is it that needs re-balancing? What has too much emphasis, what not enough? Where have you expended too much energy, and where not enough? What are the priorities you have determined for yourself and for your day-to-day, and how might you clean house a bit to remove the clutter and make some spiritual breathing space that can welcome God and...a you that is not anxious?

As I write to you, many in our nation are anxious because of the political situation. Indeed, last week a member of the new Administration

called Lutheran Immigration and Refuge Service (now known as Global Refuge) a “money-laundering scheme.” Lutherans may be many things, but we are not money launderers, and—in fact—a case can be made that our entire tradition exists as a response to a medieval money-laundering scheme (indulgences, anyone?).

The point is that much is askew. In nation, in personal lives, in our communities and in our hearts. Stop. Breathe. Re-balance. Take the opportunity that the church is giving you: time to de-clutter, to reevaluate what really matters, and to prepare for joy that conquers (really!) the sorry state of much of the world.

The disciplines of Lent—as we write to you every day—can be lived out in some practical ways, and you may wish to give some of these things a try. I urge you to commit to them for the full forty days; if they don’t work for you, you can be rid of them at Easter, but commit to sticking with it for the entirety of Lent:

- 1.) **Fasting.** This could mean a literal fast (traditionally practiced on at least Ash Wednesday and Good Friday), or it might more broadly mean a refrain from consuming so much; in short, can you simplify some things? Then do. Say “no” to some things on the calendar and take a break from some regular commitments. In these days, for some, this might mean a break from the news cycle.
- 2.) **Almsgiving** can mean increased financial generosity to some cause (including SPR!), but it might also mean a more generous view of people and things. The point here is generosity of heart, and “giving alms” might also mean “giving forgiveness.” Whatever it is, whatever ancient hurt is still calling the shots: let it go, and forgive for the sake of your own healing.
- 3.) **Prayer** is the most important of all, and Lent is a wonderful time to set apart some “conversation



“Take the opportunity that the church is giving you: time to de-clutter, to reevaluate what really matters...”

time” with God every day. Can you start with five minutes? If you can do five minutes a day of sitting in silence, being open to God without giving God a laundry list of things to get to work on, and just **be**, you may find that even this short time is like a warm blanket or a rest at the spa. Within your prayers, no other thing can invade: not the anxieties of the world, not the past, not the people you struggle with. Prayer is a sanctuary where just you and God exist together. Learn to love it and love God and this special place of meeting between “the beloved and the beloved one.” As an ancillary, make a commitment now to participate in the fullness of Holy Week (yes, Virginia...every service), since it is the gathered Body of Christ (the church) that the people of God enter into the events of the passion.

Lent is about cleaning, it is not about pretending to be sorry. So, grab your bucket and your mop, and—together—let us start scrubbing the dirt (or the ashes) away, that our cleaning may be *balanced*.

+Pr. Patrick H. Shebeck, *Senior Pastor*

FROM THE CANTOR

Enjoying more hours of sunlight each day reminds me of a hymn by Mary Louis Bringle, that seems apt for these weeks as we transition from Epiphany into Lent and look toward celebrating Jesus’ resurrection:

*As the winter days go longer, drawing short
the hours of night;
as our eager expectation waits for Easter’s
dawning light –
yearning people, here we gather, turning
watchful eyes to you;
God who blesses earth with springtime, shine
within our world anew!*

Musical opportunities abound this Lent!

Please join us here at SPR for an ecumenical Evening Prayer service on **Thursday, March 20 at 7 p.m.**, featuring our Chancel Choir and the choirs of

two other neighborhood churches: St. Thomas More Catholic Church and St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church.



Flauto Dolce goes on the road! If you happen to be out and about, Flauto Dolce Flute and Organ Duo is presenting concerts on Sunday, March 16 at 3 p.m. at St. Andrew’s in Mahtomedi, and on Sunday, March 23 at 3 p.m. at Central Lutheran Church in Winona. We’re also playing on the Lenten series at Augustana Lutheran Church in West Saint Paul on April 2 at

around 11:25, after their morning prayer service.

If you prefer some music here at SPR, on Saturday, March 22 at 7 p.m. the Gregorian Singers present a concert of luscious musical settings from The Book of Solomon. The concert includes music from the 15th century to the present. \$25 admission at the door.

Consortium Carissimi is also planning a concert at SPR in March, but details were not available at deadline. We’ll let you know in the bulletin and weekly emails when details are finalized.

Since you’re marking your calendar for future events anyway, please join us for a **Feed My Starting Children meal packing event** on Saturday, April 5 from 9:30-11:30 at their site in Eagan (990 Lone Oak Rd #136). There are 20 spots available. **Sign up at fmsc.org using the join code W2WE8K.** We’ll go out for lunch together afterward.

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100 Oxford St N St. Paul, MN 55104
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LENTEN LISTEN SERIES: *Nurturing Your Soul: Finding Sacred Rhythms*

For our annual Lenten LISTEN series, SPR will welcome Sr. LaDonna Olson, a member of the Deaconess Community of the ELCA and a trained spiritual director. Sr. LaDonna will lead us in this year's study: "Nurturing Your Soul: Finding Sacred Rhythms." The Listen Series runs every Wednesday during Lent **starting on Wednesday, March 12** from 7:00-8:30. You are invited to join us for one, or all of the sessions!

Each Wednesday evening we will gather to experience a way to nurture our souls using a different practice. We will use Scripture, Orthodox Icons, Creative expression and Nature. There will be time to share and suggestions for daily activities to find new ways to connect with God.

Sister LaDonna is a member of the Deaconess Community of the ELCA. She is a certified spiritual director through Christos Center in Lino Lakes, retreat leader, and Enneagram coach through the

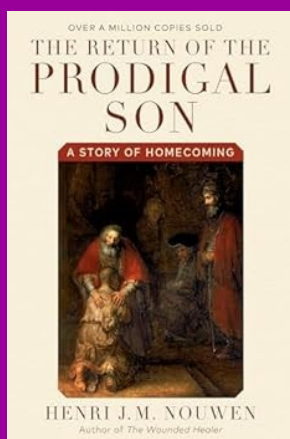
CPEnneagram Academy. She is a widowed mother of three grown children. She lives in North Branch with her dog, Milo. This promises to be a great time of learning—see you there!

BIRTHDAYS

03/01 Paul Lindell
03/02 Russell Rent, Stacie Lightner
03/03 Rachel Poppleton, Jan Swenson
03/05 Michael Banks, Ava Osano
03/06 Carlos Ramirez
03/07 Jake Kutz
03/08 Holly Tischer
03/12 Carol Hamlin
03/13 Karen Hanson, Kathy Thomforde
03/15 Henry Rent
03/16 Susie Adams, Susanna Yaeger Weiss
03/18 Gary Reetz, Sonya Schober-Johnson
03/20 John Rent
03/26 Max Rouillard-Horne
03/29 Isaiah Kutz, Lee Lundin

ANNIVERSARY

3/1 James & Marilyn McGowan



Lenten Retreat at St. John's Abbey

Tuesday March 25—Thursday March 27

Through a generous subsidy from the SPR Endowment, you are invited to join us for a Parish Lenten Retreat at St. John's Abbey in Collegeville. This three-day retreat will center on the Gospel for Lent IV: the parable of the prodigal son. We will make use of Henri Nouwen's "The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming," but much of our days will be spent in quiet, prayer, and rest.

We have twelve spots available that include meals and lodging in the Abbey Guesthouse. The Endowment's gift covers most—but not all—of the retreat's cost. Cost for the full three days, including meals and lodging: \$125. Registration opens on Ash Wednesday, March 5. Watch for more information!

COUNCIL CORNER

The Parish Council met on Tuesday, February 12, 2025.

- Council welcomed three new members, Ian Block, Carla Hagen and Chris Lyman. Council approved the following officers for 2025, President Alyn Bedford, Vice President, Susan Martyn, Treasurer, Chris Lyman and Secretary, Kristin Benson. The Council is grateful for the work of the outgoing members, Jessa Anderson Reitz, Pam Peyton and John Rent.
- Council approved two Endowment Fund requests. Funds will be dispersed to support 12 congregation members attending the Lenten Retreat at St. John's Abbey and to support the Lenten Listen Series led by Sr. LaDonna Olson from the ELCA Deaconess Community.
- President Alyn Bedford updated the Council on the Capital Campaign. Two committees have been constituted, Capital Finance and Capital Building, and the members were approved by Council. The Capital Finance Committee, chaired by Sarah Matala, includes Matt Entenza, Scott Hanson, and John Rent. The Capital Building Committee, chaired by Judy Fluger, includes Aaron Brown, Patricia Graham and Steve Winfield.
- The Personnel Committee chair, Chris Thomforde, updated the Council on the current administrative staffing situation.

+ Kristin Benson, *Council Secretary*



PRIVATE CONFESSION will be offered in the church on Ash Wednesday from 6:00—6:45 p.m. Yes, this is a part of our Lutheran tradition, and if something is particularly burdening your conscience or

your life, you may be surprised how rewarding this can be. No experience necessary, your confession is completely secret, and we promise to get you through to the other side. Even if you have no great weight on you, this is still a good thing to do. Try it: you'll like it, it's a great way to start Lent!

ADULT FORUMS IN MARCH

Sunday Adult Forum is a gem of SPR, and we hope you will join us every Sunday from 9:10-10:10 a.m. as we continue to learn together:



March 2: John Choi, Ramsey County Attorney + John Choi leads the County Attorney's office, and he will join us to discuss how legal services, safety, and public policy converge in Ramsey County.

March 9: Leaving a Legacy: The SPR Endowment + SPR member Luke Hanson will lead us in a discussion of how we can remember SPR in our estate plans, and give us concrete steps to do this work, ensuring the long-term legacy of ministry at St. Paul-Reformation!



March 16: ISIAIH Listening and Action I + In this first of three sessions, we will learn about the work that Isaiah is doing in this new climate,

how communities of faith advocate for dignity and justice for all, and give some thought to how recent changes impact members of our own community (including members of SPR and our families). A short survey will be taken in preparation for the next week.

March 23: ISIAIH Listening and Action II + In this session, we will review the results from our previous survey about how matters of justice are impacting the lives of members of SPR and how we as a community provide support and help for all.

March 30: ISIAIH Listening and Action III + In this session, we will move toward larger goals in our own state and city, taking into account legislative realities and how congregations can advocate for the least among us.

MARCH MINISTRY SCHEDULE

Thank you to all the volunteers who help make the 10:30 a.m. Sunday morning services “run.”

March 2: Transfiguration of Our Lord

Anthony Hedlund, Amy Rouillard, Assisting Ministers
Annette Hines, Cynthia Peyton, Lectors
Bonnie Olson, Joe Herbert, Joe Voss, Ed Stuart,
Greeters/Ushers
Annette Hines, Anastasia Polda, Coffee/Treats
Matias Badilla, Sebastian Badilla, Mikko Matala,
Henry Hanson, Acolytes Jim Bowen, Cantor

March 5, Ash Wednesday

Kathy Thomforde, Victoria Smith, Assisting Ministers
Peter Huckfeldt, Jim McGowan, Lectors
Pat Graham, Doris Ikier, Greeters/Ushers

March 9, The First Sunday in Lent

Ian Block, Jamie Block, Assisting Ministers
Jan Swenson, Cheri Gohr, Lectors
Dorcas Adedigba, Kristin Benson, Joshua Weichel,
Roman Hund, Greeters/Ushers
John Johnson, Alice Swan, Coffee/Treats
Elizabeth Adedigba, Acolyte Jesse Crosby, Cantor

March 16, The Second Sunday in Lent

Kathy Thomforde, Anthony Hedlund, Asst. Ministers
Colleen McGuire, Kristen Damberg, Lectors
Margaret Schuster, Roman Hund, Hilary Hund,
Deanna Sande, Greeters/Ushers
Teresa Ortiz, Carla Hagen, Coffee/Treats
Noah Johnson, Acolyte Dawn Klesk, Cantor

March 23, The Third Sunday in Lent

Aaron Brown, Amy Rouillard, Assisting Ministers
Shirley Henning, Victoria Smith, Lectors
Jim Halgerson, Anne Halgerson, Eldora Pearson,
Anthony Hedlund, Greeters/Ushers
Jim Halgerson, Anne Halgerson, Coffee/Treats
Ellis Bedford, Acolyte Chris Lyman, Cantor

March 30, The Fourth Sunday in Lent

Joe Voss, Victoria Smith, Assisting Ministers
Linda Dahlen, John Whalen, Lectors
Margaret Schuster, Cheri Gohr, Jan Swenson,
Ed Stuart, Greeters/Ushers
Linda Dahlen, Margaret Schuster, Coffee/Treats
Matias Badilla, Acolyte Erica Perl, Cantor

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

SPR is in the preparatory stages of a major Capital Campaign, and our goal is to keep you updated on developments as they occur. Right now, the Finance Committee has been formed and has met, chaired by Sarah Matala. The Building Committee is in the process of forming now, and an update on that will be coming next month.

The next step for the Finance Committee is to be in contact with various consultants/resources to advise this campaign. For our 2016-17 Campaign, we employed Mark Davey and Associates as our consultant, and the Finance Committee feels that this was a good use of resources and energy.

The “timeline” for this Campaign is for it to launch sometime in the fall, meaning that we will be preparing and laying the foundations (no pun intended) in the spring and summer of this year. Please pray for the success of this work as we begin, and we promise to keep you in the loop and informed as we move ahead!

MEDICAL LEAVE

SPR’s Parish Administrator, Jennifer Walding, is away on medical leave. Our prayers go with her as she navigates some health issues, and—to that end—we ask that you would be patient with some administrative tasks that might take a bit longer than usual. We are thankful for Victoria Smith who helped; Victoria is now done with her service and we are working on a long-term solution. If you would like to send a card to Jennifer, you can simply send it to her at the Parish Office and we will see that she gets it!

WEDNESDAY LENT SCHEDULE

Lutherans love them some Lent, and we hope you can join us each Wednesday as we gather for fellowship, worship, and learning:

- 5:30-6:30 p.m. Soup Supper (Lower Aud.)
- 5:30 p.m. Wings of Grace Handbell Choir
- 6:30 p.m. Holden Evening Prayer (church)
- 7:00 p.m. LISTEN Series with Sr. Ladonna Olson
- 7:00 p.m. Choir

QUILTING AND KNITTING *for Charity* Join us on **Saturday March 1 at 10:00 a.m.** You can sew, arrange blocks, iron, tie layers together, cut fabric! All knitters, crocheters, and quilters invited. Work on your own projects. Join in on the fun! Bring a snack to share; coffee is provided. Contact Gwen Peyton at gwenpeyton5@gmail.com.

MEALS MINISTRY!

Once a month, SPR members help each other by preparing and delivering meals for members who may find it challenging to always have a home-cooked meal. Meals cooked in the church kitchen at **9:00 a.m. on Saturday March 15.** Volunteers needed; if you can chop, cook, package, measure or just like to socialize, please join us. The alley door will be open. Your contributions for this ministry are greatly appreciated. For more information please contact Gwen Peyton, gwenpeyton5@gmail.com.



ISAIAH UPDATE

Concerned about the direction of our democracy? Feeling frozen like our state legislators? ISAIAH has a way to start moving forward! It starts with voicing our concerns and listening to one another so we have a united direction. SPR's ISAIAH team will host three Adult Forums, including a listening session to talk about our church community, our values, and how we relate to social justice. This is a space where we get to share the concerns we have about the world and our nation, how the values we hold impact us and the people we love, and what kind of future we want to live in. By being a part of this conversation, you can shape what our future priorities and actions look like. This is a three-session conversation, and we invite

you to attend all three. If you're frustrated and looking for a way to make a difference in today's anxious national climate...this is one way you can do it! Change is about showing up...so, show up! March 16, 23, and 30th at 9:10 a.m.

BREAKFAST CLUB + Join us **Sunday, March 2** at the Louisiana Café on Selby Ave after the second service. All are welcome to join this time of fellowship, good conversation and food.



No agenda: just fellowship!

ASSISTING MINISTER BRUSH-UP

SPR will host an Assisting Minister "Brush-Up" on **Sunday, March 16th after the second liturgy.** If you are an Assisting Minister, or would like to be, this is for you! We will train you in, and have a refresher for those who have already been trained. We do this occasionally to keep our skills sharp!

ECUMENICAL LENTEN EVENING PRAYER

*Thursday, March 20th at 7:00 p.m. at
St. Paul-Reformation*

*The choirs of St. Paul-Reformation,
St. Thomas More, and St. John the
Evangelist will combine for this service of
prayer and music. A freewill offering will be
taken, a reception follows.*

DONATE TO SPR USING YOUR SMARTPHONE! A great way to donate *whether you are at church or out and about!* Now you can give from anywhere in the world! It's fast, easy, and secure. If you are giving electronically, you may use the QR code at right, which is safe, fast, and efficient! You can donate to either the Good Samaritan Fund or the Parish General fund (in addition to your regular pledge). Give it a try!



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ST. PAUL-REFORMATION LUTHERAN CHURCH
I N T H E C I T Y F O R G O O D

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



ASH WEDNESDAY

Wednesday, March 5

6:00 p.m. Private Confessions in
the Church

7:00 p.m. Imposition of Ashes
and Holy Eucharist