

# MARCH 2026 PEW ECHO

FIRST REFORMED CHURCH  
527 Giddings Ave., Sheboygan Falls, WI 53085  
920-467-3251  
1stReformed.org

Brad Veenendaal - Pastor  
pastorbrad@1streformed.org

Sue Dempster - Office  
office@1streformed.org



## Fishing Season

*"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people."*

~ Matthew 4:19

March is a month of changing seasons. In fact, two seasons of change occur this month. One we are familiar with (at least in the years that we actually have this season), and that is Spring. The other season may not be as familiar to you, but for centuries it has played an important role in the cycles and rhythms of the church calendar. It is the season of Lent.

Beginning with Ash Wednesday (which was back on Feb. 18), Lent is a 40-day period of preparation and reflection leading up to Holy Week and Easter. In some ways, it is similar to Advent, a season of anticipation and preparation during the four weeks leading up to Christmas. But while Advent prepares us for *when* the Savior came, Lent prepares us for *why* the Savior came. That is one of the reasons for the 40 days of Lent, as it is meant to represent the 40 days of fasting that Jesus experienced in the wilderness before he began his public ministry.

This connection provides another contrast between Advent and Lent. While Advent is part of a season that focuses on giving, Lent focuses on giving up. It is perhaps the most well-known aspect of Lent, summarized in the question we sometimes hear: "What are you giving up for Lent?" This is a common practice in many faith traditions, as a way to focus on sacrifice, penitence and prayer. And, because of the Catholic practice of observing meatless fasts on Fridays during Lent, it has led to one of our most beloved Wisconsin traditions: the Friday fish fry. But Lent also prepares us to reflect on what Jesus gave up for us, as Jesus willingly makes the journey to Jerusalem to give his life in order to give us life. And, like Spring, it provides an opportunity for new life, for starting over with God, when we put

our faith in Jesus and trust in Him for our salvation.

We have to go through the unpleasant parts of spring in order to get to the parts we all enjoy. We have to endure the times when the cold and snow won't let go, and the ugliness of the brown ground and bare trees, until the warmer weather and new growth settle in, until the flowers bloom and trees blossom and the beauty of new life begins again. We wouldn't necessarily choose Winter as the way to get to Spring, but it is part of God's design in the changing seasons. And we wouldn't necessarily choose suffering and sacrifice as part of experiencing new life in Christ, but it is part of God's design and what Jesus willingly went through for us.

So in this season of Lent, we are going to focus on the One who gave up in order to give. Appropriately, our sermon series is called "Fish for Lent." Using the gospel of John as our guide, we are going to discover how the fish became a symbol of Christianity. We are going to discover more about the true identity of the One we are called to follow, the One who sends us out to fish for people. The word *ichthus* is the Greek word for fish, and the Greek letters in this word became an acronym for an early confession of faith: Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior.

In the weeks to come, I hope and pray that you will take time to reflect on the suffering and sacrifice of our Savior. Take time to prepare for Holy Week by remembering the journey that Jesus takes to get there. Take time to pray that the Holy Spirit will prepare you for your own journey in following Jesus.

Grace and Peace in Christ,  
*Pastor Brad*



## MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Kevin Lammers
- 6 Ethan Teunissen  
McClaren Teunissen
- 7 Macy Koene
- 10 Jeff Born
- 14 Joan Koebel
- 18 Jeff Van Wyk  
Wayne LeMahieu  
Dale Hoffmann
- 23 Jean Kappers
- 26 Jane Van Wyk
- 28 Dick Huibregtse



## MARCH ANNIVERSARIES:

- 10 Vern & Karen Heidenreiter (13)

Botanists say that trees need the powerful March winds to flex their trunks and main branches, so that the sap is drawn up to nourish the budding leaves. Perhaps we need the gales of life in the same way, though we dislike enduring them. A blustery period in our fortunes is often the prelude to a new spring of life and health, success and happiness, when we keep steadfast in faith and look to the good in spite of appearances.



### Have you ever wondered what would happen if God used voicemail to handle all our prayers?

Let's imagine it for a moment.

I had just finished gossiping and wanted to confess, so I got ready to pray—or rather, to “call.” Immediately, a voice answered:

“You’ve reached the throne room of Heaven, the Prayer Department. All of our representatives are currently assisting other callers. Your call is important to us, and we want to help you. Please stay on the line, and your request will be answered in the order it was received.”

Soft music plays. Then another message comes on:

“Listen carefully to the following options and press the appropriate number.

- Press 1 for prayer for a loved one.
- Press 2 for prayer for your church.
- Press 3 to give thanks.
- Press 4 to confess sins.
- Press 5 for salvation.
- Press 6 for physical needs.
- To repeat this menu, press 9.”

Since I had a sin to confess, I pressed 4.

Another voice responded cheerfully:

- “We’re so glad to help you with your confession of sins. Please select from the following options:  
If you cursed, press 1.
- If you yelled at your spouse or another family member, press 2.
- If you gossiped, press 3...”

The list went on and on.

About then I decided to hang up and keep on gossiping. But then I remembered what the Bible says about God and how he attends to our needs. He doesn't route our prayers through a heavenly call center or put us on hold. We don't get busy signals, menus or automated voices.

Instead, our Father listens instantly, personally, and lovingly. Instead of a voice mail system, he says, “Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.” (Isaiah 65:24, KJV)

## WE HAVE TOMORROW!

During the Korean conflict, journalist Marguerite Higgins, a courageous and award-winning war correspondent, spoke with a young soldier shivering in the bitter cold. He was eating from a tin can, his face streaked with mud, when she asked, "If I could give you anything in the world you wanted, what would you ask for?"



The soldier paused for a moment, then answered quietly, "Give me tomorrow."

What a simple yet profound longing. For those living in hardship, tomorrow represents hope—the chance to see another sunrise, to experience peace, to begin again.

As Christians, we live with the blessed assurance that we not only have today, but also tomorrow—an eternal tomorrow promised through the risen Christ. Scripture reminds us, "Death has been swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15:54, NRSV). And again, "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57, NRSV).

Because of Christ's resurrection, we no longer fear what tomorrow may bring. Our future is secure, our hope unshaken. In Him, tomorrow is already ours.

## A SIGN OF SPRING



In *The Story of the Easter Robin*, Dandi Daley Mackall retells an old Pennsylvania Dutch tale of the robin's compassion as he witnessed Jesus' death.

On Good Friday, a plain brown robin flying over Jerusalem was curious about the "nest" atop Jesus' head. When the bird realized it was a crown of thorns, he tried to dislodge it. As the robin pulled out a long thorn from Jesus' forehead, a drop of blood landed on the bird's breast, staining it red. Now the robin's red breast is a symbol of Jesus' loving sacrifice, and the robin's early-spring song is a reminder of Jesus' joyful resurrection.

## EASTER LILIES

**If you would like to purchase a lily in memory or in honor of a loved one, please fill out the form on the foyer table, place the form and \$11 (cash or check) into the envelope and put it in the box. You may take your lily home with you after the service on Easter. The deadline for ordering is March 11.**



## USHERS FOR MARCH

Ron Mueller

Dale Hoffmann



**USHER  
SCHEDULE**

## GREETERS FOR MARCH

**March 1**

Kevin & Margie Lammers



**March 8**

Curt & Sheila Teunissen

**March 15**

Jeff & Nancy Van Wyk

**March 22**

Lin Wilterdink, Bev Dulmes

**March 29**

Steve & Linda Wilterdink



Dear Friends,

In 2025, Brian was the only worship leader in our church plant. However, **Efe has now learned to play guitar** and will begin assisting in worship. Praise God!

**Efe's online Bible school training** is off to a great start. Please continue to pray for Efe.

Thank you for praying for our **Flash Training** over college semester break. We spent 18 classroom hours studying the book of Ephesians!



One of our core church members, **Pelin** (pictured below at her 2025 baptism), was recently accepted into a **doctoral program in chemistry**. We are very proud of Pelin. Please pray for her.

**Kadir** (pictured below) came to faith in Christ four years ago. Kadir has two college degrees and is an accomplished musician. Most recently, Kadir had been working at his brother's restaurant. Unfortunately, over the weekend, Kadir's brother learned of Kadir's faith in Christ and fired him. He also kicked Kadir out of their house.



Kadir will be living at our church for a few days while he makes a new plan. Please pray for this sad situation of **family persecution**.



Love,

Brian and Dana

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Avant".

[10000 N Oak Trafficway](http://10000 N Oak Trafficway)  
[Kansas City, MO 64155](http://Kansas City, MO 64155)  
[www.avantministries.org](http://www.avantministries.org)

Dear Friends,

Thank you for praying for Kadir. **Kadir decided to move back to his hometown** in eastern Turkey. It will be easier for him to find a new job there. However, there are very few churches in that part of Turkey. Please continue to pray for Kadir.

Last week **Rukiye** (pictured below) faced persecution as well. Rukiye moved to a new dorm for the start of her second college semester. However, when Rukiye's new roommate learned that Rukiye was a Christian, she refused to accept Rukiye. It took the dorm administration one week to find an alternative room for Rukiye. In the meantime, Rukiye had to live semi-nomadically. And by the way, Rukiye is less than one year old in Christ! Please pray for Rukiye to continue living boldly for her Savior.

All of our college students are amazing. Here is a list of what they are studying:

Chemistry (doctorate degree)  
Chinese (masters degree)  
English (masters degree)  
Medicine  
Spanish  
Archaeology (3 students)  
Pharmacy  
Biology  
German  
English  
Engineering



Love,

Brian and Dana

*Avant*

[10000 N Oak Trafficway](http://10000NOakTrafficway.com)  
[Kansas City, MO 64155](http://KansasCity.MO64155.com)  
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Can you imagine how Christ is going to use these young people in the future? It is breathtaking!

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### SAY YES TO GOD

“Many think of self-denial as giving up something during the Lenten season. Others have said that it is to be dead to self, or even to hate self. I disagree with these opinions. When Jesus referred to self-denial (Mark 8:34), he was not talking about denying ourselves some luxury item or denying the reality of self or the needs of self. Rather, he was focusing on the importance of renouncing self as the center of our life and actions.

“In other words, self-denial is the decision of each of his followers to give over to God his body, career, money and time. A true disciple is willing to shift the spiritual center of gravity in his life. Self-denial is the sustained willingness to say no to oneself in order to say yes to God.”

—Bill Hull

# KID'S PAGE

Saying AMEN is like pressing the "SEND" button for your prayers!



## GOD HAS A PLAN FOR ME

WHEN I GROW UP, I WANT TO BE:

I FEEL CLOSE TO GOD WHEN...

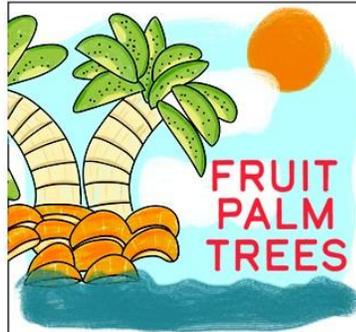
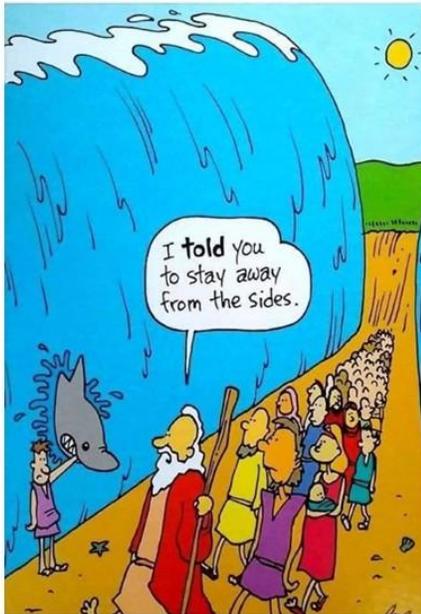
I'M GOOD AT:

MY FAVORITE VERSE:

A BIBLE HERO I WANT TO BE LIKE:

I THANK GOD FOR:

I SEE GOD'S LOVE WHEN...



These cheerful "palm trees" make a bright reminder of the celebration that greeted Jesus as he entered Jerusalem.

### What you need:

- Bananas (for the tree trunks)
- Kiwis or green grapes (for the palm leaves)
- Mandarin oranges (for the ground)



### What you do:

1. Slice bananas in half lengthwise and place vertically on a plate.
2. Arrange kiwi slices or grapes at the top to form palm fronds.
3. Add oranges at the base.
4. Serve immediately or chill until ready to serve.

### Scripture Tie-In:

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"  
—Matthew 21:9 (NIV)

### Bible Quiz

In Bible times, shepherds spent most of their days with their sheep—guiding them to food and water and guarding them from danger. When a sheep was injured, the shepherd treated the wound with a special liquid. What was it?

- A. Water
- B. Honey
- C. A Salt Solution
- D. Olive oil

Answer: D (See Psalm 23:5, ESV)

What kind of dog never bites?

A dog that barks

### Bible Quiz

Who came to Jesus by night to ask him questions, and what famous Bible verse was part of Jesus' answer?

- A. Martha; "I am the resurrection and the life ..."
- B. Peter; "Do to others what you would have them do ..."
- C. Thomas; "I am the way and the truth and the life ..."
- D. Nicodemus; "For God so loved the world ..."



Answer: D (See John 3:1-16)

## BOOKS OF THE BIBLE SCAVENGER HUNT

Find the first book in the Bible. .....	What is a book named after a woman? .....	How many books are in the Old Testament? .....
What book has the longest name? .....	What book has the most chapters? .....	Find a book that has only one chapter. .....
Find the last book in the Bible. .....	How many books are in the New Testament? .....	What book tells the story of Creation? .....
Which book is full of songs and poems? .....	Who wrote the most books of the Bible? .....	What is the shortest book? .....

# March



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:30am Worship 10:45am POW 45 / SS	2	3 1pm Dorcas Society 7pm Elders	4 1:30pm Living Bible Study 6:30pm Youth Night	5	6	7
8 9:30am Worship 10:45am POW 45 / SS	9	10 7pm Consistory	11 6:30pm CrossCenter	12 6:15pm Women's Bible Study	13	14
15 9:30am Worship 10:45am POW 45 / SS	16 6:30pm Women's Bible Study	17	18 6:30pm CrossCenter	19	20	21
22 9:30am Worship 10:45am POW 45 / SS	23 6:30pm Women's Bible Study	24	25 No CrossCenter Mtg— Spring Break	26 6:15pm Women's Bible Study	27	28
29 9:30am Worship 10:45am POW 45 / SS	30	31				



## APPLYING THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

A Sunday school teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five and six-year-olds. After explaining the commandment to 'Honor thy father and thy mother,' the teacher asked, "Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?"

Without missing a beat, one little boy answered, "Thou shall not kill."

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SIRI ... SAY GRACE

02-06-2015

