



/ APRIL 2020

DISTRICT NEWS

OKLAHOMA



**HE IS
RISEN
INDEED!**

True Easter Flower

A neighbor in Orlando got a deal on some blacktop for his driveway. It looked really good and he was very proud of it. However, sometime later a bulge appeared toward the edge of the blacktop. Something was pushing upward. The new blacktop began to crack in that spot as the unknown force worked its way toward the light.

When it finally burst its tarry bonds, there was a dandelion! Nothing, not even a thin layer of blacktop, would hold it down. Now that's the "true" Easter flower! A dandelion has a deep root, hearty leaves, a brilliant bloom and it produces countless seeds, allowing the Oklahoma wind to blow them hither and yon.

To me, this demonstrates the power of Christ's resurrection! He suffered vicious scourging, He was pinned to a cross and He was sealed in a tomb. It was humanly impossible for Him to break away from that situation. Yet this

was the eternal plan to redeem sinners, demonstrating how much God loved the sinful world. When all seemed lost, Jesus Christ broke through every barrier that attempted to hold Him down, namely death and the grave! What seemed impossible became possible! He broke through them like that dandelion broke through the blacktop to show its sun-like flower.

In like manner, Malachi refers to Jesus as the Sun of Righteousness:

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EASTER BLESSINGS Saints of Oklahoma!

Today in most of our Lutheran churches, Easter Sunday services are marked with the beauty of multiple Easter lilies adorning the altars and filling the sanctuary with their strong aroma. But does the Easter lily truly represent the impact of Easter for us?

True, from a dead-looking bulb springs forth new life. True, the trumpet-shaped white blooms look as though they are trumpeting good news to the world. But the bloom quickly dims, droops and drops leaving only a bloomless, leafy stem.

Of course, the lily can be transplanted in one's garden to impress with a summer bloom. But in spite of the Easter lily's beauty, it's a fragile plant that needs much tending and it quickly fades.

Lilies

When Easter Sunday was celebrated at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Orlando, I have no remembrance of any flowers adorning the altar. Perhaps there may have been a bouquet or two of peonies or irises from the garden of Miss Hulda and Miss Wilhelmina Gieschen. However, purchased flowers were neither considered nor available.

The trumpeting white bloom of an Easter lily was foreign to Orlando, at least at the Lutheran church. I think this was true also of the Evangelical United Brethren and the Christian Church since their pockets were attended by frugal hands as well.



Rev. Barrie Henke
District President

Honoring first responders

The Young Woman Representatives of the LWML Oklahoma District held the Fourth Annual Cookies for Courage at Lutheran Church of Our Savior, Bethany, on Jan. 24. A soup supper and devotion by Grace Rohwer, wife of Rev. Gary Rohwer, Lutheran Church of Our Savior pastor, was held prior to cookie decorating.

Many plates of cookies were delivered to first responders across the state. The ladies look forward to this event every year as a way of gathering together and serving those who first serve us. For more information about Cookies for Courage as well as other LWML activities, visit oklwml.org.

— Submitted by Shari Stepanek



From left, (standing) Shelly Michael and her daughters, Elizabeth, Abi and Hannah; and (seated) Milty Brasher. Elizabeth and Hannah are the 2019 Young Woman Representatives.

Continuing education for 2020

The Oklahoma District is blessed with several significant continuing education opportunities in 2020.

First, there are two monthly reading groups, open to all rostered workers and laity, offering CEU credits. One is hosted in the Tulsa Circuit, the other in the Ponca City Circuit. The reading list is at oklahomalutherans.org/continuing_education. More reading groups can be developed wherever there is interest.

Second, this June, Lutherhaven Retreat Center will host a continuing education course in the Panhandle. Dates and course details will be announced via email and the continuing education page at the district website.

Third, if you are a pastor who would benefit from a getaway, DOXOLOGY is offering programs in both Schuyler, Neb. and Belton, Texas. DOXOLOGY, an LCMS Recognized Service Organization, provides training in advanced

pastoral skills while also providing spiritual care to pastors and equipping them to take better care of themselves and their family while serving God's flock. I highly recommend the program for pastors and their congregations.

There are three parts to the DOXOLOGY program, including four days of pastoral training, a later weekend session with at least one lay leader from the pastor's congregation, and a third event welcoming pastors' wives. Housing, meals and material for all sessions are included in the \$2,200 cost, which is eligible for district continuing education funds and can be spread out over two years. Visit doxology.us for more details and to check out the schedule.

Contact Rev. Ned Moerbe at pastortlblackwell@sbcglobal.net with any church worker continuing education questions or suggestions you may have.

MESSAGE

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... for you who fear My name, the Sun of Righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings." — **Mal 4:2**

And so He did on Easter morning!

Dandelion Seeds

By the power of the Holy Spirit, the Easter Gospel is graciously planted like a seed in our heart. He sinks our spiritual root deeply into the Word and the Sacraments. The growth given by the Holy Spirit impacts our whole life.

The message of the risen Christ is proclaimed in our congregations on Easter, with the intention of impacting the community in which we are planted. The Easter Gospel of Jesus as the Resurrection and the Life is not to be confined to our sanctuaries or our own lives. Instead, it is intended to impact all those around us.

Recall the dandelion. After it blooms, you know what happens — hundreds of seeds replace the bloom and the slightest bump or breeze sends them flying through the air. They lodge in the most unpredictable places, but wherever they lodge a plant comes forth. That new plant may have to break through blacktop, hardened red clay or a hard gravel road.

And to this we have been called as Easter people: to distribute the seed for the Holy Spirit to plant wherever He desires! He is the One who gives that tiny seed the "breakthrough" power it needs, and He is one who gives the growth and increase!

I am not recommending that on Easter morning you adorn your altar with dandelions, but I do hope that you consider the Easter story in the light of their resilience, hardiness and seed-bearing qualities. The Holy Spirit lets the Easter Gospel break through the hardest ground ... and hearts! Through it He changes lives and eternities!

Let each of us sow that seed.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Congrats!

We rejoice with those in the Oklahoma District who are celebrating wedding anniversaries of **50 years** or more in April.

Bethany, Lutheran Church of Our Savior

Ray and Rosalie Seebeck
62 years, April 12

Edmond, Holy Trinity

Melvin and Caroline Schemm
60 years, April 24

Enid, St. Paul

Robert and Twana Winter
51 years, April 7

Bud and Patricia Durheim
56 years, April 25

Norman, Trinity

Duane and Nancy Brosowske
58 years, April 9

Oklahoma City, Messiah

Harl and Mary Dubben
55 years, April 17
Robert and Audrey Smith
58 years, April 21

Okarche, St. John's

Bobby and Violet Moeller
59 years, April 7

Tulsa, Christ the Redeemer

Gene and Betty Kuhlmann
50 years, April 18

Belated

Watonga, Mount Calvary

Larry and Jaquita Bernhardt
61 years, March 22

Alva, Zion



Don and Ruby Hughes
60 years, April 17



John and Lena Rehkop
50 years, April 20

Ponca City, First



Jack and Della Rein
64 years, April 5



Fred and Jane Miller
55 years, April 24



John and Nada Fetrow
71 years, April 30

Enid, Redeemer



Eugene and Shirley Sharp
55 years, April 30

Tulsa, Christ the Redeemer



Del and Jan Dreyer
57 years, April 20

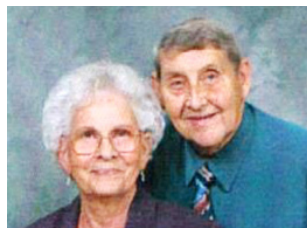


Bob and Jean Paulsen
64 years, April 21

Tulsa, Our Savior



Bev and Tom Bordner
53 years, April 1



Gene and Katie Duenow
58 years, April 9



Bartlesville, Redeemer

Alice Gilbreath
99 years, April 8
Evelyn Burling
91 years, April 21

Enid, St Paul

Helen Gilles
92 years, April 1
Roland Schroeder
92 years, April 15

Fairmont, Zion

Milton Eggers
95 years, April 10
Doris Holle
92 years, April 24

Norman, Trinity

Patsy Halliburton
90 years, April 19

Oklahoma City, Messiah

Norma Schafer
93 years, April 6
Darrell Grob
91 years, April 28

Ponca City, First

Carl Pierce
93 years, April 9

Tulsa, Our Savior

Melvina Schneider
91 years, April 2

Belated

Norman, Trinity

Arlesa Tarver
99 years, March 6



Alva, Zion
Isabel Gates
98 years,
April 1



Women in mission

On Feb. 9, these three LWML members of Messiah, Oklahoma City, were commissioned by Rev. Mark Muenchow, Messiah pastor, to participate in a MOST Ministries outreach in Belize.

From left, Cathy Berner, Barbara Krei and Linda Shults traveled to the Central American island nation to help distribute eyeglasses to those in need. During daily clinics, the 10-member team conducted vision tests, and fitted and distributed eyeglasses. Hundreds of used glasses had been donated by Messiah members.

MOST (Mission Opportunities Short Term) Ministries is an LCMS Recognized Service Organization.

— Submitted by Rev. Marvin Henschel



Baptisms in Okmulgee

Feb. 23 was a historic day at Trinity, Okmulgee. Rev. Dr. Christian C. Tiews, Trinity pastor, performed five Baptisms. All five are from the same family, and the children are all cousins. Trinity members Manuel and Angela Parada are the grandparents and Darrin and Tammy Roesners served as sponsors. (Angela and Tammy are sisters.)

— Submitted by Becky Kirkbride



CTSFW holding continuing education class in Knowles

Rev. Dr. Roland Ziegler will instruct a course, "Luther's Bondage of the Will," June 15-17 at Lutherhaven Retreat Center in Knowles. The course is part of the Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind. (CTSFW), Continuing Education series for 2020. Ziegler serves as chairman of Systematic Theology at CTSFW.

Luther thought this his best book, though not everybody agrees. It not only deals with the question of the freedom of the will, but also with election, the hidden God and the relation of God to evil — questions that are alive today.

For more information and to register, visit ctsfw.edu/ctsfw-events/continuing-education/knowles-oklahoma.

Share your news with us!

We are always in need of more submissions for the Oklahoma District insert of *The Lutheran Witness*.

Please submit anything of note in your congregation, including announcements, special events or human interest stories that you or your organization would like published.

Please send submissions to jhedrickokdistrict@gmail.com.

You may also mail your submissions to Janice Hedrick, P.O. Box 70, Owasso, OK 74055 (918-396-9629). Please ensure photos sent electronically are high resolution.

The deadline for the combined June-July issue is April 15.