



/ APRIL 2021

DISTRICT NEWS

OKLAHOMA



A Committal

I recently found myself standing in Gracelawn Cemetery in Edmond. It is a historic cemetery bordered by an ornate rock fence on the east and north sides, an open field for expansion on the west side and the tracks of the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe Railroad on the south.

I was attending the burial service of a 59-year-old man who had died from COVID-19. He was a native of Kenya, so about 99 percent of those attending were from Kenya and Tanzania. It was a traditional Kenyan burial ritual, and I was duly impressed. A soloist began singing in Swahili, and her words were echoed by the 100-plus people standing around the grave.



Rev. Barrie Henke
District President

An older man standing beside me whispered the hymn translation in my ear as they sang. I heard beautiful words of how God Almighty holds the hand of His children throughout their earthly journey to the grave and beyond, leading them into heaven with Jesus.

The casket was lowered, leaving a gaping hole. Family members tossed roses on top of the casket. Finally, everyone else threw a handful of sand onto the coffin. The words “earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust” were a constant refrain as each person tossed sand into the grave. A harpist played softly during this ritual.

Suddenly, interrupting the solemnity of the ritual was the loud, shrill sound of an air horn blaring from a slow-moving freight train. I thought, “How perfect! St. Paul would love this!” Because at that moment the words of 1 Corinthians 15 came to my mind:

Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, **at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound**, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. (*v.51-52, emphasis added*)

I am sure that the Lord’s angel is not an engineer for the BNSF, nor will the trumpet he sounds be the air horn of a freight train, but he will sound the Lord’s trumpet on the Last Day to awaken the dead!

God’s Not Done With You Yet!

The resurrection of the body is a foundation teaching of the Christian faith. It is based upon the fact of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead on Easter morning. Most religions of the world believe in the spirit living forever, but Christianity adds the great truth that the body will rise again and live forever.

Paul writes:

For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.

— 1 Cor. 15:53

He is talking about our body

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**GOD’S
BLESSINGS**
Saints of
Oklahoma!

‘I cannot do otherwise ... may God help me.’



"Luther at the Diet of Worms" by Anton von Werner. © Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0 and used with permission.

LCMS to celebrate 'Here I Stand' Sunday

ON APRIL 18, 1521, three and a half years after he nailed the 95 Theses to the church door in Wittenberg, Martin Luther made his historic stand at the Diet (official meeting) in the German city of Worms (pronounced "Vorms"). Accused of fostering heresy, he was directed by Charles V and other leaders to recant his teaching about the pure Gospel or face death.

As recounted in his collected works, Luther concluded his statement to the Diet with the words: "Since then your serene majesty and your lordships seek a simple answer, I will give it in this manner, neither horned nor toothed: Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience.

"I cannot do otherwise, here I stand, may God

help me, Amen" (LW 32:112–13).

On April 18, 2021, the Synod will commemorate the 500th anniversary of Luther's defiant defense of the pure Gospel by observing "Here I Stand" Sunday, as called for by the adoption of Resolution 4–09 at the 2019 Synod convention. The resolution reads, in part:

"WHEREAS, Scripture gives us encouragement with these words: 'Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful' (Heb. 10:23) ... therefore be it Resolved, That April 18, 2021, be declared 'Here I Stand' Sunday throughout The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, its districts, circuits, and congregations ... and be it finally Resolved, That our churches and people be encouraged to spend time in prayer, asking the Lord to continue to bless the proclamation of the Gospel."

Congregations and individual contributors have also received further Synod communications on how they might participate in the gathering of a Synodwide thank offering, as called for in Res. 4-09, as part of the anniversary celebration.

- Find resources and ideas for celebrating: lcms.org/here-i-stand-sunday
- Learn about the history of the Reformation: lutheranreformation.org



HERE I STAND SUNDAY
IT'S STILL ALL ABOUT
Jesus

Congrats!

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

Edmond, Holy Trinity

Melvin and Caroline Schemm
61 years, April 24.

Mike and Carla Komarek
50 years, April 25

Enid, St Paul

Robert and Twana Winter
52 years, April 7

Bud and Patricia Durheim
57 years, April 25

Norman, Trinity

Duane and Nancy Brosowske
59 years, April 9

Oklahoma City, Messiah

Harl and Mary Dubben
56 years, April 17

Robert and Audrey Smith
59 years, April 21

Ponca City, First

Fred and Jane Miller
55 years, April 24

Tulsa, Christ the Redeemer

Gene and Betty Kuhlmann
51 years, April 18

Belated

Mustang, Christ

Joe and Bettye Haller
69 years, March 15

Bill and Gen Allen
63 years, March 22

Alva, Zion



John and Lena Rehkop
51 years, April 20

Enid, Redeemer



Eugene and Shirley Sharp
56 years, April 30

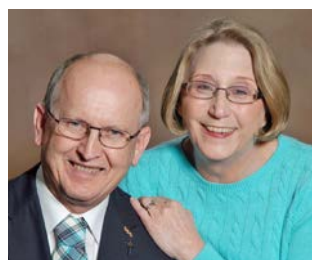
Tulsa, Christ the Redeemer



Bob and Jean Paulsen
65 years, April 21



Del and Jan Dreyer
58 years, April 20



Don and Marie Vavra
50 years, April 24

Tulsa, Our Savior



Bev and Tom Bordner
54 years, April 1



Gene and Katie Duenow
59 years, April 9

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Celebrating **90 years** or more!

Bartlesville, Redeemer

Alice Gilbreath
94 years, April 8

Evelyn Burling
92 years, April 21

Covington, St. John's

Joy Schweer
90 years, April 29

Enid, St Paul

Roland Schroeder
93 years, April 15

Oklahoma City, Messiah

Modean Luecke
91 years, April 1

Darrell Grob
92 years, April 28

Ponca City, First

Carl Pierce
94 years, April 9

Alva, Zion



Isabel Gates
99 years, April 1

Share your news with us!

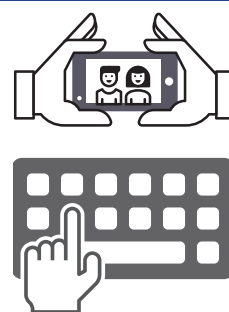
We are always in need of more submissions for the Oklahoma District Lutheran Witness insert. Why should you send them in? It helps remind us of what God is doing around the district. It is also a way to share ideas for nurturing those God has already gathered into His church and for reaching those still outside of the flock with the Good News about Jesus. It finally reminds each of us that Christ's Church is much larger than just our particular congregation.

We understand the church looks different these days, but please share with us how your church is still engaged in ministry and what our life together currently looks like.

Please send submissions to Janice Hedrick at jhedrickokdistrict@gmail.com. You may also mail your submissions to Janice at P.O. Box 70, Owasso, OK 74055 (918-629-1225).

Please ensure photos sent electronically are high resolution.

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





Rev. Matthew Tassey was installed as pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Shawnee, on Feb 21. He previously served as pastor of St. Paul, Malcolm, Neb. Clergy participating in the service are, from left (front row) Revs. Phillip Borntreger (Trinity, Ardmore, and Norman Circuit visitor), Matthew Tessey, Barrie Henke (district president); (back row) Mark Bershe (St. John, Moore), David Nehrenz (Trinity, Norman, and district first vice-president), W.R. Rains (Zion, Guthrie, and district secretary), Chris Griffith (St. Paul, Wellston), Ron Simpson (Good Shepherd, Midwest City) and Jason Steffenson (First, Ada).

— Submitted by Rita Rains



The congregations of the LCMS have approved, by over 90 percent, a proposal to extend the current 2019–2022 triennium, pushing the Synod's previously scheduled 2022 national convention to 2023 and extending the timeline for districts that wish to delay their conventions from 2021 into 2022. More than 63 percent of Synod congregations voted.

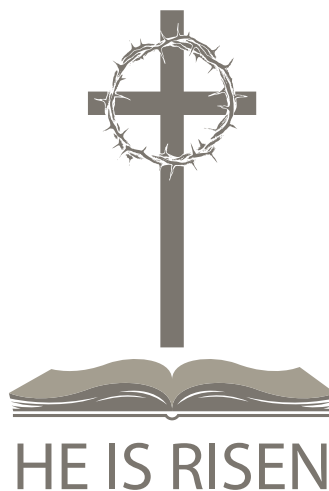
As a result, the Oklahoma District Board of Directors has approved to delay the district convention that was scheduled for April 2021. **The rescheduled district convention will be held June 10-11, 2022, at Hilton Garden Inn in Edmond.** Revised timelines and other details will be communicated soon.

MESSAGE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

after the great Day of Resurrection. The body that goes down into the ground — battered, beaten, cancerous, sickly, maimed — is not what shall come out of the grave when the last trumpet sounds! (Finally skinny ... I can't wait!)

Sadly, at many Christian funerals there is no mention of the resurrection of the body. There may be talk of the spirit living forever, but almost any religion can preach that message. Because of Easter we know there is more to the story. When a Christian dies, his spirit goes into the presence of Jesus, while his dead body returns to the dust from which it was taken.

But, when the last trumpet sounds those dead bodies will be raised as glorious bodies and reunited with their spirit! Then both spirit and body together shall live with Christ forever in His new, sinless creation!



St. Paul burst out in song at this truth: When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

"Death is swallowed up in victory."
"O death, where is your victory?"
O death, where is your sting?"

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. — **1 Cor. 15:54-57**

Just remember, even when death draws near, God is not done with you yet! The next time you hear the blaring horn of a slow-moving freight train, recall with joy and expectancy the promised resurrection and pray, "Come, Lord Jesus, quickly come!" That's Easter! Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!