



/ APRIL 2022

DISTRICT NEWS

OKLAHOMA



**Easter Blessings,
Saints of Oklahoma!**

WE, TOO, WILL RISE!



Rev. Barrie Henke
District President

Disclaimer: This is the first Easter article I submitted after becoming district president in 2009, so I think it is somewhat fitting for it to be my last *Lutheran Witness* Easter article — with many edits — since my term ends in June this year.

Underground Village

Deep in a pasture east of Orlando is located a village. The only visible location markers are the tops of old cedars far to the north of a sumac grove. Working one's way through the pasture's rough terrain, it becomes obvious that the cedars were deliberately planted as a border around this underground village. That underground village has a name: St. Paul's Lutheran Cemetery.

Caution must be used in opening the gate lest a rattlesnake be near. The gate opens to a plot of holy ground set aside to inter

the mortal remains of God's saints. The 30 or 40 graves have been undisturbed for many years. But for me, the markers bear familiar names: Gieschen, Brase, Traugott, Young, Schroeder, Emde and Henke. They are my grandparents Gustava and Saloma; aunt Bertha, who died of influenza; cousin Agnus, who died at birth; step-grandmother Mary Emde Henke and many more connected to me by memories, stories or DNA.

My grandparents have separate stones. My grandmother's is in German and my grandfather's is in English. They both read, "For to me to live is Christ, to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). It is always quiet there at this underground village, except for the Oklahoma wind blowing through the cedars. Standing in the midst of this village of saints, I am overwhelmed with feelings of expectancy. These graves may be forgotten by men, but they are not forgotten by God.

Expectancy!

Evergreens are a traditional border for Christian cemeteries symbolizing eternal life. When they marked the perimeter of "consecrated" ground (referred to as "God's acre"), it was to remind everyone of the great assurance we have in and through Christ: everlasting life for all who die in the faith.

Sometimes Christians give into a half-truth about eternal life that comes from Greek philosophy, namely, that the spirit freed from the body lives eternally apart from the body. That is a half-truth. Think back to the Apostles'

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The 50th Convention of the Oklahoma District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

June 10-11 • Hilton Garden Inn, Edmond

Ballots set for election of **district president** and **first vice-president**

One of the duties of the district secretary is to solicit nominations for district president and first vice-president. This was accomplished when a mailing was sent out on Sept. 30 to all Oklahoma District congregations.

From that mailing, I received 29 replies. For president, the top three candidates nominated were willing to have their names placed on the ballot. They are:

- ▶ **Rev. Mark R. Muenchow**
Pastor, Messiah, Oklahoma City
- ▶ **Rev. David R. Nehrenz**
Pastor, Trinity, Norman
- ▶ **Rev. Bill Schneider**
Pastor, St. John, Lawton

The top four names nominated for first vice-president were contacted regarding their nomination. The reason for contacting the fourth was that one of the top three chose not to have his name placed into consideration. After the fourth nominee confirmed his willingness to be considered, the nominees for district first vice-president are.

- ▶ **Rev. Christopher D. Hall**
Grace, Tulsa
- ▶ **Rev. Mark R. Muenchow**
Messiah, Oklahoma City
- ▶ **Rev. Dwayne J. Schroeder**
Redeemer, Enid

— Submitted by Rev. W. R. Rains,
Oklahoma District Secretary



Rev. Hall



Rev. Nehrenz



Rev. Schneider



Rev. Schroeder



Rev. Muenchow

Share your news with us!

Why publicize your congregation's stories in *The Lutheran Witness* district Insert?

- ▶ It reminds people that Christ is active in His church in so many ways.
- ▶ It gives readers a sense of the larger body of Christ, that they have brothers and sisters engaged in the same work.
- ▶ It gives congregations ideas for events and outreach.
- ▶ It helps former members to see what is going on in their former congregations.
- ▶ It aids other congregations in knowing who to reach out to when they need resources or referrals for a project they are considering.

We love to feature a wide variety of events occurring in our district congregations. All that is needed is a brief description of the event and one or two photos. No event or announcement is too big or small.

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. Send the largest sized photo from your camera or phone.

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

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,
62 years, April 24

Mike and Carla Komarek
51 years, April 25

Enid, St Paul

Robert and Twana Winter
53 years, April 7

Bud and Patricia Durheim
58 years, April 25

Norman, Trinity

Duane and Nancy Brosowske
60 years, April 9

Okarche, St. John's

Bob and Violet Moeller
61 years, April 7

Oklahoma City, Messiah

Harl and Mary Dubben
57 years, April 17

Robert and Audrey Smith
60 years, April 21

Ponca City, First

Fred and Jane Miller
57 years, April 24

Tulsa, Christ the Redeemer

Tom and Bev Bordner
55 years, April 1

Gene and Betty Kuhlmann
52 years, April 18

Del and Jan Dreyer
59 years, April 20

Bob and Jean Paulsen
66 years, April 21

Don and Marie Vavra
51 years, April 24

Tulsa, Our Savior



Gene and Katie Duenow
60 years, April 9



Dartball MVP!

Every February, the LWML Priscilla Circle of Zion Lutheran Church, Oklahoma City, invites the congregation to a Valentine's Day dinner and party. This year's event was held at a barbecue restaurant. After dinner, the group went to church to play dartball — men v. women. Olinda Berry (pictured above), age 102, was a participant. When it was her turn to throw the dart, she got a double. Then on her next turn, she got a home run.

Olinda has been a member of Zion since 1937 and will turn 103 on July 24.

— Submitted by Vivian Stehr

Happy Birthday

Bartlesville, Redeemer

Alice Gilbreath
101 years, April 8
Evelyn Burling
93 years, April 21

Covington, St. John's

Joy Schweer
91 years, April 29

Oklahoma City, Messiah

Bud Grob
93 years, April 28

Ponca City, First

Carl Pierce
95 years, April 9

Tulsa Good Shepherd

Leon Tibbs
95 years, April 8

Tulsa, Our Savior

Melvina Schneider
93 years, April 2

Alva, Zion

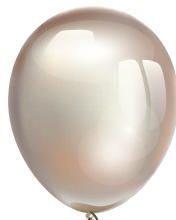


Isabel Gates
100 years, April 1

Fairland, St. Paul's



Ed Dresher
90 years, April 5



Belated

Alva, Zion
Art Britcher
99 years, March 7

Ponca City, First



Lois Bintz
91 years, Jan. 9

LCEF has grants for K-8 schools

On Jan. 15, Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) announced the opening of the 2022 grant process for its long-standing Kaleidoscope Fund. This year, eligibility will be limited to LCMS K-8 elementary schools. Those who are interested and eligible for the grant should submit a grant application by June 1.

Funds will be granted in amounts between \$10,000 and \$40,000.

The application proposal deadline is June 1. To find out more or start the grant process, visit lcef.org/kaleidoscope.

Trinity welcomes NEW SHEPHERD

God answered the prayers of the Trinity, Broken Arrow, congregation as Rev. John Michael Wilke was installed as pastor on Jan. 30. For the service, Rev. Dr. Arthur Spomer gave the sermon and Rev. Barrie Henke, Oklahoma district president, performed the installation. Rev. Tim Dreier, pastor, Our Savior, Tulsa, read the texts. Pastor Wilke is pictured in front, second from right.

Paul Steitz was the crucifer, Judy Newman was the organist, Andrew Pearson was the trumpeter and Nathan Jones was the liturgist.



EASTER

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Creed. Where does the term “life everlasting” occur? Just to refresh your memory: “...the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.” The Bible tells us that when we die, the body returns to the ground and the soul returns to God who gave it (Eccl. 12:7). But there is more!

Bodily Resurrection

Listen to how both the Old and New testaments testify to the resurrection of the body:



- The prophet Daniel writes: “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” DAN. 12:2
- The great sufferer Job writes: “For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will stand upon the earth. And after my kin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall

see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.” JOB 19:25-27

- The Apostle Paul writes: 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. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 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. 15:51-57

Glorious Future

Jesus’ resurrection seals to us a

glorious future: body and soul together in His eternal presence. Our living Lord empowers us to live out our Easter faith as we wait for the great day of resurrection. Our risen Christ summons and empowers us to live out our Easter faith by fulfilling His Great Commission, sharing His Easter Good News, and by demonstrating actions of love toward others.

On His appointed day, that underground village east of Orlando will be no more! No power on earth can hold our bodies down when the Lord returns in glory. And empowered by the Holy Spirit no earthly or spiritual power can hold us back from witnessing of our risen Lord Jesus. While alive our bodies are to be used as living sacrifices, holy temples for the Lord’s work. And when these bodies are laid to rest, then we remember that the grave, the coffin, the urn are only temporary containers for Christ’s Easter People!

Alleluia! Christ is risen ... and we, too, shall rise! Alleluia!