



DISTRICT NEWS

OKLAHOMA

Adjusting to the **new normal**

Normal

Life in Orlando was somewhat normal. A regular day had few surprises, so the lifestyle found in Orlando was one of predictability, routine and normalcy.

Except the day when the Emde Creamery was robbed. Now that was not normal! My Uncle Adolph and Aunt Hertha Emde operated the creamery, which bought and sold cream from area farmers. It was not just a creamery, however, but also a grocery at the end of Main Street.

Then one day a young man — a stranger — entered the store armed with a handgun. He demanded cash from the register. A startled Aunt Hertha grabbed a thick Coke bottle and moved toward him speaking a vocabulary not learned in church. The robber threatened to shoot, but slapped her instead. Uncle Adolph, always calm, gave him the money and the man exited through the back door.

My uncle and aunt immediately called the “central” phone office to have a “general ring” sent out. In a short time, angry citizens turned out for a man-hunt. Some had guns and one had a



Rev. Barrie Henke
District President

rope. In the alley behind the store, John Chadwick shot the robber in the leg, followed by threats of lynching him. When the Logan County sheriff arrived, the robber pleaded to get him out of this crazy town!

It took a while for the town folk of Orlando to fall back into a normal routine, but they did. Nothing often upset the normalcy except an occasional fire of which I was blamed, but that is another story ... maybe.

New normal

The world, our nation, our communities, our schools and our churches have experienced the robbing of our comfortable *normal* by an unseen virus called COVID-19. As these summer months arrive, we are noticing changes that seem to be creating a *new normal*. I think it ironic that, in several places where Muslim garments such as the niqāb or burka are banned, it's now required that everyone wear a face mask! Even though it is intended for the safety of all, it does create a *new normal*. (My Montgomery ancestors were ahead of their times since most of them wore face masks as they moved westward!)



Establishing a *new normal* is not foreign to us. We do it out of necessity with a job change, an Alzheimer's or cancer diagnosis, or the death of a spouse. We may not like it, but we adjust. A *new normal* may bring unexpected blessings as it moves us from our comfort zone and the predictable routine of our life. But sometimes it can have negative results. Many people have anticipated the churches to be filled when the social distancing rules are lifted. However, new habits are formed in a short time, and because of our sinful flesh, we are more prone to form a bad habit. About

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MESSAGE

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two months of no “in-person” worship services can create a hunger for worshipping together, or sadly, satisfy that hunger with other things offered by the world.

The devil looks for opportune times in working to destroy someone’s faith, and this pandemic offers him a perfect opportunity. The apostle Peter warned:

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time He may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith.

—1 Peter 5:6-9

Like a roaring lion prowling, lurking about ... what a vivid picture of his style! He does not attack the herd except in an attempt to separate one from the herd, then he targets the one and moves in for the kill. This places a scary twist to the whole concept of “social distancing.” When we are alone, the devil wants to keep us in that situation so he can complete his soul-killing work! He

works to convince a person that there is no need for worshipping with other Christians.

“Resist him, firm in your faith!” May your *new normal* be such that you desire to be with the “herd”... the “flock”... in worship of our Good Shepherd! It is there that we are fed with Word and Sacraments. The Holy Spirit always works through the Word, but even

more powerfully does He work to build up our faith as we assemble together, commune together, reaffirm our baptism together, and sing together the praises of our risen and reigning Lord Jesus Christ! Let’s claim this as our *new normal*!

**With Joy in our risen and ascended King Jesus,
President Barrie E. Henke**



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 Oklahoma 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 welcome pictures and stories of congregational events, youth events, outreach events, installations, events from your men’s or women’s group, servant events, conferences, anniversaries, church renovations or additions, and much more.

We understand many activities have been postponed

because of the pandemic, but please share with us your stories and photos of how you’re currently worshipping and continuing our kingdom life together as the church.

If you would like an upcoming event publicized, please make sure we have the information at least two months in advance.

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

The deadline for the September issue is July 15.



CALL DAY 2020

We rejoice with the 194 seminary students who received first call placements and assignments as pastors, deaconesses, vicars and deaconess interns during the Call Day services on April 28 at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (CSL), and April 29 at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), Ind. There were 113 assignments made out of CSL and 81 assignments made out of CTSFW.

Call Day 2020 by the numbers:

- ▶ 194 total students
- ▶ 103 first call placements as pastors
- ▶ Three first call placements as deaconesses
- ▶ 83 assignments as vicars
- ▶ Five assignments as deaconess interns

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the services of both seminaries were held entirely online — for the first time in either seminary's history. Despite the nontraditional format, seminary presidents Rev. Dr. Dale A. Meyer (CSL) and Rev. Dr. Lawrence R. Rast Jr. (CTSFW) encouraged the students to embrace their unique circumstances.

"In the 181 years of Concordia Seminary, there has never been a class like yours," Meyer said. "Years from now, you'll tell your children and grandchildren, 'We were the coronavirus class. Call Day was virtual!'"

"You are being sent to flesh-and-blood people, with hurts and hopes, with joys and sorrows. And you're being sent by the spirit of the Lord Jesus to draw alongside them in their walk toward home and their walk toward life."

"Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen, teaches Hebrews 11:1," Rast said. "Our faith is being tested, but we are not overcome. Our patience is tried, but we remain faithful. For in all things, our risen Lord Christ continues to care for His church by providing able servants of the Word. We had hoped to celebrate it in a different setting. More importantly, we have hope because Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia!"

You can re-watch the live services and see complete lists of each seminary's assignments and calls on their websites:

- ▶ CSL: csl.edu/callday
- ▶ CTSFW: callday.ctsfw.edu



Please join us in giving a special welcome to the pastors and vicars who received first calls and assignments to the Oklahoma District!

CANDIDATES CALLED



Joshua Brakhage
(CSL)
Holy Trinity,
Edmond



Ahren Reiter
(CSL)
Holy Cross,
Lawton



Timothy Roggow
(CSL)
Zion, Alva



Tyler Arends
(CTSFW)
Trinity,
Guymon

VICARS ASSIGNED



Justin Bangert
(CSL)
Holy Trinity,
Edmond



Jordan Peiser
(CTSFW)
Trinity,
Norman



St. John ‘MASKeteers’!

The LWML of St. John Lutheran Church, Lawton, continues to serve in the midst of the pandemic. Comanche County Memorial Hospital put out a request for face masks, needed for patients and those accompanying them to the emergency room. After putting the word out to the Dorcas Guild, Lois Courtright (above) and Marki Payne have been busy at their sewing machines! As of mid-May, 50 had been delivered and more were on the way. Join the ladies in praying for all those who use them for their protection and health. And prayers of thanksgiving for the time and talent of these ladies serving!



Celebrate Cloeter’s 40 years in ministry

To celebrate his 40 years of ministry, Rev. David Cloeter, pastor of Trinity, Broken Arrow, will be honored at a come-and-go reception from 3 to 5 p.m. on Saturday, July 11, at Trinity, 5750 S. Elm Place.

Cloeter was born in Fairmont, Minn. and spent his maturing years in Milwaukee and Seward, Neb. David’s parents were Lutheran school teachers and graduates of Concordia Teachers College, Seward.

In 1976, David also graduated from Concordia Teachers College (now Concordia University, Nebraska), where



he was awarded a teaching degree.

Following his graduation, the influence of his parents, relatives, pastors and professors convinced David to enter the pastoral ministry.

“The thought of learning the Greek of the New Testament and studying God’s Word in its original language was very appealing to me,” Cloeter says. “I wished to understand the breadth and depth of Christianity at the grass-roots level. I could see no higher calling in life than that of bringing people to the knowledge of their Savior, Jesus Christ.”

In 1980, David graduated from Con-

cordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind. He subsequently served as shepherd for congregations in Wyandotte, Mich.; Albuquerque, N.M.; and Owatonna, Minn. Since December 2000, Rev. Cloeter has served as pastor of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Broken Arrow.

For the past 40 years, Cloeter has served the Lord in many wonderful ways — pastor, counselor, teacher, leader and friend. It is always apparent that his burning desire for continued breadth and depth of LCMS doctrine is a driving force for his ministry.

Congratulations Pastor Cloeter ... you have consistently served the Lord, and those under your salient Christian guidance have benefited from your solid commitment to teaching the Gospel in its purity!

— Submitted by Denise Blair

HEARING GOD'S CALLING

By Rev. Heath R. Curtis
Coordinator,
LCMS Stewardship Ministry

Strange days are upon us. Lockdowns. Stay-at-home orders. Travel shut down. Offices closed. Millions upon millions out of work. What should the church be doing right now? What should I be doing as an individual? Where do we start?

“We brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world” (1 Tim. 6:7) — it all belongs to God. But the Lord has blessed us to be His stewards: He gives us gifts to be used for His purposes. But how do we know what those purposes are? God’s purpose for us in our lives is expressed in the various vocations, or callings, that we have. That’s all the more clear in a time of emergency: God makes each aspect of our lives “holy ground” by calling us to be His children.

A great treasure of the Lutheran Reformation was the rediscovery of the holy callings given to each Christian. In Luther’s day, it was taught that the surest way to enter heaven was to leave the world and join a monastery. But in



Luther’s eyes, to do this was actually to abandon the holy callings (“vocations”) that God has given us to fulfill in the home, the church and society at large. Each one of these vocations makes a claim upon us. Luther laid out the biblical commands for our various vocations in the Table of Duties in the Small Catechism, and specifically the command for all Christians when it comes to stewardship in the church:

- ▶ **1 Cor. 9:14:** “In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.”
- ▶ **Gal. 6:6–7:** “Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.”



In the Church

Our vocation as Christians in the church makes a claim on us: on our presence on Sunday morning (even now that it might only be online!) and on our support for the work of the Gospel. We find purpose here: We are called to use what God has placed in our trust for His high purpose of bringing salvation to all people.



In the Home

Likewise, our callings in the home make a claim on us: again for presence and support. So, for example, parents use their income to feed, clothe and protect their children, and they must be present with their children to actually raise them. Children are called to listen to their parents. Grandparents give support, love and wisdom. And so on — whatever your role in the home, God is calling you to a high purpose.



In Society

In society at large our vocations are varied, but they all boil down to being a good neighbor no matter where we are. We work, we have friends, we help those in need. In each place, we are to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. That means being a faithful friend and worker, a kind and generous neighbor, etc. Once again, this role places a claim on our presence and our support and gives us a role to play in God’s high purposes for the world.

God has called you to be His child. He has made your whole life “holy ground,” whether in the church, the home, or in society at large. In each role He has given you, pray for wisdom and seek to fulfill His purposes in your use of the gifts He has given you.

He has made your
whole life **“HOLY
GROUND,”**
whether in the
church, the home, or
in society at large.



Lightstock

Congrats!



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

June and July

Bartlesville, Redeemer

Fred and Jackie Malone
55 years, June 3

Nolan and Marilyn Jones
58 years, June 11

Lewis and Becky Trentman
57 years, June 16

Ralph and Lois Bergstad
54 years, June 17

Ken and Cheryl Byam
55 years, June 20

Daryl and Vickie Doughty
53 years, July 7

Jere and Bonnie Smith
65 years, July 23

Bethany, Lutheran Church of Our Savior

Bud and Ann Reedy
53 years, July 15

Breckinridge, Immanuel

Gerald and Judy Roggow
57 years, July 7

Edmond, Holy Trinity

John and Patricia Steffens
58 years, June 1

Wayne and Carolynne Bechler
58 years, June 2

Neil and Carol Ford
52 years, June 2

Jim and Carol Flasch
58 years, June 9

William and Jan Fraase
61 years, June 13

Dennis and Rita Paul
52 years, June 14

Ray and Clara Hasselwander
57 years, June 15

Bill and Susan Foster
52 years, June 16

Richard and Connie Lewellen
59 years, June 23

Jim and Pam Duit
51 years, June 27

Gary and Michele Quick
50 years, June 27

Gary and Linda Johnson
52 years, July 1

Roger and Linda Bradford
52 years, July 3

Richard and Patricia Glasser
60 years, July 10

Marvyn and Audrey Olson
61 years, July 11

Enid, St. Paul's

Ralph and Barbara Kroll
57 years, June 1

Ray and Sharyn Mueller
52 years, June 8

Gerald and Mary Ann Hoeltzel
63 years, June 22

Rev. Ken and Carole Wade
56 years, June 28

Jere and Carole Courter
58 years, June 30

Joe and Marjorie Chandler
51 years, July 16

Guthrie, Zion

John W. and Ada Schneider
63 years, June 1

Harold and Joy Flasch
64 years, July 15

Fred and Phyllis Zachary
51 years, July 21

Norman, Trinity

Tom and Anne Anderson
51 years, June 8

Nancy and Norman Parker
63 years, June 9

Joel and Barbara Anderson
50 years, June 20

Rev. Dr. Howard and Valerie Kramer
72 years, June 27

Okarche, St. John's

Mike and Nancy Bomhoff
52 years, July 10

Oklahoma City, Messiah

Terry and Molly Pufahl
51 years, June 7

Henry and Denise Spielmann
63 years, June 17

Michael and Barbara Schnauffer
51 years, June 21

Phil and Karen Woodward
50 years, June 20

George and Carol Williams
64 years, July 1

Rev. Marvin and Shirley Henschel
61 years, July 18

Hugh and Dorothy Simpson
63 years, July 28

Skiatook, Shepherd of the Hills

Rev. David and Marilyn Helmer
56 years, June 28

Tulsa, Lutheran Church of Our Savior

Larry and Eileen Wigger
74 years, July 21

Woodward, Trinity

Larry and Gwen Meier
54 years, June 5

Bill and Vura Moser
57 years, June 15

Oklahoma City, Immanuel



Bill and Betty Mahan
71 years, June 26

Broken Arrow, Trinity



Lynn and Freida Burton
55 years, June 5



Bill and Marilyn Ninke
53 years, July 29

Perry, Christ



Jim and Karla Karcher
51 years, June 6



James and Peggy Gottschalk
65 years, June 25

Perry, Christ



George and Darlene Alley
69 years, June 16



Bruce and Martha Henke
56 years, June 23

Ponca City, First



Gary and Sandy Sibley
50 years, June 13



Phil and Joyce Abbuhl
50 years, June 14

Ponca City, First



Karel and Sharilyn Blubaugh
56 years, June 10



Glen and Barbara Mayer
57 years, June 30

Shawnee, Redeemer

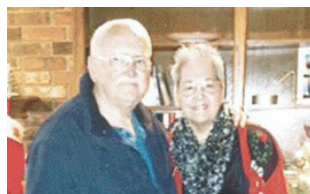


Chuck and Doris Norton
51 years, June 28



Don and Marilyn McCollough
60 years, July 24

Belated Claremore, Redeemer



Don and Marj Purkey
58 years, April 13

Tulsa, Christ the Redeemer



Norman and Bernie Zanter
55 years, July 3



Harold and Colene France
55 years, July 24



Roger and Nancy Witte
56 years, July 26

Guthrie, Zion



John and Kay Williams
60 years, June 4

Happy Birthday

Broken Arrow, Trinity
Jim Wilson
90 years, June 22

Leona Stoiber
90 years, June 30

Covington, St. John's
Marie Fischer,
94 years, July 7

Duncan, Good Shepherd
Dean Jordan
90 years, July 13

Edmond, Holy Trinity
Gene Queri
91 years, June 11

Mildred Treiber
90 years, July 12

Enid, St. Paul's
Kathleen Gray
94 years, July 21

Verneal Hiatt
90 years, July 24

Lindy Eck,
91 years, July 31

Guthrie, Our Savior
Norma Fisher
90 years, July 3

Norman, Trinity
Rev. Dr. Howard Kramer
96 years, June 3

Oklahoma City, Messiah
Pauline Cox
91 years, June 2

Jerry Mauck
93 years, June 25

Delphine Zajic,
95 years, June 26

Charles Torbeck
91 years, July 12

Rita Malan
95 years, July 30

Dellora Elise Manske
98 years, July 30

Ponca City, First
Joe Banks
90 years, June 28

Tulsa, Our Savior
Eileen Wigger
95 years, July 11

Tulsa, Christ the Redeemer



Berniece Rowland
95 years, June 26

Perry, Christ



Marg Martin
96 years, July 9



Bob Ewy
92 years, July 20



Getty Images



Initiative
aims to
unite
Synod in
God's
Word



Short
verses
will be
posted
weekly

By Stacey Egger
LCMS Staff Editor, Writer

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) has a suggestion for how to spend some of your free time during the pandemic: memorize verses of Scripture together!

On March 25, Director of LCMS Worship and International Center (IC) Chaplain Rev. Sean Daenzer issued the Psalm 91 Challenge over LCMS social media, encouraging members of the Synod to memorize the psalm over a couple of weeks.

LCMS Communications decided to take the opportunity to launch a memory initiative that had been in the works for several months.

“Psalm 1 teaches us that it is blessed to meditate on the Word of God day and night,” said Dr. Kevin Armbrust, director of Editorial for LCMS Communications. “We in Communications had been talking about providing a Bible passage each week for the Synod to meditate on and memorize together. Our unity is in Christ and in His Word, so we wanted to provide an opportunity for the people of the LCMS to be united in memorizing Scripture.

“When Chaplain Daenzer started encouraging us to memorize some psalms, we knew this was the perfect opportunity to begin posting a weekly memory verse.”

Starting the first week of Easter, a new memory verse will be added weekly at lcms.org/memoryverse and shared on LCMS social media, including its Facebook page, facebook.com/TheLCMS.

The verses will be selected primarily from the Gospels and epistles. Most of the selections will be short, just one or two verses at a time.

Daenzer said that memorizing Scripture is a valuable practice for Christians, even in a digital age.

“We’re so connected with everything digitally, and we have

information at our fingertips,” Daenzer said. “But if that were to ever go out, what would we know? Almost nothing.

“When Jonah was in the belly of the whale, it was too late to pull out his Bible. It was too late to grab his catechism and his hymnal. ... The great Song of Jonah in Chapter 2 is nothing but pieces of the psalms stitched together. They’re his childhood memory verses and bedtime prayers that he was able to use in the total darkness of the whale to pray faithfully, to bring God’s Word to bear on his situation, and to comfort himself in the midst of great distress.

“And that’s exactly why we learn the Scriptures now: We never know when persecution may come, when technology or even access to Bibles and churches may go away. We’re getting a taste of that now in the quarantine time. So, it drives home the point that we need to have Scripture ... on our hearts and our minds.”

Tips for effective memorization from Chaplain Daenzer

- ▶ Small, short bites, repeated many times, are way better than one giant “cram” session. Take two minutes every night and say it through twice together, or once in the morning and once in the evening.
- ▶ Music always helps us to memorize more easily and then to retain it. Sing anything that can be sung, either to a tune you know, or to a simple tone like one of the psalm tones in the hymnal.
- ▶ If you have a Bible translation that you’ve started memorizing in, don’t feel like you have to switch translations whenever a new one comes along. Whatever you’re familiar with will be just fine.