



/ NOVEMBER 2021

# DISTRICT NEWS

## OKLAHOMA



LCMS/Erin M. Lunsford

## The Communion of Saints



**Rev. Barrie Henke**  
District President

### Together in Christ

There was a special lady who belonged to my first congregation in southwestern Minnesota. Her name was Anna. She was a widow in her early 80s who loved to host the new bachelor pastor for breakfast about twice a week.

Her husband, Pete, had died several years before I arrived to serve at St. Peter Evangelical Lutheran Church in Heron Lake and Delafield townships. The large, white-framed church was topped with a bell tower that lifted high the cross of Christ to the community. One mile west of the church was the cemetery, the abode of five or six generations of the same families I served.

Pete was buried there. Many widows made weekly treks to visit the grave of their deceased husband. Among them were Lillian, Minnie, Erna, Ida and Olga (even though Olga searched the fence line for asparagus more than paying respects to Carl, but Carl didn't mind!).

One morning while visiting Anna, she confided to me that she did not think herself to be a "good" widow since she felt no urge to visit the grave of her husband like the other widows. "I don't feel close to Pete at the cemetery," she said. I asked, "Where do you feel close to him?" Her response touched my heart: "In church during worship. He would always hold my hand. We would sing hymns and commune together. That's where I feel close to him!"

Emotionally, I responded, "That's where you should feel close to him. After all, the liturgy says, 'Therefore with angels and arch-angels and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious name.' So when we sing praises to the Triune God, our voice blends with the voices of all the company of heaven, the saints in heaven, and that includes Pete!"

I think that assurance comforted her. Over the years it has also comforted me.

### All Saints

October ends with Halloween, that is, "hallowed evening," marking the eve before All Saints' Day. On Halloween our society goes crazy with "ghosties and ghoulies and things that go bump in the night," but when All Saints' Day arrives only the Christian Church celebrates.

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

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### Zion welcomes new members

In September, Zion Lutheran Church, Oklahoma City, welcomed 22 new members. Following a wonderful service and time for the new members to learn about the history of Zion, the congregation gathered for a hamburger and hot dog cookout and homemade sides. From left, Rev. Ron Christie, Finnley and Rachel Bartlett; Sarah Baumann; Eric Steinmetz; Darlene Steinmetz; Josie, Craig and Elizabeth Braddy; Mary Bormann; Andrea Delling; Mark and Jean Engebritson; and Emma, Jody, Trey and Billy Thomas. — Submitted by Vivian Stehr

## MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

We confess in the Apostles' Creed: "The Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints." The Holy Christian Church and the communion of saints span both earth and heaven. It encompasses saints at work in mission and ministry on earth and under attack by satanic forces (Church Militant), and saints at rest in heaven in the presence of Jesus (Church Triumphant).

There are physical boundaries that separate us, namely the grave, but we are not separated by spiritual boundaries. In Christ we are one communion, whether in heaven or on earth! I think St. Paul hits on this holy common union when he encouraged:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith. **Heb. 12:1-2**

He reminds us of the connection we have in Christ to all the saints, both *here* in our presence or *there* in His presence. He almost makes it sound as though the saints in heaven serve as a cheerleading squad for the saints on earth who are running the race and fighting against satanic attacks. This is, indeed, a "holy communion" because it is totally bound to and based upon our faith in Jesus Christ.

### Thanksgiving

We begin November with All Saints' Day and we close it out by observing Thanksgiving Day. One of the things for which I am thankful is that conversation I had with Anna so many years ago. It has become more meaningful to me since my wife passed to the Church Triumphant in 2009. To feel close to her I need not hold a graveside vigil in Prairie Hill Cemetery, just north of Fulda, Minn.; instead I need only sing the beautiful hymns and liturgies of praise to know that her voice is blending with mine!

Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. **1 Cor. 15:57**



## Christmas market is Dec. 4

First Lutheran Church and School, 1101 N. Fourth St., Ponca City, will host their 10th Annual Christmas Market Oklahoma Festival from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 4.

The market will feature a wide variety of vendors selling their arts and crafts, Christmas decorations for your home and office, activities for the children, and local music groups performing for your enjoyment, and much more!

Traditional German brats and pulled pork sandwiches will be available for lunch. In addition, should you have a sweet tooth, there will be an amazing selection of Christmas cookies to purchase.

If you would be interested in being a vendor, please contact Shirley Zimmerman at 580-761-4657.

Plan to attend this delightful Christmas event!

# Congrats!

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

## **Bartlesville, Redeemer**

Bob and Diane Seemann  
59 years, Nov. 18

Ed and Marsha Durkin  
53 years, Nov. 30

## **Edmond, Holy Trinity**

Gene and Jan Queri  
59 years, Nov. 17

## **Okarche, St. John's**

Freddie and Alberta (Jeannie)  
Peters

55 years, Nov. 4

Marlin and Kathryn Kremeier  
53 years, Nov. 5

Larry and Judy Heald

58 years, Nov. 24

## **Oklahoma City, Messiah**

Kevin and Margo Baker  
50 years, Nov. 20

Daniel and Doris Lucas  
53 years, Nov. 18

## **Tulsa, Good Shepherd**

Norman and Marcie Thorson  
68 years Nov. 21

## **Broken Arrow, Trinity**



Truman and Linda Criss  
61 years, Nov. 26

## **Tulsa, Grace**



Ervin and Patsy Postier  
65 years, Nov. 21

## **Tulsa, Our Savior**



Allen and Valerie Arthurs  
51 years, Nov. 6



Larry and Launa Rheurk  
54 years, Nov. 16



Marvin and Sydney Duensing  
62 years, Nov. 30

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

## **Bartlesville, Redeemer**

Marge DeFrees  
99 years, Nov. 22

## **Broken Arrow, Trinity**

Mary Maslanka  
96 years, Nov. 13

## **El Reno, Trinity**

Miriam Biegel  
98 years, Nov. 2

## **Enid, St. Paul's**

Geraldine Heidrich  
93 years, Nov. 3

Marjorie Chandler

96 years, Nov. 8

Deloris Theimer

90 years, Nov. 21

## **Okarche, St. John's**

Laurnell Lenz  
91 years, Nov. 29

## **Perry, Christ**



Gerald "Red"  
Rainsbarger  
92 years, Nov. 5

## **Broken Arrow, Trinity**



Norma Dobbinst  
92 years, Nov. 1

## **Oklahoma City, Messiah**

Betty Renth  
95 years, Nov. 8

Mildred Kiefer  
98 years, Nov. 29

## **Tulsa, Christ the Redeemer**

John Woods  
100 years, Nov. 8

Phyllis McKay  
95 years, Nov. 9

Art Fabrizio  
92 years, Nov. 17

# 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](mailto: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 January 2022 issue is Nov. 15.**





### Teachers gather for convention

The Oklahoma Lutheran Teachers Convention was hosted by First Lutheran Church, Ponca City, on Sept. 17. Four of the eight district schools sent representatives. Thirty-five participants worshiped together under the theme "In All Things," based on Colossians 1, and addressed concerns of mental and spiritual wellness. — Submitted by David Birnbau

### Mercy for Haitian children

Members of Zion Lutheran Church, Alva, enjoyed an afternoon together on Sept. 19 packing meals for Stamp Out Starvation (SOS) of Cherokee. Monte Stewart, director of SOS, said the meals will go to help those in need in Haiti.

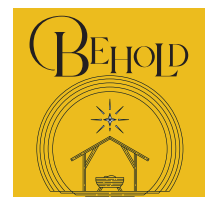
Forty-one volunteers, ages 5 to 80, helped pack 12,456 meals with over 1,200 pounds of rice, of which a portion was purchased with an Thrivent Action Grant.

— Submitted by  
Rev. Tim Roggow,  
Zion, Alva



2021 Advent and Christmas Media Kit

**NOW AVAILABLE!**



Downloadable materials to promote your Christmas services to your community.  
[lcms.org/christmas-media-kit](https://lcms.org/christmas-media-kit)

