



/ SEPTEMBER 2020

# DISTRICT NEWS

## OKLAHOMA



LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

“pick rock” before readying the field for sowing.

Ornate stone posts at each corner of the wall and at intervals along it were adorned with holy symbols embedded in them. This wall project was initiated by a priest who served Sacred Heart in the early days. As it became his passion, it consumed his whole ministry. After his death, the bishop assigned another priest with the charge of completing the wall. Still unfinished at his death, a third priest committed his whole ministry to finishing the wall. As unique as that cemetery wall might be, in my opinion, it is not very pretty. However, it must be somewhat effective since I have heard of no one escaping from that cemetery!

### Wall Building

As we have been weathering through the COVID-19 pandemic, we have experienced a type of wall building. “Social distancing” it is called. It has impacted our relationships with family, friends and fellow church members. Care facilities have virtually built isolation walls around elderly residents in an effort to protect them and their fellow residents.

### GOD'S BLESSINGS Saints of Oklahoma!

Isolationism is not normal for human beings and works to break down one's spirit. The worst punishment in the prison system is to place someone in isolation — solitary confinement. Satan loves isolated humans. It allows him time to

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## Living stones, through Christ



**Rev. Barrie Henke**  
District President

### The Wall

About eight miles southwest of my first congregation set the small town of Heron Lake, Minn. The town was dominated by two prominent features: the tall corn and soybean elevators beside the railroad and the lofty bell towers of Sacred Heart Catholic Church in the center of town.

Built in 1920, Sacred Heart is a very ornate church both inside and outside. About a mile north was the church cemetery, which set on one corner of a T-intersection. Turning west at the intersection would access the cemetery. Turning east would lead you into a lake and, consequently, you might end up in the cemetery! Bordering the cemetery was an ornate stone wall about four feet high. The stone was plentiful in that area since “field rocks” emerged through the soil each spring, forcing the farmers to

# Congratulations, Pastor Earl

On July 4, 1965 — 55 years ago — at his home congregation, St. Luke Lutheran Church, Olney, Texas, Rev. Earl Philipp was ordained into the pastoral ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

After high school graduation, Pastor Earl, as he is affectionately called, heeded the call from God and changed his career course from petroleum engineering to that of a seminary student. He graduated from Concordia University Texas, which was then a two-year junior college and finished his studies at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

During his time at the seminary, Pastor Earl met his future wife, Joan Kleinlein, and they married in 1963. Their union was blessed in 1967 with their beloved daughter, Adriana. Joan fell asleep in Jesus last November.

Pastor Earl's first call was to St. John's Lutheran Church, Lafe, Ark. He has also served congregations in Texas and Hinton, El Reno and Bethany.

So how does one celebrate 55 years in the ministry during a pandemic? It's done with a drive-by parade on July 5! Organized by Rev. Daniel Ross, pastor of Christ Lutheran Church, Mustang, where Pastor Earl attends, 19 vehicles of his church family drove past his home expressing their congratulations and love with posters, waves, honks and cards. The event was covered by a local news station, which interviewed Pastor Earl after the parade. Watch the report at [thelc.ms/3iudUHa](http://thelc.ms/3iudUHa).

Pastor Earl is always happy to see a visitor drop by the house and undoubtedly that visitor will hear him say, "I've got a story about that!"

Congratulations Pastor Earl Philipp on 55 years of faithful devotion to spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. May God continue to grant you many blessings!



Rev. Earl Philipp

## Time to think about DISTRICT CONVENTION

Plans are progressing for the 2021 Oklahoma District Convention, which will be held April 16-17, 2021 at the Hilton Garden Inn & Edmond Conference Center, 2833 Conference Drive in Edmond.

While this may seem a long way off, because many congregations have quarterly or semi-annual voters assembly meetings, there are several items pertaining to the convention which you will need to consider and to act upon.

**Each congregation's nominations for the offices of president and first vice-president are due Nov. 15.** Your congregation in a regularly called or special voters meeting can make two nominations each for president and first vice-president of the district. Forms have been sent to each district congregation.

Nominations for the following officers and committee members are also due:

- ▶ Secretary (ordained)
- ▶ Treasurer (lay)
- ▶ Education executive (ordained or commissioned)
- ▶ Evangelism executive (ordained)
- ▶ Education executive (ordained or commissioned)
- ▶ Missions executive (ordained)
- ▶ Stewardship executive (ordained)
- ▶ Youth executive (ordained or commissioned)
- ▶ Lutheroma Camp Committee (a total of six — ordained, commissioned or lay, but one must be ordained)

- ▶ Lutherhaven Camp Committee (three ordained and three lay)
- ▶ District Nominating Committee (two lay and two ordained)
- ▶ Synod Nominating Committee (lay)

Any voting member of your congregation or the congregation itself may nominate an individual or individuals to any or all the positions previously listed. When making a nomination, one form should be submitted for each individual nomination. Please make as many copies as you need. Once the forms are completed, they need to be returned to the church office so that they may be submitted to the district. Be sure that they are completely filled out before submitting them to the district.

In addition to the nominations, you will need to select your convention voting delegates. Each congregation is entitled to two votes at the convention, one of which is to be cast by the pastor and the other by the lay delegate (dual/multiple congregations served by a pastor or pastors are entitled to have one pastor and one lay delegate representing all the congregations.)

**Note:** The dual/multiple congregations that do not have the lay voting delegate may send a lay advisory delegate. The advisory delegate will have a voice but no vote at the convention.

All forms need to be returned to: Oklahoma District Convention PO Box 70, Owasso, OK 74055

**Rev. W. R. Rains**  
Oklahoma District Secretary





# Congrats!

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

## September

### Adair, Bethlehem

John and Charlotte Gulley  
51 years, Sept. 13

E. C. and Shirley Peper  
59 years, Sept. 16

Fred and Jane Harding  
54 years, Sept. 30

### Covington, St. John's

Earl and Janice Gopfert  
63 years, Sept. 15

### Edmond, Holy Trinity

Carlton and Georgianna Schmitz  
56 years, Sept. 12

### Enid, St Paul's

Walter and Pat Lemke  
62 years, Sept. 6

Sonny and Shirleen Otipoby  
51 years, Sept. 17

Gerald and Joyce Nolte  
53 years, Sept. 23

### Fairland, St. Paul's

Walter and Natalie Dauer  
57 Years, Sept. 28

### Guthrie, Zion

Jerry and Kay Murray  
63 years, Sept. 7

### Hooker, St. John's

R.G. "Sonny" and Linda Grounds  
58 years, Sept. 17

### Okarche, St. John's

Delbert and Deborah Hinrich  
52 years, Sept. 1

### Oklahoma City, Messiah

Travis and Margaret Simpson  
57 years, Sept. 2

Al and Marj Seeliger  
61 years, Sept. 4

Rev. Fred and Marlene Muenchow,  
60 years, Sept. 4

Marvin and Dorothy Kramer  
60 years, Sept. 24

### Perry, Christ

Max and Sherry Adams  
59 years, Sept. 2

Frederick and Karen Peterman  
60 years, Sept. 4

Allen and Carrol Piel  
59 years, Sept. 29

### Stillwater, Zion

Jim and Ruth Williams  
60 years, Sept. 3

### Tulsa, Christ the Redeemer

Ron and Phyllis Vause  
54 years, Sept. 2

Bob and Iris Wilson  
63 years, Sept. 22

### Blackwell, Trinity



Wayne and Jean Purdy  
66 years, Sept. 24

### Broken Arrow, Trinity



James and Linda Wyum  
50 years, Sept. 5



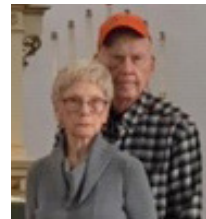
Carl and Judy Hefley  
58 years, Sept. 28

### Perry Christ



Jim and Linda Kukuk  
51 years, Sept. 1

Gene and  
Stella  
Kroll,  
66 years,  
Sept. 2



### Shawnee, Redeemer



Don and Ruth Sutherland  
64 years, Sept. 2



Scott and Jonnie Witt  
54 years, Sept. 3



Ken and Gerry Pfeil,  
52 years, Sept. 7

### Tulsa, Christ the Redeemer



Duane and Donna Anderson  
61 years, Sept. 5



Lynn and Sandy Moeller  
56 years, Sept. 12

### Vinita, Messiah



Carl and Betty Reichert  
50 years, Sept. 12

## Belated

### Bartlesville, Redeemer

William and Irene VanWey  
64 years, Aug. 12

Ron and Roberta Hall  
60 years, Aug. 27

### Chickasha, First

Don and Millie Rabine  
51 years, Aug. 10

### El Reno, Trinity



Charles and Alice Buchholz  
64 years, Aug. 17

## MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

lurk about more freely as he seeks to spiritually devour the loner.

God created us to be social creatures with a spiritual need to be with other people. To satisfy this need, He has placed us in a human family and a spiritual family. That spiritual family is the “communion of saints” — the “common union of people made holy by the grace of Christ.” In it we join with God’s saints throughout the ages who “...devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42).

The church does not and cannot exist in isolation. It is focused on people. People are the object of God’s extreme love wherein He gave His only-begotten Son to die for us so that we would not perish in our sin. God wants us to share that Good News of salvation in Jesus with other people.

Jesus graciously broke down the wall that isolated sinners from the holy God through His redemptive work on the cross. Jesus reconciled us to the Father, that is, He restored the Father’s desired friendship and communion with His fallen creatures. As blood-washed sinners, the Holy Spirit has made us something special — a living stone. Peter reaffirms:

You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. — **1 Peter 2:3**

### Stone Work

It is interesting that Peter calls us living stones since a stone is by nature lifeless. Peter should know. His name *Petros* means “rock,” and he knew very well what it meant to be a spiritually lifeless rock as opposed to being a living stone given life through the risen Christ.

We, too, are “living stones” through Jesus. His great purpose for us is not building walls — leave that to cemetery keepers. Instead we are purposed by Him to be building material for His spiritual house wherein and through which the love of Christ is shared with others. He gives us our stony existence life as His blood-washed and water-washed living stones.

The Holy Spirit desires us to tear down walls blocking access to Jesus, not to build or maintain them. He gives us eyes to see those around us who are walled in and isolated socially and spiritually. As a living stone may we allow that same Holy Spirit to use us in bringing the love of Christ to the isolated.

When I stand before Christ, I prefer to hear Him say, “Well, done, good and faithful ... living stone,” rather than (in a Minnesota accent), “Well, you betcha, that was a pretty good wall you built down there!” May the Holy Spirit use us to be His living stones working together in Christ to share His love in building His spiritual house!

**With Joy in Jesus • President Barrie E. Henke**

# Happy Birthday



**Bartlesville, Redeemer**  
Mildred Schnackenberg  
94 years, Sept. 12

**Okarche, St. John's**  
Betty ZumMallen  
90 years, Sept. 19  
Kenneth Tipton  
91 years, Sept. 20

**Oklahoma City, Messiah**  
Kitty Ernst  
96 years, Sept. 26  
Dorothy Grob  
93 years, Sept. 29

**Ponca City, First**  
Gene Wirtz  
91 years, Sept. 14

**Stillwater, Zion**  
Ramona Ehlers  
90 years, Sept. 8  
Hilda Kaiser  
102 years, Sept. 14

**Chickasha, First**  
Evelyn Lyles  
92 years, Aug. 26

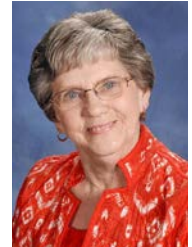
**Oklahoma City, Messiah**  
Val Reed  
100 years, Aug. 7

**El Reno, Trinity**



Helen King  
94 years, Sept. 28

**Ponca City, First**

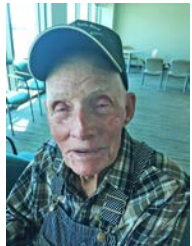


Donna Lane  
91 years, Sept. 20

**Okarche, St. John's**



Dorothy Schroeder  
100 years, Sept. 15



Raymond J Stover  
97 years, Aug. 16

## 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 November issue is Sept. 15.**

