



/ SEPTEMBER 2021

DISTRICT NEWS

OKLAHOMA



Living stones

Memorial Stones

Traveling along Highway 77 in northern Logan County, you will come to the town of Orlando. Just two blocks north of the city center (marked by the crumbling lumberyard) is a street called West Noble Avenue.

Turning right on West Noble, you will see on your left the remnant of a sandstone building. It has fallen into disarray over the past 60-plus years. These native sandstones mark the remains of Saint Paul Lutheran Church. It was once a flourishing congregation, but a diminishing popu-



Rev. Barrie Henke
District President

lation led to the demise of the town itself and, consequently the church.

I am saddened each time I drive past those stones. However, I take comfort in remembering all the good that impacted my faith and life as I worshiped among

those stones. I liken that remembrance to the Israelites crossing the Jordan River into the Promised Land. As the priests carried the Ark of the Covenant into the flooding

river, the water stopped. After everyone had crossed on dry ground, Joshua ordered one man from each of the 12 tribes of Israel to take up a stone from the midst of the river and stack those 12 stones on the riverbank in the Promised Land as a sign to the people.

“When your children ask in time to come, ‘What do those stones mean to you?’ then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. ... So these stones shall be to the people of Israel a memorial forever.”

Joshua 4:6-8

And likewise, those stones on the north side of West Noble Avenue in Orlando serve as a memorial to me of God’s goodness, mercy and love experienced from my baptism through my confirmation, and ultimately impacting my entire faith and life.

Living Stones

As I consider those memorial sandstones, I have grown to realize that it was not the sandstone building that impacted my faith, but the “living stones” who made up the spiritual house called Saint Paul Lutheran Church. Those sandstones bring to my remembrance the faces and faith of the “living stones” who worshiped and served there. Those were the “living stones” that shaped my faith, not the dead sandstones that shaped a building.

The apostle Peter says it so beautifully:

As you come to Him, a living stone rejected by men

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

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Foundation gets blessed gift from Good Shepherd

The congregation of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church (GSLC), Duncan, recently blessed Concordia Community Foundation with a ministry-advancing donation in memory of Ernst (Ernie) and Eva Gras, two long-time GSLC members. Ernst passed away in 1999, with Eva preceding him. Upon his passing, Ernie bequeathed some funds to his church, and this gift was a blessing to the small congregation as modest improvements to its church building and facilities have been made over the years.

In memory of Ernie and Eva, and in recognition of Rev. Harold Kamman and his many years of pastoral leadership at GSLC, the congregation approved a \$50,000 donation to the Kamman Chapel Expansion Fund, from the remaining Gras funds.

“For those who knew and remember Ernie and Eva Gras, we felt it would be a fitting use of their bequest, and would please them,” said David L. Taylor, GSLC council president. “Rev. Harold W. Kamman was a beloved pastor here at Good Shepherd from 1975 to 1991, and we are pleased to be able to offer this gift towards the Kamman Chapel expansion at Concordia Life Plan Community in Oklahoma City. May the positive attitude and joyful spirit of Rev. Kamman continue to be reflected in the worship space at Concordia, and in the ongoing mission to preach the Good Word to God’s people.”

“God has entrusted us to be stewards of the resources for the church, and we pray that this would be a blessing to Concordia Life Plan Community and would continue to promote God’s joy and love,” said Rev. David Heitner, Good Shepherd pastor.

“Pastor Kamman was a longtime resident and served on Concordia’s Board of Directors for decades,” said Paige Mills-Haag, Concordia Community Foundation executive director. “He envisioned a larger chapel for Concordia one day, speaking of it often prior to his passing. I think he would be pleased with the plans for this new chapel, to advance God’s kingdom and expand ministry offerings to the aging. The new chapel will more than double the seating capacity from 40 to 100 people, providing a new worship space to accommodate the nearly 200 residents at Concordia.

“Thanks to the generosity of our friends at Good Shepherd and new constituents who have joined the campaign, the chapel project has gained momentum in recent months, and we believe God is guiding and blessing our efforts. We invite everyone to join us on the journey.”

To learn more about Concordia Life Plan Community, Concordia Community Foundation or to join the campaign, visit concordiaseniorliving.com or call 405-720-7200.



‘BEACON OF HOPE’

Zion Lutheran Church, Lahoma, recently erected a 90-foot tall white cross with a 2-foot diameter. It is located on Zion’s northern boundary along Highway 412. The cross is a beacon of hope, peace, and life to all who travel between Woodward and Enid. Generous individuals have made the cross possible. Praise be to God! White crosses are also appearing on the horizons of several rural towns in northern Oklahoma.

Submitted by Marlene Karner-Johnson

LUTHERAN EARLY RESPONSE TEAM (LERT)

(LERT) is a network of LCMS volunteers who are organized at the district level and trained to deploy rapidly in the event of a disaster. In addition to flood buckets, chainsaws and words of Gospel comfort, LERT has another resource in its “toolkit”: a new website that will better facilitate the work of LCMS Disaster Response.



Congrats!

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

Bartlesville, Redeemer
Dennis and Jean Rickords
51 years, Sept. 12

Edmond, Holy Trinity
Carlton and Georgianna Schmitz
57 years, Sept. 12

Enid, St Paul's
Walter and Pat Lemke
63 years, Sept. 6
Sonny and Shirleen Otipoby
52 years, Sept. 17
Gerald and Joyce Nolte
54 years, Sept. 23

Fairland, St. Paul's
Walter and Natalie Dauer
58 Years, Sept. 28

Guthrie, Zion
Jerry and Kay Murray
63 years, Sept. 7
Butch and Carla Lattimore
50 years, Sept. 23

Okarche, St. John's
Delbert and Deborah Hinrich
53 years, Sept. 1.

Oklahoma City, Messiah
Rev. Fred and Marlene Muenchow
61 years, Sept. 4
Earle and Margaret Wagner
61 years, Sept. 11

Owasso, Faith
Elmer and Doris Schmall
62 years, Sept. 11

Perry, Christ
Max and Sherry Adams
60 years, Sept. 2
Frederick and Karen Peterman
61 years, Sept. 4
Allen and Carrol Piel
60 years, Sept. 29

Tulsa, Christ the Redeemer
Ron and Phyllis Vause
55 years, Sept. 2
Bob and Iris Wilson
64 years, Sept. 22

Belated

Blackwell, Trinity
Ed and Jackie Veith
50 years, Aug. 7

Chickasha, First
Dan and Marilyn Ramsey
54 years, July 1

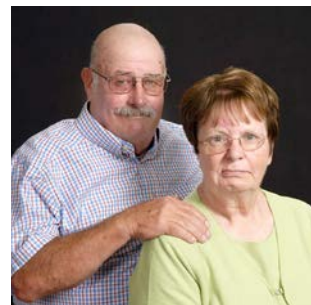
Don and Millie Rabine
52 years, Aug. 10

Blackwell, Trinity



Wayne and Jean Purdy
66 years, Sept. 24

Perry Christ



Jim and Linda Kukuk
52 years, Sept. 1



Gene and Stella Kroll
67 years, Sept. 2



Shawnee, Redeemer



Scott and Jonnie Witt
55 years, Sept. 3



Ken and Gerry Pfeil,
53 years, Sept. 7

Tulsa, Christ the Redeemer



Lynn and Sandy Moeller
57 years, Sept. 12

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Bartlesville, Redeemer
Mildred Schnackenberg
95 years, Sept. 12

Edmond, Holy Trinity
Edna Brelje
94 years, Sept. 24

Enid, St. Paul's
June Bone
90 years, Sept. 13
Alta Kiriokos
90 years, Sept. 28

Okarche, St. John's
Dorothy Schroeder
101 years, Sept. 15
Kenneth Tipton
92 years, Sept. 20

Oklahoma City, Messiah
Kitty Ernst
97 years, Sept. 26
Dorothy Grob
94 years, Sept. 29

Owasso, Faith
Don Smith
90 years Sept. 21

Perry, Christ



George Alley
90 years, Sept. 8

Share your news with us!

We are always in need of more submissions for the Oklahoma District *Lutheran Witness* insert. Please send them 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 November issue is Sept. 15.



MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)



but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. **1 Peter 2:4-5**

I have been blessed to visit numerous congregations within our Oklahoma District, and I will say that we have some of the most beautiful, well maintained church buildings in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. We take much pride in our buildings, but a building is not the church! The people make up the church!

A building is constructed of cold, dead stones, but the church is filled with warm, living stones which have been claimed by the grace of Christ and enlivened by the Holy Spirit.

Special Stones

By His design in Christ, God promises you and your congregation that:

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

1 Peter 2:9

We are a people who have been called out of the darkness of sin to the marvelous light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the purpose of proclaiming and sharing that Good News as God's people.

A church building is not intended to be a museum or memorial to the “good ole days,” but rather an active center of spiritual vitality, outreach and Gospel proclamation. We are a people who have been called out of the darkness of sin to the marvelous light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the purpose of proclaiming and sharing that Good News as God's people.

My daily prayer for the congregations of our Oklahoma District is that the Holy Spirit will bless each one with mission eyes to see the spiritual fields ripe for harvest, fields that may be next door to them, in our district or in the world. There is an ever increasing urgency to proclaim Christ's marvelous light to a darkened, dying world!

On Palm Sunday, Jesus reprimanded the Jewish leaders, saying that even if the children were prohibited from praising Him the very stones would shout out. We

are His “living stones” and He wants us to shout out His Good News of forgiveness and salvation.

So then, fellow “stones,” join with me to “proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

LWML

Deadline near for grant applications

The Oklahoma District LWML is now accepting mission grant applications for the next biennium (2022-23). Potential recipients shall:

- ▶ Be mission focused, with an emphasis on proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- ▶ Be affiliated with or approved by, and follow the mission of the LCMS.
- ▶ Be current and ready for implementation.
- ▶ Continue as a long-term mission after LWML funding is received
- ▶ Document costs, use of funds, dates needed, administrative funds.
- ▶ Have the approval of the district or partner church in which proposed grant recipient is located (unless the grant application is submitted by an LCMS board or the LCMS Office of International Mission).

Visit oklwml.org for an application and instructions for submission. **The deadline for submission is Sept. 30.**

Celebrate LWML Sunday

The first Sunday in October is traditionally set aside for the observation of LWML Sunday, but it may be celebrated at any time during the year.

“Our Hearts in His Hand” is the theme for LWML Sunday 2021 and is based on 1 Peter 4:8:

Above all, keep loving one another earnestly.

The LWML's heart is its members; our hearts have been made holy by God. We are fully dedicated to serving Him by serving His church at home and abroad. Our hearts for Christ are in His hand of service, wherever and when He has need of us.

To download, visit lwml.org/lwml-sunday.