



/ OCTOBER 2026

DISTRICT NEWS

OKLAHOMA

*'You
will be
free
indeed'*



FREEDOM is a precious commodity. In the United States of America we have freedoms which we treasure. We value liberty, justice and freedom against all tyranny. Civil freedom, however, is different than spiritual freedom. A person may be free in society and daily life, yet lack spiritual freedom.

Jesus says:

"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." **JOHN 8:36**

A person might respond to this by thinking, "I have never been enslaved to anyone, so why do I need to be 'set free'?"

Jesus explains further:

"I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin."

JOHN 8:35

In other words, our sinful nature is like a ball and chain we drag around behind us.

We chide ourselves for the thoughtless words, the hateful attitudes or the cruel actions which have been done or said against others.

Why do we continue to do those things which we know are wrong?

We are enslaved to a sinful nature, which is called the "Old Adam."

We love ourselves before we love God and other people.



**Rev. Dr. David
Nehrenz**

District President

The way to find freedom to love God and to love others is described by Jesus:

"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

JOHN 8:31-32

What is the truth? Jesus is the truth. He is God's truth in human flesh. To know Jesus is to know God. To know God is to know that He is our kind Heavenly Father.

Jesus is the "Second Adam," who came to undo the curse of the "First Adam." He lived the holy life for us which we could not live. Jesus died our death as our substitute and sacrifice on the cross. Jesus rose from the dead on the third day and has brought us eternal life. In Him is truth, love and life!

God the Father has accepted the sacrifice of His Son on our behalf. Jesus became sin for us and bore the curse of sin, death and hell. Now, by faith, we are given His righteousness and we have the blessings of holiness, life and heaven.

As Martin Luther explains in the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed:

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in ever-

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Christ Is Risen Indeed:

Oklahoma delegates reflect on the LCMS convention

The 69th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, July 18-23 in Phoenix, brought more than 1,300 people together. For several Oklahoma representatives, the experience provided an opportunity to see the wide reach of the LCMS, worship alongside fellow Christians, and consider how the work of the convention will affect congregations at home.

For Paul Steitz, a lay delegate from Trinity, Broken Arrow, the size of the gathering was one of his most memorable impressions.

“The contrast between one’s home congregation and the LCMS in convention, in terms of numbers of people, was staggering,” Steitz said.

Rather than simply being overwhelming, however, the size of the gathering encouraged him. “It gave me a feeling of confidence knowing that there are many more Missouri Synod Lutherans out there than one typically thinks,” he said.

Worship at the Phoenix Convention Center

While the size of the convention made an impression, worship was the most significant part of the experience for several Oklahoma representatives. Todd Stevens, a commissioned advisory delegate and a member of Immanuel, Broken Arrow, also identified worship as the most profound part of the convention.

“The grandeur of it all was awe inspiring,” Stevens said. “The music! The music was superb!”

Worship was held three times each day.

“Gathering for worship and hearing the delegates sing and respond to the liturgy reminded me that even when we may disagree on various topics, we worship God in unity,” Stevens said. “He is what unites us.”

That unity became particularly meaningful as the convention considered a

wide range of issues affecting the Synod and its congregations. Stevens said the experience strengthened his confidence that disagreements do not have to divide the church.

“Because of this truth, I believe our Synod can resolve any disagreement,” he said. “Praise be to God.”

The Lord’s church

The work of a national convention includes discussion and decisions that can have an impact throughout the Synod. For Rev. Tim Roggow, ordained delegate and pastor of Zion, Alva, the most important perspective was remembering who ultimately leads the church.

“No matter what decisions were made, this is the Lord’s church and He will continue to lead us to care for our members and reach the lost,” Roggow said.

That perspective also shaped Roggow’s thoughts about one of the challenges facing congregations in Oklahoma: the need for more pastors. He hopes there will be a greater effort to encourage men to consider pastoral ministry. With a limited number of pastoral candidates available, he also emphasized the importance of congregations and the district working together to support congregations that are seeking pastors.

The need for pastors is not simply an organizational concern. For Roggow, it is connected to the church’s calling to care for its members and proclaim Christ to those who do not yet know Him.

Tell the Next Generation

The convention’s emphasis on the next generation also resonated with one of Oklahoma’s youth representatives, Emma Wosmek.

“I love the message of the National Offering, ‘Tell the Next Generation,’” Wosmek said. “I am the next generation and I couldn’t imagine if I wasn’t raised in a Lutheran household.”

Wosmek attended the convention with her father and reflected on the role her family played in bringing her to the Christian faith. “I can especially thank my dad for that,” she said.

For Wosmek, the message of “Tell the Next Generation” reaches beyond those who are already part of Lutheran congregations. She sees it as an opportunity to proclaim Christ to those who have never encountered the Gospel. Her perspective offers a tangible example of why passing the faith from one generation to another matters. The work of teaching the faith in homes and congregations shapes the people who will carry that faith into the future.

Bringing the convention home

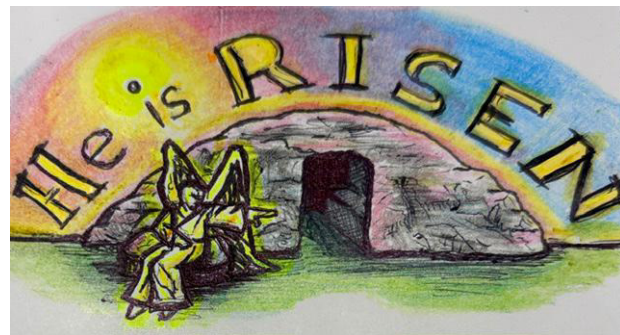
For the Oklahoma District’s delegates and representatives, the convention was ultimately about more than the decisions made in Phoenix. It was an opportunity

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At left are Hunter Remington and Emma Wosmek, who served the Oklahoma District as youth representatives at the LCMS convention. (They are pictured with Wyoming District youth representatives Miriam Kieser and Noah Waterbury.)

Pastor captures proceedings with art



For Rev. Matthew Tassey, the 2026 LCMS convention was captured not only in words, resolutions and presentations, but also in a series of illustrations he drew from the convention floor while serving as a pastoral delegate.

Each doodle from Rev. Tassey, pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Shawnee, became a visual reflection on something he heard or experienced during the gathering in Phoenix. Together, the illustrations traced a consistent theme: the resurrection of Jesus Christ changes everything.

The first illustration simply captured LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison leading the assembly. From there, Tassey's drawings moved toward the central theme of the convention, the resurrection of Christ and its significance for the church and the Christian life.

One illustration reflected on Rev. Dr. Thomas Egger's essay, titled "Christ's Changes Everything." (Egger serves as president of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis). Tassey saw this theme reflected throughout the resolutions considered by the convention, particularly those calling the church to orient its life and thanksgiving around the reality of Christ's victory over death.

Another illustration brought together several themes from a

single day of convention. Pastor Tassey connected the hope proclaimed in the morning sermon and the new life emphasized in the morning essay with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. He also reflected on the church's mission and fellowship, which flow from the gifts of Baptism and the Lord's Supper and are administered through the Office of the Holy Ministry. These themes were also prominent in the resolutions adopted that day.

A fifth illustration looked toward the Last Day. Following a sermon on Jesus raising the son of the widow of Nain, Tassey reflected on the way Christ transforms mourning into joy. The convention's consideration of the church's martyrs and its growing fellowship pointed toward the day when the whole church will be united in Christ. His illustration looked ahead to that day, pictured in the dawning light and the sound of the last trumpet.

Through his illustrations, Tassey captured more than the business of a national convention. He captured the hope at the heart of the Christian faith: Jesus Christ has died and risen again. Because He lives, mourning will give way to joy, death will give way to life, and the church looks forward in hope to the day when Christ will gather His people together in glory.

For Pastor Tassey, the convention's many discussions and decisions ultimately returned to one truth: Christ is risen indeed.

Practical ways to support local schools

By Rev. Daniel Ross

Evangelism Executive, Oklahoma District

Many schools today operate with limited resources and stretched personnel. Teachers and administrators often welcome help, especially when offered respectfully and without pressure.

Here are several ways congregations and their members can make a meaningful difference:

- ▶ **Volunteer at recess.** Many schools need additional adults to help supervise students during these periods.
- ▶ **Encourage faculty and staff.** Bringing iced coffee, soda and other drinks and snacks for teachers and staff is a simple but powerful way to show appreciation.
- ▶ **Pray for the school regularly.** Gather every few months to pray over the campus on a weekend. Organize prayer walks. Walking around the school grounds while praying for students, families and staff can become a regular spiritual discipline for members.
- ▶ **Serve in after-school reading programs.** Literacy programs often rely heavily on volunteers. Assist with after-school care. Churches with available facilities may be able to host programs, or members can volunteer in district-run programs.
- ▶ **Provide one-on-one mentoring or tutoring.** Just one hour per week can significantly impact a child's academic success. Many schools are actively seeking tutors.
- ▶ **Help with improvement or renovation projects.** Painting, landscaping or minor repairs can greatly bless a school community.
- ▶ **Sponsor character-education initiatives.** Encouraging virtues such as kindness, responsibility and perseverance benefits students and staff alike.
- ▶ **Meet practical facility needs.** Projects like pressure washing, cleanup or

campus beautification demonstrate tangible care.

This list is only a beginning. Every community has unique needs, and often the best ideas come simply from asking, "How can we help?"

What if the school hesitates to partner with the church?

Sometimes administrators are hesitant about formal partnerships with churches. This hesitation is usually not hostility; rather it is often caution rooted in policy, legal concerns or past experiences.

In these situations, a different approach can be helpful. Rather than asking, "Can our church come in?" consider: "We understand that formal church involvement may not be possible. However, we have individuals who care deeply about helping children succeed. Are there opportunities for individual volunteers, tutors or mentors? Is there someone we could connect interested volunteers with?"

This small shift changes the conversation. Schools frequently welcome individuals

who want to serve students; they simply need clear boundaries and appropriate channels. The goal is not institutional access. The goal is faithful presence.

The church's mission in everyday places

The primary mission of the church remains the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Yet throughout Scripture, mercy and proclamation belong together. Jesus preached repentance and forgiveness, but He also healed, fed, comforted and served.

Supporting local schools is one way Christians live out that same pattern today. It is loving our neighbor in action. It is mercy work that flows from faith. It is the church present in ordinary places where people already gather.

We may never know all the ways God uses small acts of kindness — a conversation at recess, encouragement for a weary teacher or a weekly tutoring session — to open hearts to His Word. But we trust that He works through faithful service.

If your congregation has been wondering how to engage its community, consider starting with the school down the street. Pray for them. Ask how you can help. Begin small. Be consistent.

Relationships grow slowly but through them, Christ's love becomes known. And often, that is where mission begins.



God bless Lutheran education!

The school year is well underway, and we continue to give thanks for our Lutheran schools and the servants who make them possible. We pray for the teachers, staff, parents and students as they learn and grow together.

We are especially thankful for the opportunity these schools provide to educate children while sharing with them the Good News of Jesus Christ. These photos from Holy Trinity Lutheran School, Edmond; First Lutheran School, Ponca City; Messiah Lutheran School, Oklahoma City; and Immanuel Lutheran Christian Academy, Broken Arrow, offer a glimpse of our Oklahoma District Lutheran schools. Please continue to keep them in your prayers.



First Lutheran School, Ponca City



Immanuel Lutheran
Christian Academy,
Broken Arrow
(Back to School Night)

Holy Trinity Lutheran
School, Edmond

Messiah Lutheran
School,
Oklahoma City



Bringing comfort and joy to the community

Persis, a K-9 Comfort Dog in the Oklahoma District through Lutheran Church Charities (LCC), continues to brighten days and bless hearts with her ministry. Persis' home congregation is Christ the Redeemer, Tulsa, but she is rarely in one place for very long. Persis' handlers and ministry partners accompany her to congregations across the district, schools, Hillcrest Medical Center in Tulsa, and many other locations. Persis recently paid a visit to San Miguel School of Tulsa to bring students and staff comfort before a big testing day. She also visited the Christ the Redeemer (CTR) quilting group to encourage them as they make quilts for those in need.

As LCC K-9 comfort dogs police ministry was celebrated in July, the Oklahoma District gave thanks for Steve Hurry, Persis' police handler. As part of the ministry, Hurry (a retired reserve police officer) helps give Persis and her ministry team access to law enforcement officers, their families, and the communities they serve following a crisis. LCC K-9 police ministry handlers are current and former law enforcement officers who understand the unique challenges and experiences of the law enforcement community.

Please continue to keep Persis and her ministry team in your prayers as she stays busy providing opportunities for her team to bring the hope of Jesus to those who are in need.



Persis visits the CTR (Tulsa) Quilters. Pictured are, from left, Jane Holt, Diane Fager (Persis' handler), Lynn Kollock, Barb Sprunger, Roxy Hurry (Persis' handler) and Sandy Cooper (seated).



Persis visited San Miguel School of Tulsa.

Institute headed to Mequon

It's time to mark your calendar for the 2027 LCMS Institute on Liturgy, Preaching and Church Music, set for July 12–16, 2027, at Concordia University Wisconsin (CUW), Mequon, Wis. The theme will be "Holy Week" and will encompass Palm Sunday to Easter and everything in between.

The LCMS Worship Institute brings chancel, loft and pew together to sing Christ's great work of salvation. Watch for more information to come.

Share your news with us!

Submit articles and photos to oklahomalutherans.org/lutheran_witness.

Articles and photos may also be emailed to commsokdistrict@gmail.com.





Campers take part in clean water project

Camp Lutherhaven attendees turned a small effort into an opportunity to make a lasting difference this summer. Campers assembled 93 water filters that will help provide up to 1,200 people with clean, sanitary water for up to 10 years. The completed filters will be distributed through Wine to Water, an international charity dedicated to providing sustainable water solutions to communities in need.

What began with a few kits and the willing hands of campers became a gift that will reach those in need over many years.

MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

lasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

Reformation Day is on Oct. 31. The Christian church rejoices that we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone, which is revealed in Scripture alone!

Freedom. In Jesus Christ alone, we do indeed have true freedom!

DELEGATES

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

to see the larger fellowship of the LCMS, worship with Christians from across the country, and return home with renewed encouragement for the work taking place in local congregations.

The LCMS is made up of individual congregations, families, pastors, church workers and members across the country, but those people are gathered into one church because of Christ. The work continues in Oklahoma. Congregations will continue to teach the faith, care for their members, encourage men and women to consider church work, and proclaim Christ to their communities. The convention in Phoenix offered a glimpse of how many people are engaged in that work throughout the Synod.

Most importantly, it offered a reminder of why the church gathers in the first place.

Christ is risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Bethlehem, Adair

George and Arlene Hugley
69 years, Oct. 20

Johnny and Bernice Walker
52 years, Oct. 26

Redeemer, Bartlesville

Robert and Doris Mills
64 years, Oct. 11

Trinity, Blackwell

Darrel and Trish Grossardt
55 years, Oct. 23

Holy Trinity, Broken Arrow
Robert and Bonnie Buffington
58 years, Oct. 29

Holy Trinity, Edmond

Steve and Debbie Kukuk
55 years, Oct. 2

Immanuel, Broken Arrow

Steve and Jacki Gray
51 years, Sept. 6

Marline and Jackie Bence
55 years, Sept. 25

St. Paul's, Enid

Paul and Sally Dunbar
58 years

Ron and Kris Young
55 years

Tony and Veta Wheeler
50 years

Messiah, Oklahoma City
Danny and Candy Oden
57 years, Oct. 2

Ablaze, Tulsa

Linda and Ed Edwards
57 years, Oct. 14

Christ the Redeemer, Tulsa



Tom and
Barbara
Sprunger
55 years,
Oct. 2

Zion, Stillwater

Martin and Rosalie Weber
60 years, Oct. 8

Alan and Muhrizah Brunken
58 years, Oct. 12

Stan and Ginny Benson
66 years, Oct. 15

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Bethlehem, Adair

Louie Thiems
92 years, Oct. 15

Holy Trinity, Broken Arrow

Jean Rensvold
95 years, Oct. 17

Pat Andrews
91 years, Oct. 31

Redeemer, Claremore

Huey Schulze
95 years, Oct. 3

Don Debolt
92 years, Oct. 6

Holy Trinity, Edmond

Richard Lewellen
92 years, Oct. 1

Trinity, El Reno

Shirley Wiedermann
90 years, Oct. 5

Joann Heupel
91 years, Oct. 24

Zion, Fairmont

Violet Eggers
91 years, Oct. 23

Messiah, Oklahoma City

Harl Dubben
90 years, Oct. 8



DISTRICT NEWS

Immanuel, Breckinridge, held its annual Confirmation Reunion and New Member Welcome on May 3. Confirmation classes celebrating anniversaries of 50-plus years and new members (since May 2025) were acknowledged after the service, followed by dinner and fellowship.

Those able to attend were, from left, Braxton Buss (new member by Holy Baptism), accompanied by parents Bo and Anthea; Adena, Peyton and Brad Bolte (new members by transfer); Valeria Lewis (70th anniversary confirmand); Teddy Bentz (65th); and Kendall Roggow (55th).



LCEF

Dear Oklahoma District Members,

Fall has arrived! Kids are back in school, the leaves are changing color and the weather is getting a bit cooler. Here in the Oklahoma District, the Enid Circuit is hosting the Professional Church Workers' Conference Oct. 12–13, at Redeemer, Enid. Dr. Bernard Bull, president of Concordia University, Nebraska, will present on the theme "Faithful and Flourishing." We pray for and celebrate our faithful church workers as they converge in Enid for a quick two days of learning and fellowship.

One way that LCEF helps the work happening in ministry is by offering two podcasts, *The Grace Place Podcast* and *Ministry Moments*. Burnout can dampen the beautiful sounds of a thriving ministry. These podcasts strive to keep listeners encouraged, confident and assured through a lifetime of ministry work.

Help your ministry thrive and align with God's purpose. Both podcasts can be found through Apple Podcasts, Amazon Music, and Spotify.

Blessings, Jeffrey Maltz

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Kansas and Oklahoma Districts

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THE

Grace Place

PODCAST

ministry

moments

Amplify Your Ministry Work

Burnout dampens the beautiful sounds of a thriving ministry.

Grace Place Wellness and Ministry Moments are podcasts created to keep listeners confident, encouraged and assured throughout a lifetime in ministry work.

HOPE

FAITH

CARE

TRUST

COURAGE

PATIENCE

PRAYER

GRACE

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