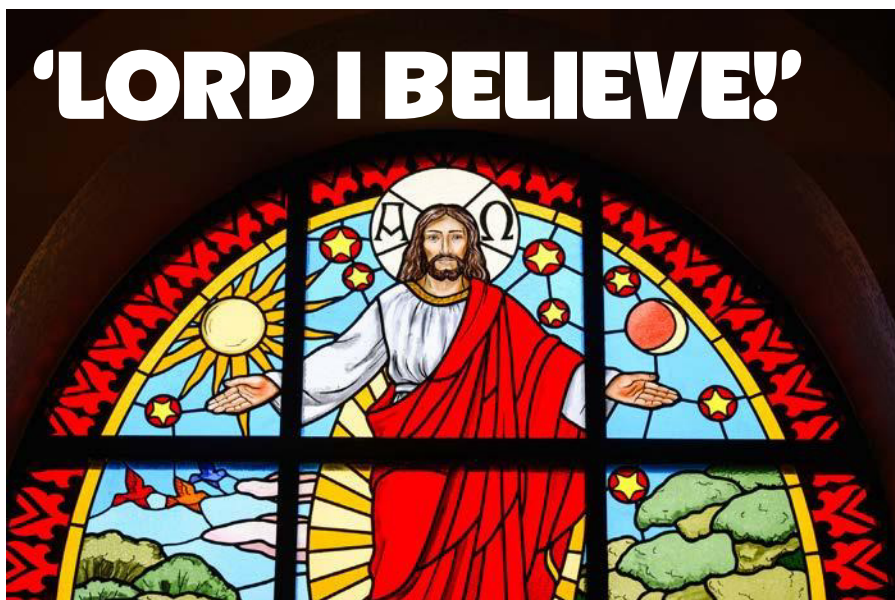




# DISTRICT NEWS

## OKLAHOMA



said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.” 25-27

Astounding words! They identify Jesus as the Resurrection, the Life, the Lord, the Christ and the Son of God. He is the promised Messiah who came to earth in his Incarnation. We join Martha in confessing these truths at each Sunday Divine Communion Service, when we confess the Nicene Creed.

What was the proof that Jesus, the carpenter from Nazareth, was also the holy Son of God?

Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” ... And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.” 38-39, 41-42

Jesus came from His Father and so now He speaks directly to His Father.

When he had said these things, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.” The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.” 43-44

Certainly there were gasps of astonishment from those in the crowd who saw this!

Astounding miracle! Jesus is pulling out all the stops as He gets closer to Holy

See **MESSAGE**, Page 2

Everyone believes in someone or something. A god is simply the one in whom a person places his or her trust. There are many religions and worldviews all around us every day. What do we believe as Christians?

In John 11, Jesus was told that His friend, Lazarus, was gravely ill. He purposely waited a few days before He ventured to see him. When Jesus arrived, He found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days.

Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.” Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” 21-24

As a faithful Jewish woman, she knew that the Old Testament taught that God would bring forth the resurrection of the dead at the final judgment. What she said and believed was indeed true. However, Jesus had bigger plans for that day.

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” She



**Rev. Dr. David Nehrenz**  
District President

# ‘Finding Peace’

You won't want to miss this opportunity — mark your calendars now! All LCMS women in the Oklahoma District are invited to gather for our 59th convention, to be held April 17 -18 at the Hilton Garden Inn, Edmond. We will proclaim Christ, support missions, equip women and serve others. Our theme is "Finding Peace," based on John 14:27: (Jesus said) "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you."

We are excited about our programming, which is centered around finding peace in today's world amid all the pressures that separate us from God.

- ▶ Bible study leader: Michelle Diercks, author
- ▶ Keynote speaker: Rev. David Nehrenz, LCMS Oklahoma District president
- ▶ Mission speaker: Patti Ross, past national LWML president

### Interest sessions

- ▶ "God is with You During Depression and Loneliness" — Deaconess Rachell Highley (First, Ponca City)
- ▶ "God Sustains You During Sorrow and Grief" — Dr. Linda Burks, psychologist
- ▶ "Lord of Hope Strengthens Your Heart" — Rev. Clayton Dodge (Immanuel, Garber)
- ▶ "Courage to Face the Unknowns of Life" — Rev. Marvin and Shirley Henschel (emeritus, Oklahoma City)



Rev. Clayton Dodge



DCE Suzanne Watt



Deaconess Rachell Highley



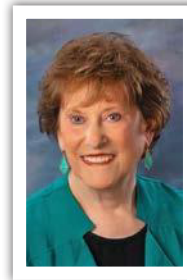
Rev. Ryan Honeycutt



Patti Ross



▶ Rev. Marvin and Shirley Henschel



◀ Dr. Linda Burks

- ▶ "God Helps Us Forgive" — Rev. Ryan Honeycutt (Redeemer, Claymore)
- ▶ "Finding Family Peace When Confronted with Constant Social Media" — DCE Suzanne Watt (Christ the Redeemer, Tulsa)

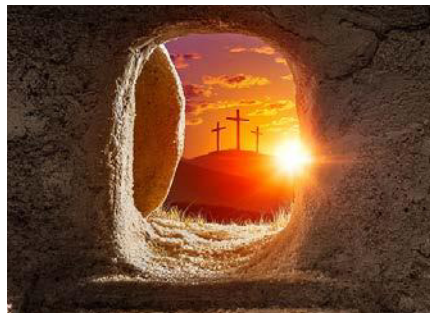
We hope you will join us as we explore how Jesus helps us to find His peace. Free childcare will be provided; registration is required. Visit [oklwml.org/district\\_convention](http://oklwml.org/district_convention) for more information and registration, .

## MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Week. He is approaching His atoning death on the cross in our place. Now He boldly performs a public miracle in the eyes of all. The time has come to reveal to all the world who He truly is. He will be the final and complete sacrifice for all sinners. He Himself would also be raised from the dead on the third day.

Even Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said "that it is better for you that one man should die for the people" (49).



He prophesied "that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad" (51-52).

Jesus would be sacrificed for both Jews and Gentiles.

From that day on, they made plans to put Him to death. In fact, on Palm Sunday, people wanted to see for themselves, both Jesus and Lazurus. But by dying, Jesus was about to destroy the power of death!

Indeed, the proof of the identity of Jesus is His complete authority over death itself. We also shall be raised on the Last Day. So we join Martha every Sunday when we speak the same words, "Lord, I believe!"



## Youth take ‘Journey in January’

Just over 90 high school students attended “Journey in January,” held Jan. 16–18 at Camp Lutherhoma.

This year’s theme, “Windy Wavy Journey,” based on Mark 4:39, reminded the youth and their chaperones that they are anchored to Christ in the “Uncertainseas” (pun intended)!

The youth were led through Bible studies by the high school committee (pictured), whose members met and planned the retreat with Erin Busch, Camp Lutherhoma program director, and Nikki Boyd, camp director. The Bible studies were well thought out and the committee members shared personal stories of the storms they have experienced, and how Jesus was there with them. These personal testimonies really helped their peers identify with and apply Scripture to their own lives.

In addition to the Bible studies, the youth enjoyed First Word (in which campers begin the day



in God’s Word); camp activities such as 9-square, archery, rumble ball and hiking; the camp band and the snow that God provided Friday night!

Participants were from the Oklahoma District as well as a congregation from Kansas and from Arkansas. What a blessing it is to grow in faith and friendship with other Lutheran youth!

Pictured are, from left (front) Erin Busch, Joshua McCoy, Camryn Bauer, Cora Davis, Shayla McKay, Alyssa Fowble, Kylee Shores, Adela Weber, Hannah Hadley, Nina Weber; (back) Grady Terrell, Erika Warehime, Elizabeth Hinrichs, Jack Collison, Trinity Stecker, Cole Edwards and Bella Runge.



# Meeting physical – and spiritual – needs

Christ, Mustang, hosted a Lutheran Early Response Team (LERT) training on Jan. 17, equipping volunteers to respond faithfully and effectively to disasters affecting their communities and beyond.

The training was led by Dr. Don Kelle, district Disaster Response coordinator. Fifteen participants attended the training, representing Christ, Mustang; Lutheran Church of Our Savior, Bethany; and Zion, Guthrie.

Christ held the training in response to the growing and ongoing need for disaster preparedness in central Oklahoma. Severe storms, tornadoes, fires and even earthquakes can create sudden and significant hardship for individuals and communities. LERT training is required for volunteers seeking to participate in Lutheran disaster response efforts, and is mandatory before advancing to specialized training such as chainsaw or heavy-equipment operation.

“The primary mission of the church is the proclamation of the Gospel,” said Rev. Daniel Ross, pastor of Christ, Mustang. “Mercy work is God’s love in action in the church and the broader

community. It is tangible and closely tied to our witness of God’s love to the world.”

The training introduced participants to the mission and scope of LERT, emphasizing both what LERT does and does not do. While LERT does not perform emergency rescue operations, it plays a vital role in long-term recovery efforts, often remaining in disaster-affected areas long after emergency responders have departed. LERT volunteers assist with removing debris, rebuilding homes and providing a compassionate presence to those recovering from traumatic events.

A key focus of the training addressed how volunteers can care for individuals as they process the emotional and practical impacts of sudden disaster. Participants also discussed how church campuses can serve as critical community resources in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. For example, internet access can be offered so that residents can contact family members or manage financial matters.

This introductory training opens the door for additional skilled instruction. Christ Lutheran Church, in coordination with the Oklahoma District, is exploring the possibility of offering chainsaw training for those who completed the January

session. All participants are now eligible to register for LERT deployments across the country as opportunities arise.

“For Christ Lutheran Church, hosting this LERT training matters because it is a tangible way to show God’s love through our works and not just our words,” Pastor Ross said. “God created humans as both body and spirit. In helping to meet the physical needs of our neighbors, we affirm that all are created in God’s image and that God loves all people deeply. Whether it is helping an elderly neighbor with yard work, building a ramp for someone recovering from a medical procedure, or responding to a disaster, meeting physical needs is part of being the hands and feet of Jesus in our community.”

In partnership with Oklahoma District Disaster Response, Christ, Mustang, plans to continue offering LERT training, refresher courses and specialty instruction as interest and need arise. Future training opportunities will be announced as they are scheduled.

Oklahoma District congregations are encouraged to reach out to Kelle to find out more about LERT and schedule trainings. Send an email to [okddrc@gmail.com](mailto:okddrc@gmail.com).



Pictured are, from left (seated) Brad Young, Kathy Brockhoff, Denny Rader, Dr. Don Kelle; (standing) Jeff Andrews, John McCage, Diana Grundmann, Lori Steele, Jim Marlatt, Paul Steitz and Brian Fish. Missing from the photo is Michele Rader.

## Disaster Response retreat

The Oklahoma District Disaster Response team had its first leadership retreat at Camp Lutherhoma on Jan. 13. The agenda included messages from Rev. Dr. David Nehrenz, district president; reports on 2025 deployments; mercy work; training; and strategic planning for 2026.

Strategic planning provided a proactive, whole-community process to define the goals, assess risks, allocate resources and

establish coordinated actions for effectively preparing for disaster response.

The Lutheran Early Response Team (LERT) leaders were invited to work together to brainstorm strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the ministry. Finally, they prioritized the topics for goals and objectives in 2026.

A key area of consensus was to develop a Rapid Response Team, which would be rostered and equipped for responding to a disaster within 24 to 48 hours in our district.



## District has new address

**The Oklahoma District office has moved.** It is now located at St. John's Lutheran Church and School, Moore (pictured):

1032 NW 12th Street  
Moore, OK 73160  
405-253-0776

Also, Yvonne Moore, district treasurer, can be reached at  
P.O. Box 6128  
Lawton, OK 73506  
580-713-2275

The mailing addresses in Norman and Owasso are no longer valid.



# Happy Ordination ANNIVERSARY

We share the Oklahoma District pastors who are celebrating milestone ordination anniversaries in 2026. We rejoice and give thanks to God for these gifts to His church.

## 65 Years

Rev. Kenneth Haskell  
Emeritus, Enid

## 55 Years

Rev. Bruce Cottrell  
Messiah, Vinita

## 40 Years

Rev. Timothy Dreier  
Our Savior, Tulsa

Rev. David Heitner  
Emeritus, Yukon

Rev. Dr. Gary Rohwer  
Lutheran Church of Our Savior,  
Bethany

## 35 Years

Rev. Mark Wescoatt  
Emeritus, Guymon

Rev. Ron Rafferty  
Lutheran Church of Our  
Redeemer, Cushing

Rev. Dwayne Schroeder  
Emeritus, Enid

Rev. Mark Erler  
St. Mark, Edmond

## 30 Years

Rev. David Thompson  
Emeritus, Chickasha

Rev. Thomas House  
St. Paul, Texhoma

## 25 Years

Rev. Rick Rostek  
Emeritus, Pryor

Rev. Mark Schlamann  
Christ, Elkhart

## 20 Years

Rev. David Owens  
Emeritus, Mustang

Rev. Trinidad Castañeda  
Emeritus, Mustang

## 15 Years

Rev. Jonathan Schultz  
Emeritus, Broken Arrow

Rev. Jay Hobson  
Shepherd of the Hills, Skiatook

Rev. Matthew Tassej  
Redeemer, Shawnee

Rev. Daniel Ross  
Christ, Mustang

## 5 Years

Rev. Joseph Highley  
First, Ponca City

Rev. Richard Dailey  
Trinity, Okmulgee

Rev. Myron Harms  
Messiah, Oklahoma City



# CONGRATULATIONS!

**We rejoice with those who are celebrating anniversaries of 50 years or more.**

**Trinity, Broken Arrow**  
Ray and Marilyn DallaRosa  
60 years, March 4

**Redeemer, Claremore**  
Pat and Leon Johnson  
65 years, March 4

Dave and Gail Wilson  
52 years, March 30

**St. John's, Covington**  
Gerald and Arba Jo Pope  
61 years, March 11

Larry and Sharon Sebranek  
55 years, March 20

**Holy Trinity, Edmond**  
Neil and Marsha Aeschlimann  
52 years, March 31

**Redeemer, Enid**  
Brad and Gloria Choat  
54 years, March 25

**St. Paul's, Enid**  
Mike and Renie Krienke  
50 years, March 26

**Messiah, Oklahoma City**  
Harmon and LaDonna Ellis  
54 years, March 24

Mike and Linda Shults  
58 years, March 28

**Immanuel, Broken Arrow**



Jim and Twila Lewis  
66 years, March 25

**Christ, Mustang**



Bill and Gen Allen  
68 years, March 20

**Christ the Redeemer, Tulsa**



Carlisle and Ellen Mabrey  
57 years, March 29



John and  
Roseanna  
Kretzschmar  
58 years,  
March 23

# Happy Birthday

**Redeemer, Bartlesville**  
Doris Mills  
90 years, March 11

John Runnels  
91 years, March 30

**Lutheran Church of Our Savior, Bethany**  
Elaine Russell  
92 years, March 27

**Trinity, Broken Arrow**  
Maralyn Brauer  
99 years, March 10

**St. Paul's, Enid**  
Patsy Herth  
96 years, March 25

Dorothy Lagan  
92 years, March 25

Eldon Reinhardt  
90 years, March 20

**St. John, Hooker**  
Donna Holzrichter  
93 years, March 26

**Mount Olive, Miami**  
Ralph Offill  
92 years, March 27

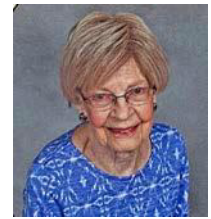
**Messiah, Oklahoma City**  
Don Ewing  
94 years, March 6

Ann Hallum  
95 years, March 7

Russell Hixon  
91 years, March 15

**Mount Calvary, Watonga**  
Doris Matti  
96 years, March 30

**Ablaze, Tulsa**



Marcene Tennyson  
93 years, March 11

**Christ, Mustang**



Joetta Taylor  
90 years, March 20

# Share your news with us!



Submit articles and photos to [oklahomalutherans.org/lutheran\\_witness](http://oklahomalutherans.org/lutheran_witness).

Articles and photos may also be emailed to [commsokdistrict@gmail.com](mailto:commsokdistrict@gmail.com).

## Zion Lutheran Church, Stillwater, will celebrate its centenary anniversary on Sunday, Nov. 1

(which is also All Saints Day). You are invited to celebrate and rejoice with us in God's grace and love for our congregation over the past 100 years.

The worship service will be held in the afternoon, with Rev. Dr. Carl Fickenscher, professor of Pastoral Ministry and Mission at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, serving as preacher. Guest pastors from our Oklahoma District will also participate in the service.

For more information, call Heather, Zion secretary, at 405-372-3703.

The congregation is looking forward to seeing lots of old friends and new faces joining its members for this joyous day.



**Zion, Stillwater, is pictured in 1950.**



## CSP offering free tuition for church work students

Concordia University, St. Paul (CSP), Minn., is strengthening its commitment to the church through an expanded Church Work Tuition Guarantee, offering \$0 tuition for all students preparing for full-time church work vocations. This initiative affirms CSP’s long-standing mission to prepare workers for the church wherever and however they are called to serve.

“This commitment reflects who we are and what we value — affordable tuition, outstanding faculty and a robust, confessionally Lutheran curriculum,” said Rev. Dr. Mark Koschmann, CSP chief mission officer. “Our prayerful hope is that this removes financial barriers so that more students can joyfully prepare for lives of service in the church, strengthened by the gifts God has entrusted to them.”

Through this commitment, CSP seeks to ensure that financial barriers do not prevent students from responding to God’s call into church work. “We pray that this commitment to ensuring an affordable, Christ-centered Lutheran education will bless countless students now and in the years to come,” said Rev. Dr. Brian Friedrich, CSP president. “We are grateful to CSP’s many friends and alumni who generously support our students through scholarships and endowments, which help us underwrite their educational costs.”

## Read **Book of Concord** online for free



Concordia Publishing House (CPH) recently announced the launch of an online version of the Book of Concord (BOC), available at no cost at [bookofconcord.cph.org](http://bookofconcord.cph.org). The reaction across social media after the announcement was uniformly enthusiastic:

- “A beautiful gift for the church!”
- “Way to go, CPH! Thanks for another wonderful resource for life and ministry.”
- “This is awesome! Thank you, CPH!”

“What sets the *Book of Concord Online* apart is that it features the text of *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*,” said Jonathan D. Schultz, CPH president and CEO. “For over 20 years, this has been the most widely used and trusted version of our Confessions. We are thrilled to be making it freely available online.”

The new *BOC* website makes the historic documents of the *Book of Concord* — containing the foundational writings of the Lutheran confessors — available to all on a user-friendly, digital platform. The text provided on the website is from *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*, second edition, by CPH. A press release from CPH describes it as “a revised and updated version of the translation originally prepared by William H. T. Dau and G. Friedrich

Bente for the *Concordia Triglotta* to ensure both theological fidelity and readability for today’s readers.”

“The *Book of Concord*’s faithfulness to the Holy Scriptures allows it to be central to the teaching and witness of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod,” said the Rev. Dr. Jacob Corzine, vice-president of publishing for CPH. “By making it available online, we hope to encourage faithful teaching and study, and bold confession of the Christian faith.”

Some key features of the new website include:

- ▶ The ability to easily copy and paste text with a single click. When pasted, the excerpt automatically includes a proper citation.
- ▶ A clear sidebar menu that allows users to quickly locate specific documents and sections, with simple toggles to move between previous and subsequent sections.
- ▶ The ability to search by word, phrase or article/paragraph number. Users can also filter results by individual confessional document for more precise study.
- ▶ Scripture passages, displayed in the English Standard Version (ESV), that appear directly on the page when the citation is hovered over, allowing readers to engage biblical references without leaving the text.

Send questions to [publicity@cph.org](mailto:publicity@cph.org).