



DISTRICT NEWS

OKLAHOMA



But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

Just like the Joseph in the Old Testament, the Lord spoke to him in a dream. Recall that in the book of Genesis, the Lord used Joseph and his dreams to bring the 12 sons of Jacob into Egypt. In the book of Matthew, the Lord used Joseph and his dreams to bring his stepson, Jesus, and his wife, Mary, into Egypt.

Also in Genesis, one brother of Joseph was Judah, who would be the ancestor of King David. Judah and David then were also the ancestors of Jesus, the royal Messiah. Jesus would be both David's son and David's Lord.

Just as the Holy Spirit hovered over the water at creation, so the Holy Spirit hovered over the womb of Mary. She conceived in her womb the Son of God. Since God is His true Father, the mystery of the Incarnation involved all three persons of the Holy Trinity.

This Jesus came to save us from our sins. Jesus would be placed in a manger at His birth. He would be placed on a cross in His death. He became sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. The is called the Great Exchange. Our tattered rags of sin were placed on Jesus. The royal robes of Christ's righteousness

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THE NAME of JESUS

The angel of the Lord, with Joseph and Mary, knew ahead of time that the son to be born from Mary's womb would be named "Jesus." In English the name is Jesus, which comes from Latin. In Hebrew it is Yeshua, which is also Joshua. The meaning of that name is "Yahweh saves."



Rev. Dr. David Nehrenz
District President

the new Israel, into the Promised Land of heaven.

During the Christmas season, we hear the Gospel in Matthew 1:18-25:

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

Joseph did not yet understand how this conception had taken place. It appeared that Mary had been unfaithful. To Joseph, she seemed to be an unwed mother. Joseph still loved her and was intending to treat her with kindness.

Yeshua is the same name as Joshua. This similarity is not a coincidence and reflects a theological connection. Joshua led the Israelites into the Promised Land of Canaan. Jesus leads His people,

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The Oklahoma District's Fall Church Worker Conference

was held Oct. 13-14 at St. John, Lawton. The agenda included a circuit visitors' meeting, worship, district business, devotions and presentations by Rev. Dr. Roger Sonnenberg on "Sexual Matters." Rev. Sonnenberg, a psychotherapist, university professor, author and lecturer, serves as vacancy pastor of St. Matthew, Port Angeles, Wash.

ABOVE, Sonnenberg gives a presentation; RIGHT, conversing are, from left, Revs. Tim McCarty (Emmanuel, Kingfisher), James Bozarth (Trinity, Blackwell), Aaron Ferguson (Christ, Perry) and Chris Hall (Grace, Tulsa).



St. John, Pryor, honored the rotating pastors serving the congregation

with a dinner on Oct. 16. From left, Revs. Rick Rostek, Rick Tabisz, Dwight Moeller, David Reber, Barry Schwiesow and Mark Burger. All are emeritus except Rev. Moeller, who serves as pastor of Bethlehem, Adair.



MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)



are placed on us. Through the Means of Grace — by water, bread and wine connected to the Word of God — we are washed, justified and sanctified.

All this indeed took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).

This is a quote from Isaiah 7:14. The miraculous conception and virgin birth of Jesus clearly reveal that Jesus is true God and true Man in one person.

We confess this wondrous reality when we speak the creeds during the Divine Service. How powerful it is each Sunday to hear the assembled saints boldly speak the truth about the Trinity and the Incarnation. It still gives me chills down my spine to hear that loud confession in the sanctuary, spoken by voices young and old!

St. Matthew concludes by telling us:

When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

May we like Mary and Joseph do as the Lord commands us. We gladly come often to the Divine Service to be blessed each day in the name of Jesus!

LWML



Bethlehem, Adair, celebrated LWML Sunday on Oct. 5 by recognizing three ladies who have been participating in the LWML for well over 50 years, and they still participate. Congregation LWML president Cherie Meislahn (third from left) presented, from left, Jane Harding, Arlene Hugley and Emma Lou Peper with a cross to thank them for the many years of service.

Celebrating LWML Sunday

Did your church celebrate LWML Sunday this past October?

Traditionally, LWML Sunday is set aside to celebrate the mission and vision of Lutheran Women in Mission, and we focus on “Proclaiming Christ, Supporting Missions, Equipping Women and Serving Others.” Hopefully, you had the opportunity to take part in this celebratory service.

Throughout October, alongside their pastors, Oklahoma women adorned in purple participated in worship services and organized special events to acknowledge and celebrate the work of the LWML. A special worship service, authored by Rev. Mark Maas, was celebrated under the theme “Proclaiming Christ.” Cake was served, “mitye muffins” were baked, luncheons were organized, health kits and blankets were dedicated, collections were brought together for those in need, and mite offerings were collected, all for the glory of God.

United in Christ’s message of repentance, forgiveness, salvation and the hope of an eternal life with our Heavenly Father, Lutheran Women in Mission have stepped out in faith, setting goals and trusting God to move the hearts of His people to give generously to LWML to proclaim the Gospel. Since 1942, Mite Box offerings have raised over \$100 million to support grants in over 84 countries.

We invite you to join us in proclaiming Christ’s message throughout the world by donating your loose change to the LWML. Just find a woman in your church who loves purple, and she will be happy to show you how it’s done.



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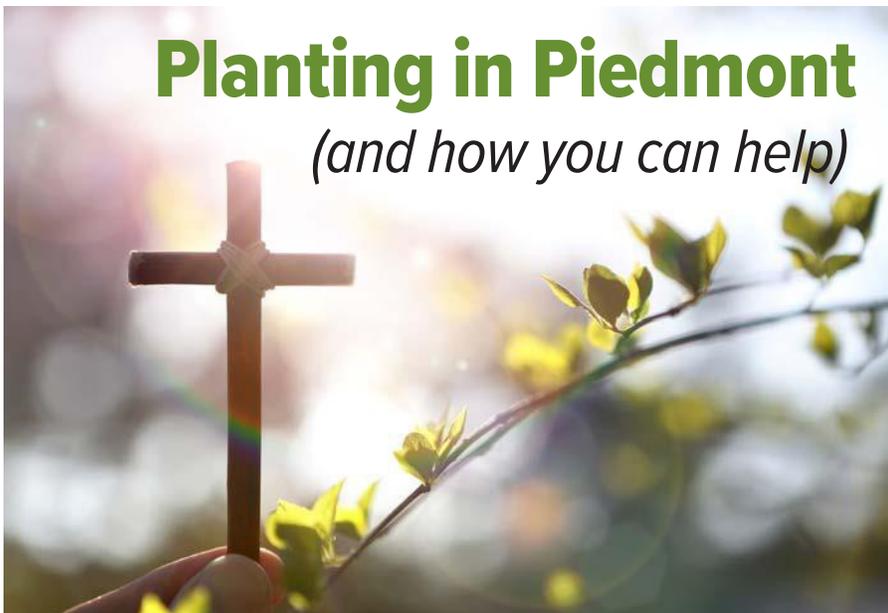
Bethlehem, Adair, held its annual outdoor service in the woods on Oct. 19. The wooded area is known as "Peace." The service was led by the youth and included readings, prayers and singing. The service was followed by a hayride and hot dog roast.





Trinity, Broken Arrow, youth and adults spent some time getting to know each other on Oct. 12. For six minutes, each participant is engaged in a one-on-one conversation. When the buzzer goes off, they move to the right to meet and chat with the next person. Speed friending was a huge success!





Planting in Piedmont (and how you can help)

A group of committed Lutherans are now in the planning stages of starting a new congregation in Piedmont. It will formally launch in 2026, but while they plan and work out the details, ministry has already begun. And you can help!

A home Bible study fellowship has begun. The core group wanted to establish fellowship in the Word and build faith while building relationships. A home in Piedmont had its doors opened for Bible study, and away we go!

As Nathan James, one of the study leaders, says, “This is how we plan to build our core group, get to know one another better and create unity while raising awareness and enthusiasm. We’re just so excited to do mission work and to be at the ground level of starting a new congregation.”

This group would love to include families and individuals new to the LCMS, as well as those disconnected from the LCMS. But they could use your help. Just put on your thinking caps for a moment and write down the name of someone you know who might be looking to reconnect to weekly worship and Bible study. If you know someone who is not currently active in a church and who might live in the Yukon-Piedmont area — these are the people the core group would like to include.

We have found that a number of LCMS

people are already interested either because they live near Piedmont and are looking for a church closer to home, or because they feel moved to be part of God’s mission to make more disciples. So please send the group the names and contacts of people like that. They might really be blessed to become part of a church closer to where they live, or in joining a group whose aim is to reach the unchurched with the message of the free gift of salvation by God’s grace.

If someone like that comes to mind you might reach out to them. Let them

know we have formed a home Bible study fellowship. Let them know we would love to get to know them and include them. Let them know about the plans to start worship services in 2026.

Names and contact information may be sent to Nathan at njames@yahoo.com or 408-505-5080.

They may also be sent to csfarms59ok@gmail.com.

— Submitted by Rev. Dr. Gary Rohwer
Pastor, Lutheran Church of Our Savior, Bethany

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.

Please ensure photos you are sending are in high resolution.





Tulsa Area Lutheran Messiah

103rd PRESENTATION

Please join us for this special annual event!

UNTU US
a child is born
ISAIAH 9:6

Christ the Redeemer Lutheran Church
2250 East 71st St.
Tulsa

Sunday, Dec. 7
2 and 4:30 p.m.

Let us know you are coming! | tulsamessiah.org/rsvp 

CONGRATULATIONS!

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

Redeemer, Bartlesville
Merl and Cheryl Lindstrom
53 years, Dec. 16

Trinity, El Reno
Earnie and JoAnn Bomhoff
68 years, Dec. 23

Zion, Alva



Corky and Esther McIver
58 years, Dec. 1

Our Savior, Tulsa



Gerald and Dawn Baehler
65 years, Dec. 22

Immanuel, Broken Arrow
Earl and Betty Franklin
71 years, Dec. 4

Allen and Lynn Beaird
53 years, Dec. 29

Christ the Redeemer, Tulsa



Dennis and Kathy Stephen
50 years, Dec. 27

Christ, Mustang



Kenny and Gail Kautz
52 years, Dec. 22

Redeemer, Claremore
Debbie and Jack Roberts
55 years, Dec. 19
Rev. Mark and Roz Burger
51 years, Dec. 28

Zion, Fairmont
Tom and Cheryl Pritchett
58 years, Dec. 15

Trinity, Norman
John and Joanie Eisenbraun
65 years, Dec. 31

Messiah, Oklahoma City
Ed and Barbara Krei
51 years, Dec. 28
Tim and Colleen Woolery
51 years, Dec. 27

St. John, Pryor
Charles and Sandy Barney
54 years, Dec. 16
Gregory and Kathy Geres
58 years, Dec. 23

Zion, Stillwater
Darrel and Meg Kletke
51 years, Dec. 28

Christ the Redeemer, Tulsa
Sid and Beverly McVey
56 years, Dec. 22
Ray and Claudette Brown
64 years, Dec. 24

Mount Calvary, Watonga
Leroy and Ruth Lage
68 years, Dec. 21

St. John's, Okarche
Freddie and Jeannie Peters
59 years, Nov. 4
Marlin and Kathy Kremeier
59 years, Nov. 5

Congregational tool assists Synod's connection with youth



Each year, on behalf of the Concordia University System (CUS) and the Synod's seminaries, LCMS Rosters, Statistics and Research Services (RSRS) gathers contact information for 7th–12th grade students from each LCMS congregation. This information is used strictly to reach these youth with information about LCMS schools and opportunities for professional church work.

In September, a new online form was released that makes the annual reporting process simpler, more efficient and more secure. The new method vastly reduces processing times, while also eliminating the risk of emailed files being intercepted. Congregations may access the form by logging into lc.lcms.org, the same site they use to update their information for the LCMS Locator and *The Lutheran Annual*. Additional information and instructions were emailed to each congregation at the beginning of October. Questions may be sent to rosters.stats@lcms.org.

Dr. Bernard Bull, president of Concordia University, Nebraska, highlighted the value of this information for LCMS educational institutions.

“The more detailed and accurate data that we receive about young people in our churches, the better chance we have of building a relationship with prospective students early and increasing the chance of them prayerfully considering a Concordia, as well as one or more church vocations,” Bull said. “At a time when between 60% and 70% of young people are leaving the church ... it has never been more important to urge our young people to consider higher education options ... where God's Word is present and prevalent, and where these young people will find professors and coaches who mentor and guide them.

Scott Kostencki, RSRS director, said that the long-standing process suffered from waning participation and lost CUS support during COVID; with the urging and support of the Synod's universities and seminaries, it has now been resumed and revitalized.

Rev. Dr. James Baneck, executive director of the LCMS Office of Pastoral Education, said, “As a part of *Set Apart to Serve's* work to uphold a culture of church work formation and recruitment throughout the LCMS, we encourage LCMS youth to consider attending an LCMS Concordia university and/or seminary to receive a Christ-centered education in preparation for their vocations — whether it be in the church, in the world or at home.”

For more information, contact rosters.stats@lcms.org.

Happy Birthday

Redeemer, Bartlesville
Janice Wolff
94 years, Dec. 3

Lutheran Church of Our Savior, Bethany
Mary Bird
91 years, Dec. 3
Joan Bridges
93 years, Dec. 6

St. Paul's, Enid
Gertrude Clark
94 years, Dec. 17

Trinity, Norman
Marie Campbell
90 years, Dec. 5

First, Ada
Lowell Leach
90 years, Nov. 3

St. John's, Covington
Bob Falls
94 years, Dec. 31

St. John's, Okarche
Laurnell Lenz
95 years, Nov. 29
George Newer
93 years, Dec. 2



Christ, Perry
Margaret Seeliger
90 years, Oct. 9

Redeemer, Enid



Leonard and Frances Dungan
98 years, Dec. 25 | 97 years, Dec. 11



SING and SHINE: A simple way to share Christ

By Rev. Daniel Ross
District Evangelism Executive

Every December our neighborhoods transform into wonderlands of joy. Homes shine with Christmas lights, trees twinkle and sparkle in windows, and a gentle glow cuts through the long winter nights. This beautiful picture is a reminder of the promise and declaration of John 1:5:

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Our home decorations reflect our faith in the Savior of the nations. It is a visible metaphor of the light of Christ shining through us. With neighbors gathering to walk through neighborhoods to look at the lights and enjoy the season, it is a ready-made opportunity for gentle, joyful witness!

One of the simplest and most powerful ways to do that is through Christmas caroling. A familiar song can soften a heart. A warm smile can open a door. A small invitation can plant a seed that God may cause to grow.

Following are practical and simple ways you can share the light of Christ this season.

Host “Lights and Carols” on your lawn

- ▶ Gather a few friends, your small group or your family.

- ▶ Choose three to five classic carols that clearly tell the Christmas story; for example, “Silent Night” (*LSB* 363), “O Come All Ye Faithful” (*LSB* 379), “Joy to the World” (*LSB* 387), “O Little Town of Bethlehem” (*LSB* 361).
- ▶ Invite your neighbors to come by, turn on your Christmas lights, prepare some hot cocoa and sing for those who pass by.
- ▶ Have a small table or basket with invitation cards to your church’s Christmas services.
- ▶ Keep it short and simple — 10 to 15 minutes is often enough to make a meaningful impact.

Walk and sing through the neighborhood

- ▶ Identify nearby homes, especially those with visible lights or decorations.
- ▶ Sing a short carol or two at each house, then end with a warm “Merry Christmas.”
- ▶ Offer an invitation to your Christmas Eve or Christmas Day service (have an invitation card to hand out).
- ▶ Pair up with another household or bring a youth group to make it more comfortable and joyful.

Create a “light trail” with others

- ▶ If several families from your congregation live close to each other, plan to sing at each other’s homes.
- ▶ Turn your neighborhood into a “trail of light and song,” where neighbors can join in as you move from one home to the next.
- ▶ Place a simple sign or flyer at each stop inviting neighbors to follow along.
- ▶ A short, printed verse such as Isaiah 9:2, can make an excellent handout.

Pray for the people who hear you

- ▶ Not everyone who hears the singing will come to church, but God’s Word is powerful.
- ▶ Pray for each home you visit, each neighbor you greet and each passerby who listens.
- ▶ Trust that the light of Christ shines even in small moments of kindness and song.

This is what evangelism often looks like — not grand programs or perfectly crafted speeches, but ordinary Christians carrying the extraordinary light of Christ into ordinary places. As Jesus said:

“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.”

Matthew 5:14

So this Christmas, let’s sing. Let’s shine. Let’s meet our neighbors where they are with the warmth of a carol, the glow of a light and the joy of the Gospel.

In Christ • Pastor Ross