

DISTRICT NEWS

OKLAHOMA

The actual POWER OF PRAYER

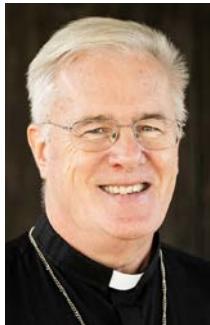
Does the following scenario sound familiar to you? You neglect your daily devotions. Then the whole rest of the day seems disorganized and frustrating. At work and at home, you feel like nothing has any real meaning.

You are just “Slip Slidin’ Away,” as Paul Simon sings. But there is a daily remedy for this.

“By word and prayer” is a simple way to describe our daily Christian walk. It is the reality of the Divine Service on Sunday. It is the air we breathe every day of the week. God speaks to us in His Word and we speak to Him prayer. This happens through the intercession of His Son and by the guidance of His Holy Spirit.

What is the actual “power of prayer?” Many people, including non-Christians, claim to believe in “the power of prayer.” But this phrase can be misleading. It can turn prayer into a new-age type of meditation and manipulation.

The “word of faith” heresy is taught by many false prophets today. They teach that you have the power to plant seeds of faith to guarantee health, wealth and happiness for yourself. You can “name it



Rev. David Nehrenz
District President

and claim it,” and then God has to give you what you want. This counterfeit prosperity gospel is false, deceptive and must be condemned.

People begin to imagine that there is some magnetic, innate power just in the practice of prayer. They do this apart from whether it is addressed to the true and living God. In reality, the Triune God has all the power. Prayer is not the power. Prayer is asking the Lord God to exert His power on our behalf.

In the Scriptures, the Triune God speaks to us, and we speak to Him in prayer. It is a two-way conversation with the living God. The Word from God comes down to us. The prayers from us go up to God.

Thus we begin each day by first hearing what God has to say to us in His Word. God the Father gave His Words to His Son. The Son then gave those Words to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit gave His Words to the prophets and apostles of the Old and New testaments. They wrote down those Words in the Bible. These Words are read, heard and believed by you and me.

Then we respond by praying to God. The Words which we read and hear in the Bible, we pray back to God. We speak those words as directed by God the Holy Spirit. Our prayers go through our mediator, God the Son. These requests then are brought before God the Father.



The Lord’s Prayer is the perfect prayer. Jesus teaches us how to pray. In the Small Catechism, we learn why we pray:

Our Father who art in heaven.

What does this mean? With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father.

This what Jesus teaches us in Matt. 7:11:

“If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!”

We teach the posture of prayer to our children. We show them how to fold their hands, close their eyes and bow their heads. This shows respect for God and demonstrates that prayer is a sacred act.

The Lord alone has the actual power to answer our prayers. God bless the sacredness of our daily conversation with Him. One day we will see Him face to face. Then the conversations with Him will continue into eternity!

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Mercy for the hungry

Lutherans volunteered together at the Oklahoma Regional Food Bank on Jan. 21. The group was blessed to have 34 people from St. Mark, Edmond; Lutheran Church of Our Savior, Bethany; and Zion, Oklahoma City. It was a great joy to bond together as the volunteers spent nearly three hours packaging 404 boxes of bread (5,252 pounds) to be sent to those in need in Oklahoma.



LENT: A time of PRAYER and FASTING

By Rev. Mark Muenchow
Senior Pastor,
Messiah, Oklahoma City

We are in Lent, and many Christians use this a time of prayer and fasting. If you would like to try fasting this Lent, here are some tips from "How to Begin Your Fast" by Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ. How you begin and conduct your fast will largely determine your success. By following these seven basic steps, you will make your time with the Lord more meaningful and spiritually rewarding.

Step 1: Set your objective

Why are you fasting? Is it for spiritual renewal, guidance, healing, the resolution of problems, or special grace to handle a difficult situation? Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His leading and objectives for your prayer fast. This will enable you to pray more specifically and strategically.

Step 2: Make your commitment

Pray about the kind of fast you should undertake.

Step 3: Prepare yourself spiritually
The very foundation of fasting and prayer is repentance. Unconfessed sin will hinder your prayers.

Step 4: Prepare yourself physically
Fasting requires reasonable precautions. Consult your physician first, especially if you take prescription medication or have a chronic ailment. Some should never fast without professional supervision.

Step 5: Put yourself on a schedule
For maximum spiritual benefit, set aside ample time to be alone with the Lord. Listen for His leading. The more time you spend with Him, the more meaningful your fast will be.

Step 6: End your fast gradually

Step 7: Expect results

I encourage you to join me in fasting and prayer again and again until we truly experience revival in our homes, churches, nation and throughout the world.

For the full article, including more detailed tips on fasting, visit okomalutherans.org/fasting.



God bless our teachers!

Oklahoma District pre-K and kindergarten teachers met at St. Paul's, Enid, on Jan. 19 to build camaraderie, exchange ideas and encourage one another in their vocations. Ten teachers from four Lutheran education programs attended.



THE LWML MARCH MISSION

GRANT FOCUS is \$9,000 for Upgrading and Maintenance of AC Units, Cristo Rey Lutheran Church, Oklahoma City.

To learn more about Mission Grants and how you can help, visit oklwml.org/mission_grants.

INSTALLATIONS

► Rev. Adam Ellison was ordained and installed as pastor of Faith, Oklahoma City, on Jan. 22.

▼ Rev. Mike Monterastelli was installed as assistant pastor of St. Paul, Wellston, on Jan. 15.

▼ Ava Schweninger was commissioned and installed as director of Christian education at Holy Trinity, Edmond, on Jan. 22.



CONGRATS!

We rejoice with those who are celebrating birthdays of **90 years or more**

Holy Trinity, Edmond
Charles Herman
91 years, March 18

St. Paul, Enid
Patsy Herth
93 years, March 28

Zion, Fairmont
Wilma Grimes
90 years, March 3
Robert Jack
94 years, March 12

Dale Niehus
94 years, March 21
Zion, Guthrie
Joy Flasch
91 years, March 23

Messiah, Oklahoma City
Arlene Thies
92 years, March 5

Don Ewing
91 years, March 6

Ann Hallum
92 years, March 7

St. John's, Okarche
Peggy Kauffman
90 years, Feb. 13

Emmalein Schroeder
95 years, March 27

Christ the Redeemer, Tulsa
Johnny Barfield
91 years, March 3
Leon Thomas
92 years, March 28

Immanuel, Oklahoma City



Bill Mahan
93 years, March 7

Trinity, Norman



Arlesa Tarver
102 years, March 6

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

Redeemer, Bartlesville
John and Carla Cherry
60 years, March 23

Immanuel, Breckinridge
Ron and Sharon Clinton
57 years, March 4

Redeemer, Claremore
Leon and Pat Johnson
62 years, March 4

Redeemer, Enid
Brad and Gloria Choat
51 years, March 25

Zion, Fairmont
Lyle and Mary Reinhardt
59 years, March 21

Zion, Guthrie
Fred and Marie Schneider
56 years, March 19

Trinity, Guymon
Vernon and Fae Koch
55 years, Jan. 14

Christ, Mustang
Alan and Florence Brown
58 years, March 20

William and Genevieve Allen
65 years, March 22

Messiah, Oklahoma City
Harmon and LaDonna Ellis
51 years, March 24
Mike and Linda Shults
55 years, March 28

St. John's, Okarche
Allen and Norene Stroud
56 years, Feb. 4

Christ, Perry
Robert and Linda Oberholzer
57 years, March 12

First, Ponca City
Berno and Janet Ebbesson
59 years, March 29

Christ the Redeemer, Tulsa
John and Roseanna Kretzschmar
55 years, March 23
Carlisle and Ellen Mabrey
54 years, March 29



SUBMIT NEWS to oklahomalutherans.org/lutheran_witness and use the forms. Articles may also be sent to commsokdistrict@gmail.com. The deadline for the May issue is March. 15.

CTR dedicates expansion

Christ the Redeemer (CTR), Tulsa, on Jan 22 held a dedication service for the newly renovated sanctuary and building expansion. Rev. Chris Hall, district first vice-president and senior pastor of Grace, Tulsa, preached for the service, which featured musical offerings from the handbell choir, the adult choir, soloists, and organist Jacob Drengler. After the service, a reception was held in the new Fellowship Hall.

On Jan. 10, 1954, Christ the Redeemer held its first service in a facility near 49th and Peoria in Tulsa. CTR was first incorporated as a congregation a month later. The present church on 71st Street near Lewis Avenue was built in 1967 and enlarged in 1994.

CTR officially broke ground on the two-phase project in July 2020. The congregation now has two large fellowship spaces, dedicated Sunday school and youth rooms, a new commercial kitchen, a new music rehearsal and storage space, new offices, spacious workrooms and storage space, and rooms dedicated to outreach opportunities with partner organizations

Currently, the Tulsa area Lutheran Braille Workers have two rooms dedicated to their equipment, used to make books of the Bible in Braille in multiple languages for distribution around the world. Tulsa Saints, a group dedicated to serving the unhoused citizens of Tulsa, also has a room in which to store and stage supplies for their weekly dinner outreach events in downtown Tulsa.

The sanctuary reopened for Reformation Sunday 2022, and the congregation enjoyed worshiping in the beautifully renovated sanctuary throughout the Advent and Christmas seasons. The congregation looks forward to being able to worship God and serve their neighbors in the beautiful and expanded space, while continuing to live out their mission to lead people into a living relationship with Jesus Christ.

The full article and a photo slideshow of the dedication are available at oklahomalutherans.org/christ_the_redeemer_dedication.

— Submitted by Suzanne Watt



From left, Rev. Chris Hall, is pictured with Rev. Scott Burmeister, Christ the Redeemer pastor, following the dedication service.



Pastor Tiews is pictured third from left with Persian members of his congregation in Hamburg Germany.

Blessings in Germany

By Rev. Christian Tiews

LCMS Missionary to Germany

When you think of Iran, what comes to mind? The Islamic revolution and the hostage crisis in the U.S. Embassy in Teheran in 1979? Crowds shouting “Death to America!”?

Amazingly, many analysts believe that the fastest growing Christian church in the world is in Iran, with perhaps one-third of the population having secretly become Christian in recent years. Converts to Christianity, however, are still at severe risk of prison or even death.

Christian missionaries are obviously not allowed to enter Iran, so the next best opportunity for mission work among Persians is to share the Gospel with the tens of thousands of Iranian and Afghan migrants who have fled their homelands and have requested asylum in Western Europe, especially in Germany.

Two years ago, the LCMS Office of International Mission called me out of pastoral ministry at Trinity, Okmulgee, and sent me and my wife, Lula, to north Germany to minister to the many Iranian migrants living there. Having already spent half of our lives in Germany and being fluent in German (and now learning Farsi as well), Lula and

I serve two SELK congregations in Hamburg (SELK is the LCMS partner church in Germany).

Our two Hamburg congregations have a total of about 150 Persian members, but almost every week new Iranians show up wishing to be baptized.

While it is possible that some of them may desire Holy Baptism to improve their chances of being granted asylum, my job is not to question their motivations, but simply to share the joyful news of Jesus Christ with them, begin their baptismal instruction and shepherd them on their Christian journey.

The ongoing Islamic rule in Iran and Afghanistan are causing even more refugees to knock on our church doors as their eyes are opened to the harsh realities of strict Islam teaching — especially for women.

I also serve (online) as a theological educator at Luther Academy in Riga, Latvia. At this time, several dozen students from some 13 countries are enrolled. If you wish to find out more about our ministry or would like to subscribe to our free e-mail newsletter, contact me at christian.tiews@lcms.org or visit lcms.org/tiews.

God bless Oklahoma — and the people of Iran and Afghanistan!