



/ SEPTEMBER 2022

DISTRICT NEWS

OKLAHOMA

THE MASTER'S GENEROSITY

Every one of us has been given unique talents. These are meant to be shared with others. In our Synod, district, circuits and congregations, we have multi-talented people among us. You are one of them! Your gift may be in music, administration, finance, teaching, cooking, planning or repairing. Even in simple conversation we care for others. Jesus calls us to be *generous* in using our abilities. We do this in faith toward Him and in love for our neighbor.

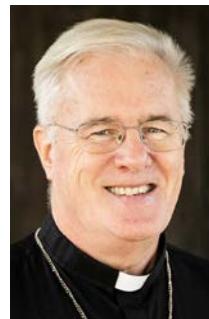
We all admire *generous* individuals who freely give and offer help to others. They do so with a joyous and happy heart. These are folks we treasure at home, at work and at church.

Why do we respect such persons? I think I know why. They model what God our Master is like. There is no one more *generous* than God. Consider the beauty of the universe and the amazing earth upon which we live. Admire the stars and the mountains and the wonder of watching a hummingbird hover in place. God the Father created all of this for our enjoyment and sense of awe.

Jesus tells the parable of the master of a house paying all the laborers the same amount for their work in his vineyard. He will picture for us the *generosity* of God. In Matt. 20:1-2 He says:

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard."

A denarius was a fair wage for a day's work.



Rev. David Nehrenz
District President

However, the work day was 12 hours long. There was much work to be done in the vineyard. So the master continues to hire people at the third, sixth, ninth and 11th hour. No reason for people to be idle when there was plenty of work and wages for all.

At the end of the day, it was time for the workers to be paid. Jesus says in v. 8-9:

"And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.' And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius."

Then the resentment began. The parable continues in v. 10-12:

"Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. And on receiving it they

grumbled at the master of the house, saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.'

In the midst of a beautiful *generosity* to all, these workers respond with an ugly jealousy. It's like the boy who complains that his brother got a bigger piece of cake. Selfish and petty complaints are not appropriate after experiencing liberality.

Jesus concludes with the overall point of this parable in v. 13-16.

"But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?' So the last will be first, and the first last."

God the Father created us. God the Son redeemed us. God the Holy Spirit sanctifies us. The Holy Trinity pours out the blessings of forgiveness of sins, life and salvation upon us all. Each one receives the same "denarius" of eternal life.

Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ is empowered by the water and Word of Holy Baptism. By the spoken Word of Holy Absolution, our sins are released from us. Through the bread and wine with God's Word in Holy Communion, Christ feeds us His body and blood as our medicine of immortality. God gives, we receive. That is truly divine service!

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DISTRICT NEWS



30-year vision now reality in Glenpool

King of Kings, Glenpool, broke ground on their new building on July 14. In the early 1990s, the Oklahoma District purchased 13.5 acres of land in Glenpool for the purpose of a new church plant. The congregation was organized in 2005 and moved into its current building in 2007.

"This vision has been a long time coming for our community," said Rev. Rick Tabisz, King of Kings pastor. "We have worked with the Lutheran Church Extension Fund to make this site our permanent home and have long awaited this dream."

King of Kings kicked off a capital-fund drive in 2011, titled "God's Plans, Our Future." Funds have been raised and plans made for the new building. The new site has hosted vacation Bible school, a "Lift High the Cross" hot-air balloon ministry, and 12 live Nativity presentations, which were well attended by the community.

Happy 30!

On June 12, members of Christ, Shattuck, and Bethlehem, Perryton, Texas, helped celebrate Rev. Gary McClellan's 30th ordination anniversary. Pastor McClellan, a native of Nebraska, has served as Christ's pastor since 1994 and began providing pastoral services to Bethlehem in 2002. He most recently began serving as vacancy pastor at Trinity, Woodward.

Pastor McClellan also serves as Panhandle Circuit visitor and has been very active in the development and support of Lutherhaven Retreat Center in Knowles. The congregations are pleased



From left, Pastor McClellan is pictured with Brad Bunch, Oklahoma District Western Region board member, and Scott Broskowski.

and blessed to celebrate 30 years with Pastor McClellan, and pray that his ministry continues to touch others as it has touched ours.



Matthew, Jessica and Emma Sparks were welcomed as members of First, Ada, on July 3.



David Ramthum, pictured with his parents, Roma and David, and Rev. Ryan Honeycutt, was confirmed at Redeemer, Claremore, on June 12.

Quilts made with love

At Redeemer, Claremore, the LWML mission quilters meet to work on quilts every week and are well on their way to completing their goal of 100 quilts. Along with quilters around the state, the ladies are working to meet their goal before the Lutheran World Relief (LWR) ingathering on Oct. 4 at Messiah, Oklahoma City. Pictured are, from left, Roz Burger, Dorothy Gilbreath, Marcia Dow, Bonnie Schulze and Kathy Fletcher.

LWR distributed its first quilts in 1945 to families in war-torn Europe following World War II. Today, an average of 300,000 quilts are lovingly given worldwide each year.



CONGRATS!

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

Bethlehem, Adair

E.C. and Shirley Peper
61 years, Sept. 16

Jane and Fred Harding
56 years, Sept. 30

Redeemer, Bartlesville

Dennis and Jean Rickords
52 years, Sept. 12

Trinity, Blackwell

Wayne and Jean Purdy
67 years, Sept. 24

St. John's, Covington

Earl and Janice Gopfert
65 years, Sept. 15

Holy Trinity, Edmond

Carlton and Georgianna Schmitz
58 years, Sept. 12

Fred and Carolyn Van Wieren
67 years, Sept. 30

St. Paul's, Enid

Walter and Pat Lemke
64 years, Sept. 6

Gerald and Joyce Nolte
55 years, Sept. 23

Sonny and Shirleen Otipoby
53 years, Sept. 17

St. Paul's, Fairland

Walter and Nathalie Dauer
59 years, Sept. 28

Zion, Fairmont

Ted and Virginia Loesch
60 years, Sept. 2

J.C. and Velda Pralle
61 years, Sept. 3

Dennis and Barbara Gerken
53 years, Sept. 6

St. John's, Hooker
R.G. "Sonny" and Linda Grounds
60 years, Sept. 17

Tom and Vickie Arnold
55 years, Sept. 21

St. John's, Okarche
George and Mabel Newer
66 years, Aug. 19

Kenneth and Pam Smith
50 years, Aug. 19
Delbert and Debby Hinrichs
54 years, Sept. 1

Messiah, Oklahoma City
Earle and Margaret Wagner
62 years, Sept. 11

Christ, Perry
Jim and Linda Kukuk
54 years, Sept. 7

Allen and Carroll Piet
61 years, Sept. 29

First, Ponca City
Bill and Janet Broddle
61 years, Sept. 3

Christ the Redeemer, Tulsa,
Ron and Phyllis Vaus
56 years, Sept. 2
Bob and Iris Wilson
65 years, Sept. 22

Zion, Stillwater
Jim and Ruth Williams
62 years, Sept. 3

Don and Margaret Lawson
55 years, Sept. 29

First, Ponca City



HD and Carla Bodenstein
51 years, Sept. 4

Christ the Redeemer, Tulsa



Lynn and Sandy Moeller
58 years, Sept. 12

Ablaze, Tulsa



Rev. Dr. Art and Connie Spomer
60 years, Aug. 12

happy

BIRTHDAY

Celebrating **90 years**
or more...

Adair, Bethlehem

Art Peper • 90 years, Sept. 22

Bethany, Our Savior

Robert L Seitz • 92 years, Sept. 24

Karl Klick • 94 years, Sept. 26

St. Paul's, Enid,
June Bone • 91 years, Sept. 13

Alta Kiriokos • 91 years, Sept. 28

St. John's, Okarche

Marjorie Kremeier • 91 years, Aug. 23

Messiah, Oklahoma City

David Giles • 91 years, Sept. 17

Kitty Ernst • 98 years, Sept. 26

Dorothy Grob • 95 years, Sept. 29

First, Ponca City

Donna Lane • 92 years, Sept. 20

Trinity, Guymon

Tillie Prather
94 years,
Sept. 18



DISTRICT NEWS

Blessings at First, Chickasha



▲ Congregation members of First, Chickasha, are pictured on July 3 with Rev. David and Sharon Thompson on the occasion of David's retirement. He has served First first since 1996, when he graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind. (CTSWW).

► The saints of First were also blessed to welcome their new pastor, Rev. Kyle Nelson, who was ordained and installed on July 9. He is a recent CTSFW graduate. Pictured are, from left, Rev. Dr. Geoff Boyle, Rev. Brandon Armstrong, Lay Minister Stephan Ellis, Rev. Charles Nemec, Rev. Mark DeYoung, Rev. Kyle Nelson, Rev. Ron Boelte, Rev. Daniel Metzger, Rev. David Nehrenz, Rev. David Thompson, Rev. Dr. Bill Schneider and Rev. Barrie Henke.



Rev. Nathan Widener was ordained on June 26 at First, his home congregation. A recent CTSFW graduate, Pastor Widener was called as associate pastor to St. Peter's, Fort Wayne, Ind., and installed on July 10. Pictured are, from left, Revs. Mark Muenchow, David Thompson, Nathan Widener, Ron Boelte, David Nehrenz and Brandon Armstrong.

MESSAGE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

We are overjoyed that he freely dispenses his mercy in Word and Sacraments upon people of all nations, languages and cultures. He is *generous* to all. So, whether you have been serving in your congregation for 50 years or for five years, the Lord is happy that you are in his kingdom doing your best work. *Generosity* begets more *generosity*. There is plenty to go around. Our *generous* Master enlivens us to be *generous* servants who happily serve our neighbor with large hearts!

TO SUBMIT NEWS, visit oklahomalutherans.org/lutheran_witness and use the forms. Articles may also be sent to commsokdistrict@gmail.com. The deadline for the November issue is Sept. 15.