



DISTRICT NEWS

OKLAHOMA

Avoiding spiritual UFOs

The Birket Building

If you excluded the bell tower of the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the boarded-up second floor of the beer joint, then the only functioning two-story building in Orlando was the Birket building.

It had been built in the 1930s by Max Birket to house his Case tractor dealership. It was a white-painted, stucco edifice adorned in front with a huge, cast-iron eagle perched on a ball. After the demise of Max, his son-in-law, Bill Edwards, took possession of the dealership and the building. He and Carol lived in a house adjacent to the building overlooking beautiful downtown Orlando.

As the dealership slowly faded, Bill turned the cluttered lower level into a mechanic shop. There was a staircase leading to a ramshackle second-floor apartment and an access to the flat roof. Bill took on the role of local fire chief and was the recognized guardian of the town. He loved the fire truck with its flashing lights and ear-piercing siren. He also installed a tornado warning siren atop the roof of the Birket building.



Rev. Barrie Henke
District President

But he considered his role far more complex than fighting an occasional grass fire or watching for a tornado. He was concerned about a nuclear attack by the “commies” or some havoc wreaked by a UFO. He was convinced that the “commies” were going to attack Tinker Field, so with a margin of error of a 100-mile radius, Orlando was a prime target. We needed to be vigilant, watchful, on guard! So he initiated the Civil Air Patrol.

Civil Air Patrol

Bill recruited every kid in town to become part of the Civil Air Patrol. We were given lapel pins marking our membership. He emphasized that our service was not just to Orlando, but to the national security of our nation. This was important!

NEW YEAR BLESSINGS Saints of Oklahoma!

On many days, he would lead us to the rooftop of the Birket building. With our lapel pins attached and a pair of binoculars in hand we watched for “commie” aircraft and that occasional UFO. Bill loved UFO stories, claiming even to have been a witness of the Roswell, N.M., UFO event.

The more he talked, the more we listened. Strangely, after each story the number of UFO sightings over Orlando increased dramatically. Many days we found ourselves on the roof of the Birket building diligently watching for impending disaster and ready to warn the nation. Only once did the blare from the tornado siren sound — someone thought



it was a light switch! OK, I was told it was a light switch.

A New Year

As we enter this new year of 2018, it is natural for us to reflect on what will transpire through the course of the year. Our sinful nature tends to lead us down a pessimistic path, especially as we consider the messed up world in which we live.

It is easy to think of what might go wrong or the impending disaster that might occur. However, God does not direct us toward pessimism about a new year or even a new day. Instead, we are challenged by God to be watchful with joyful expectation, not only as we enter a new year, but as we enter each new day of God’s grace. This attitude can only prevail if we acknowledge that God is in control of our days, our years and our lives.

Our sinful flesh tempts us to focus on the negative “what ifs” of life and on spiritual UFOs (Unidentified Faith Obstacles) that might be lurking. No doubt

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Ladies renewed at district retreat

“Be Refreshed at Lavender Springs Spa, Where Women Rest in God’s Faithfulness.”

Those were the words of invitation to the LWML Fall Retreat Oct. 20-21 at Canyon Camp and Conference Center in Hinton.

Ladies from 18 to those in their 90s drove through the autumn foliage decorating the rocky canyon, checked into their rooms and then had time to visit before the evening meal. Some chose to renew old friendships and begin new ones in the comfortable lobby of the lodge. Others chose the circle of wooden rockers on the front porch, while others enjoyed the cluster of newly installed swings on the lawn.

The Rev. Dwayne Schroeder, pastor of Lutheran Church of Our Savior, Bethany, presided over the fire, cooking hotdogs for supper. Later in the evening, the fire was just right to toast marshmallows for s’mores. Other meals were served in the dining hall. The walk provided still another opportunity for fellowship among the ladies.



The six Bible study sessions were based on psalms of praise, lament, wisdom, ascent, confession and thanksgiving. In small groups, Bible verses were discussed and thought-provoking questions were asked and answered. Activities correlating with the Bible studies included mixing a lavender-scented sugar scrub, making a refrigerator magnet and writing colorful messages on a large sheet of plastic.

District LWML President Dianna Just provided entertainment by bringing a video of Jan Struck, a humorist who appeared as Katie Luther at the national convention in Albuquerque in June.

District vice-presidents who helped coordinate the retreat include Paula Keefer, Pam Wiederkehr, Delia Collard and Tish Mindemann.



NEW LOOK

The new national LWML logo has inspired a new LWML Oklahoma District logo.

The LWML Oklahoma District will now use the logo included here. Graphic artist and LWML district board member Keah Payne created the new logo using national guidelines. The new Oklahoma logo will appear in purple and orange while the national logo will be in purple and gold.

Also, the website has a new design, so please visit it often at oklwml.org for updated info on what is happening in our district!

LCEF

Earn 3% with ConnectPLUS term note

ConnectPLUS is for the new LCEF investor who wants to experience the over-and-above reward of supporting LCMS ministries — ultimately helping to expand the kingdom of God. Realize not only the financial benefits that LCEF offers, but start a new relationship with LCEF, the financial arm of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Features of ConnectPLUS:

- Open with a minimum of \$500.
- Earn a fixed rate on the first \$5,000 (principal and interest) during the two-year term.
- Balance above \$5,000 earns second-tier fixed rate.
- Additional investments of \$25 or more allowed during the term.
- Available to new LCEF investors only;

one account per investor.

- At the end of the term, the funds remain yours to re-invest or redeem.
- Interest compounded and paid quarterly (March, June, September, December).



For more information, contact Jeff Maltz, LCEF vice-president, at 785-230-4112 or jeffrey.maltz@lcef.org; or go to lcef.org.

JOY IN SERVICE

Members of Zion, Oklahoma City, and St. Mark's, Edmond, recently joined forces to work a Saturday afternoon at the Regional Food Bank in Oklahoma City. In addition to the satisfaction of helping to pack food for at-risk children, the participants had a great time working together. Another trip to the Food Bank is scheduled for this month. Both congregations also participate in the local dartball league and have had a great time competing at each other's churches.

— Submitted by Vivian Stehr



Quilts are Peru-bound

Sunday school students from Zion, Lahoma, completed three quilts for families in need in Peru. The quilts have been sent to the Rev. Edward Hosch, an LCMS missionary to Peru. The students are, from left, Sydney Harmon, Reagan Brakhage and Savannah Dryden.

— Submitted by Deborah Rapp

Educators meet

Teachers and administrators from all nine Oklahoma Lutheran schools and most of the 16 early childhood centers met on Sept. 15 at Holy Trinity, Edmond. The event was attended by 130 educators. The event began with worship, led by the Rev. Jonathan Meyer, Holy Trinity associate pastor, who focused on the theme "It's Still All About Jesus." Gary Kuschnereit was presented the 2016-17 Administrator of the Year award by Oklahoma District Education Executive David C. Birnbaum and Debbie Swanson, 2015-16 recipient. Kuschnereit is principal of Good Shepherd, Midwest City, and has been serving in Lutheran education for 45 years. He is pictured in center, with plaque.

— Submitted by David C. Birnbaum



ANNIVERSARIES

We congratulate those in Oklahoma District congregations who are celebrating 50 years or more!

Adair, Bethlehem

Louie and Betty Thiems
58 years, Jan. 25

Bartlesville, Redeemer

Jerry and Judie Page
57 years, Jan. 14

Bethany,

Lutheran Church of Our Savior

Chester and Jan Kyle
63 years, Jan. 27

Breckinridge, Immanuel

Mike and Joan Nicholas
53 years, Jan. 24

Edmond, Holy Trinity

Robert and Rose Renner
53 years, Jan. 2

Enid, St. Paul's

James and Marilyn Hoeltzel
54 years, Jan. 26

Norman, Trinity

Jim and Lois Bollinger
52 years, Jan. 2

Okarche, St. John's

Raymond and Darlene Stover
67 years, Jan. 29

Oklahoma City, Messiah

Richard and Gloria Day
61 years, Jan. 24

Tim and Marilyn Parker
63 years, Jan. 29

Ponca City, First

Glenn and Nancy Hildebrand
57 years, Jan. 20

Owasso, Faith



Dale and Beverly Kunze
52 years, Jan. 8

Shawnee, Redeemer



David and Carolyn Watson
55 years, Jan. 11

BIRTHDAYS

Fairland, St. Paul

Adolph Loehr, 93 years, Jan. 4

Harley Phariss, 91 years, Jan. 8

Fairmont, Zion

Irene Gragert, 94 years, Jan. 21

Lawton, St. John's

Margo LeFoll, 90 years, Jan. 4

Norman, Trinity

Audrey Lowman, 94 years, Jan. 9

Grace Roley, 90 years, Jan. 22

Okarche, St. John's

LaVerne (Bobbie) Brandley
95 years, Jan. 14

Oklahoma City, Messiah

Quinta Schubkegel
91 years, Jan. 25

Anna Warnke, 93 years, Jan. 30

Ponca City, First

Joe Bates, 90 years, Jan. 2

Cushing, Our Redeemer



Dorothy Wolff
92 years,
Jan. 1

Belated

ANNIVERSARIES

Fairland, St. Paul

Ed and Imogene Dresher
65 years, Dec. 20

Charles and JoNell Babst
57 years, Dec. 30

BIRTHDAYS

Bartlesville, Redeemer

Don Brurud
93 years, Dec. 15

MESSAGE

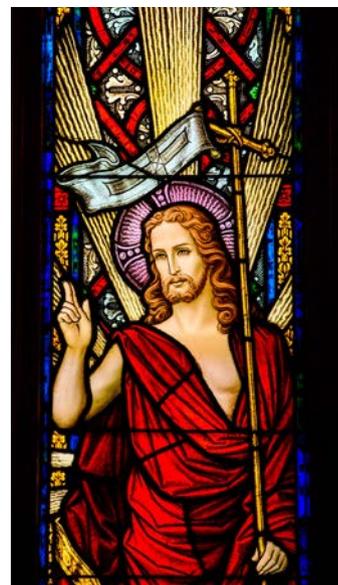
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we must be on our guard because the devil is always working to create obstacles for our faith. But he is not the victor over us — Jesus is! Therefore, in this new year of 2018, let us take to heart what the prophet Jeremiah wrote:

“But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: the steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. The LORD is my portion, says my soul, therefore I will hope in Him. The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him.” **Lam. 3:21-25**

From the rooftop of the Birket building I saw many things: active people on Main Street, large birds flying overhead, the tops of trees, jet planes streaming across the sky. But I never did see an incoming “commie” aircraft. Now UFO sightings are a different story, after all, I was 12 and Bill Edwards had many stories!

Let us enter this new year with confidence, convinced that the Unidentified Faith Obstacles will be overcome by the steadfast love and mercies of God! Trusting our Lord each day will make for a very blessed new year in Christ!



Please report your stats

Congregations should be on the lookout this month for a mailing from LCMS Rosters, Statistics and Research Services on reporting your 2017 statistics. The mailing provides information on how to submit online figures for such things as membership, worship attendance and contributions from members.

Reports are due by Feb. 28.

Share your news with us

Deadlines:

› March issue, Jan. 15

› April issue, Feb. 15

Send to:

› jhedrickokdistrict@gmail.com or

› Janice Hedrick, PO Box 70, Owasso, OK 74055

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