



# DISTRICT NEWS

## OKLAHOMA

# A Valentine from God

### The Heart

My in-laws had a long and durable marriage. My father-in-law would often project himself to people as being gruff and impatient, and in many ways he was. But he also had a tender side which would be visible when he held a newborn grandchild or comforted someone grieving.



**Rev. Barrie Henke**  
District President

There was another time when his actions gave away his soul: each Valentine's Day, he would gift my mother-in-law with a heart-shaped box of chocolates. As we dispersed their home, it was evident how meaningful this gift was to her because I don't believe she ever threw away one of those boxes!

Hearts are always prevalent in our culture during February with the observance of Saint Valentine's Day. And this heart emphasis all began with an irregularly torn scrap of paper. You see, Valentine was a physician and priest living in Rome during the persecution by Emperor Claudius. Valentine was arrested, imprisoned and executed on Feb. 14, 270. It is said that on the day of his execution he left a note of encouragement and caring for the child of the jailer, written on a torn piece of paper that appeared to be a heart. Since that time hearts and loving expressions have

become traditional. Smack-dab in the middle of February is the 14th — Valentine's Day — and messages of love will be sent out in heart-filled cards.

### The Ashen Cross

However, another day is being observed on Feb. 14, and I think it is the greatest expression of love over all others. It is Ash Wednesday. On that day we begin our 40-day Lenten walk to the cross.

It is traditional among many Christians to receive an ashen cross on that day. These ashes come from the remains of burned palm branches left from the

previous Palm Sunday. It may seem odd to mix Ash Wednesday with Saint Valentine's Day, but I think they work together very well. After all, God's greatest expression of His love toward us was embodied in His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. That Baby of Bethlehem's manger came to die for us, and that is what He did! He went the way of the cross that we might by grace go the way of heaven. What wondrous love is this!

"In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent

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**HEARTFELT  
BLESSINGS**  
Saints of Oklahoma!



# District preparing for 49th convention

The 49th Convention of the Oklahoma District will be held April 20-21 at Hilton Garden Inn & Edmond Conference Center (2833 Conference Drive, Edmond).

### Ballots set

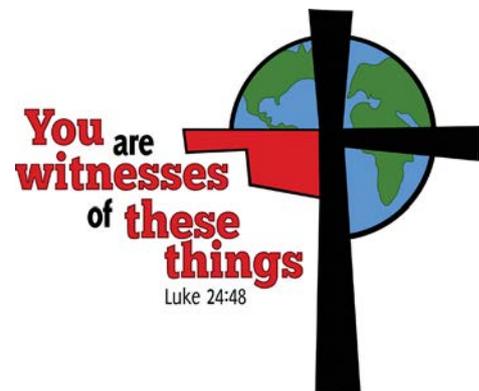
One of the duties of the district secretary is to solicit nominations for district president and first vice-president prior to the district convention. This was accomplished when a mailing was sent on Aug. 18 to all the congregations of the Oklahoma District. From that mailing for requests for nominations, 27 replies were received.

There were four nominations for district president and three were willing to have their names placed on the ballot. They are:

- ▶ **The Rev. Kory Boster**  
District second vice-president and pastor, Trinity, Sallisaw
- ▶ **The Rev. Barrie Henke**  
District president and pastor, Holy Trinity, Edmond
- ▶ **The Rev. David Nehrenz**  
District first vice-president and pastor, Trinity, Norman

Seven names were submitted for first vice-president and three candidates will be on the ballot. They are:

- ▶ **The Rev. Kory Boster**  
District second vice-president and pastor, Trinity, Sallisaw
- ▶ **The Rev. Mark Muenchow**  
Pastor, Messiah, Oklahoma City



- ▶ **The Rev. David Nehrenz**  
District first vice-president and pastor, Trinity, Norman

*Submitted by the Rev. W. R. Rains, Oklahoma District secretary.*

*Special thanks to the Rev. Sean McCoy, pastor, Shepherd of the Hills, Skiatook, for designing the convention logo.*

## Ladies: register for LWML convention

Have you made your hotel reservation for the Oklahoma District LWML Convention? The convention will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Lawton April 13-14. It is *not* too late! Call the Garden Inn, 580-280-2100, today and be sure to mention the LWML convention to get the special rate, or contact your zone president for the web link to reserve online.

You can find the reservation form for the convention at [oklwml.org](http://oklwml.org) (click the convention logo on the right side of the page).

Registration will be \$90 for our 90th year and it is never too early to get that registration taken care of. Instructions

on where to send your registration and payment are listed on the form.

The Oklahoma District LWML is going back to where it all began 90 years ago for the 2018 convention. The national LWML we know today began right here in Oklahoma in March 1928. Eight ladies' circles were represented at the organizational meeting, including Lawton Ladies Aid Society. We are planning a celebration worthy of this emerald anniversary.



I encourage you to bring at least one friend from your congregation to celebrate 90 years of LWML in Oklahoma! Anyone is welcome — you may bring someone that may not know about the wonderful mission work of the LWML.

Convention is a great tool to re-energize the veteran member as well. New mission grant projects will be adopted, and you might just learn a little history as we celebrate this anniversary.

▶ Convention participants will be led in

Bible study by Cindy Steinbeck, owner-president of Steinbeck Vineyards & Winery in Paso Robles, Calif., and author.

- ▶ Mission Central will be the focus of the Rev. Dr. Brent Smith's mission segment and his interest sessions. Smith serves as mission development counselor for Mission Central.
- ▶ Former LWML presidents Linda Reiser (2003-07) and Virginia Von Seggren (1999-2003) will be the keynote speakers.

Interest sessions, servant projects and Young Woman Representatives activities will round out the busy convention weekend. Child care will be offered.

The convention theme, "Great is Thy Faithfulness," is based on Lam. 3:22-23. We will celebrate God's mercy, receive His strength and learn of His hope for tomorrow. We will also celebrate God's faithfulness in our past, present and future as the Oklahoma LWML.

*Submitted by Paula Keefer, chairman of the District Convention Planning Committee.*

# Our Savior honors veterans with quilts, moving tribute



Forty-one quilts hanging from the ceiling of the Our Savior, Tulsa, Fellowship Hall greeted attendees on Veterans Sunday, Nov. 12.

The quilts were made to honor the veterans who served our country and vowed to protect our freedom. Ruth Kruse was the brainchild of the project, suggesting the Peace by Piece quilting group make the quilts thinking there would be 10 to 15 or perhaps 20 veterans.

After further investigation, there were 41 veterans! After planning and purchasing the fabrics and materials, and endlessly thinking about the quilts, seven women worked every Tuesday night for 10 months to bring Kruse's idea to fruition.

Thanks to a Thrivent Action Team grant and several generous donors, the cost of the materials was covered. For Veterans Sunday, handmade invitations were mailed, the hall was decorated, and many attended the celebration. The recognition reception was even covered by Fox News.

The Rev. Tim Dreier blessed the quilts,



The quilters, from left, are Brenda Carter, Marian Sutterfield, Belinda Kastelic, Ruth Kruse, Chrislyn Hinck, Sandra Meyer and Claudette Brown.

Our Savior youth presented the colors, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited and the Star Spangled Banner was sang. Each veteran stood up and was recognized during the Military Medley, when the song of each branch was played.

Each veteran's name was read in the order of the years that they served. The veterans were humbled by the recognition and truly appreciated all that

had been done to honor them. The Rev. Art Spomer led the closing prayer and he followed up by saying, "This morning was unique and memorable. I was deeply moved. It is a tops for me and few experiences in my many years rate that high. What a great way to honor our veterans. God was honored as well."

*Submitted by Sandra Meyer*

## ANNIVERSARIES

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

**Covington, St. John's**

Louis and Pat Schweer  
65 years, Feb. 8

**Enid, St Paul**

Gene and Christine Hollrah  
57 years, Feb. 5

**Fairmont, Zion**

Robert and Juanita Jack  
59 years, Feb. 14

**Mustang, Christ**

Arnold and Pat Sodders  
54 years, Feb. 1

**Norman, Trinity**

Paul and Donna Bushore  
52 years, Feb. 19

**Oklahoma City, Messiah**

David and Alice Giles  
62 years, Feb. 5

Bill and Nancy Varner  
58 years, Feb. 13

Glen and Ann Hallum  
59 years, Feb. 18

Ron and Kristi Barsotti  
54 years, Feb. 22

**Okarche, St. John's**

Allen and Norene Stroud  
51 years, Feb. 4

**Owasso, Faith**

Chuck and Ruth Hutchison  
54 years, Feb. 1

Ken and Sharon Bauer  
53 years, Feb. 27

**Tulsa, Our Savior**

Donald and Mina Nolan  
60 years, Feb. 1



**Broken Arrow, Trinity**  
Robert and Judith Wessels  
53 years, Feb. 14



**Tulsa, Christ the Redeemer**  
Robert and Lanece Young  
54 years, Feb. 29



**Tulsa, Our Savior**  
Verna and Lorin Saathoff  
52 years, Feb. 19

## BIRTHDAYS

**Covington, St. John's**

Dorothy Murphy  
93 years, Feb. 4

**Edmond, Holy Trinity**

Eunice Langager  
94 years, Feb. 22

**Enid, St. Paul's**

LaVern Gragert  
90 years, Feb. 10  
Emily Record  
93 years, Feb. 25

**Oklahoma City, Messiah**

Phil Benjamin  
94 years, Feb. 6  
Wilbur Lee Brakhage  
90 years, Feb. 9

Audrey Koeppel  
95 years, Feb. 1

**Ponca City, First**

Merle Paynter  
92 years, Feb. 10



**Ponca City, First**  
Betty Schwanke  
91 years, Feb. 15



**Tulsa, Our Savior**  
Larry Wigger  
93 years, Feb. 25

## MESSAGE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation (atoning sacrifice) for our sins.”

— 1 John 4:9-10

What a Valentine we have received from God — the gift of Jesus and His gift of salvation! When Martin Luther was designing his crest (or what we call the “Luther Rose”), I am quite sure that he was not thinking of Saint Valentine’s Day when he placed a black cross in the center of a red heart. He did it to remind us that Christ took to the cross our sin so that our hearts might be cleansed by His redeeming blood. But this year, when we have the dual observance of Ash Wednesday on Saint Valentine’s Day, it seems quite fitting to focus on that cross in the center of the heart.

### Sharing Love

The focus of both Valentine’s Day and Ash Wednesday is on love. However, we must not just desire to be on the receiving

end. When God’s Word talks about receiving His love into our hearts and lives, it also admonishes us to share it.

If any New Testament writer could double as a Valentine’s card designer, it would be the Apostle John. He understood the divine truth that if we have received God’s love, then we are constrained to share it in touching the lives of others.

He writes about this love especially in the third chapter of his first letter:

“For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another” (v. 11) ... “By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers” (v. 16) ... “Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth” (v. 18).

So then on Feb. 14, when you are eating chocolates from a heart-shaped box, look into the mirror to see the ashen cross that embodies the meaning of true love!



## Heckmann installed in Okarche

On Sept. 10, the Rev. Joel Heckmann was ordained and installed as pastor of St. John’s, Okarche, by the Rev. Barrie Henke, Oklahoma District president. The Rev. Dr. Robert E. Heckmann, Joel’s father, gave the sermon. Also attending was Joel’s grandfather, the Rev. Dr. Robert G. Heckmann, 90.