



DISTRICT NEWS

OKLAHOMA

Lent

My grandparents kept a pair of binoculars near their back door. During the course of the day, they would scan the western horizon of their farm, looking for threats to their pecan grove, specifically crows and thieves.



Rev. Barrie Henke
District President

If any were spotted, Granny or Grandpa would take their old shotgun, aim it heavenward and then fire both barrels. Crows would often disappear and so would any likely pecan thieves.

Even though the grandchildren were not allowed to play with the binoculars, there were many times when I would sneak them off the shelf to see what I could see. It amazed me how everything was brought closer to you, and if you turned them around, everything would be far, far away.

I now have those old binoculars in my home. They are not as fancy as the new ones, but they do what binoculars are supposed to do — bring closer to your view objects that are far off, and looking



through the opposite end, objects appear farther away.

Lent Begins

This month marks the beginning of the Lenten season. It seems as though it starts later this year with Ash Wednesday occurring on March 6. This starting date is determined by the date for Easter Sunday, which is the first Sunday after the full moon that occurs on or after the spring equinox on March 21.

Easter Sunday cannot be earlier than March 22 or later than April 25. Thus Ash Wednesday falls in the seventh week, and 40 days, before Easter (not counting Sundays). Now you know! (Or you could simply look in *Lutheran Service Book*, page xxiii.)

Lent serves a good purpose. Some people think it is a period devoted to making our life more miserable by forcing or encouraging us to “give up” something. Quite to the contrary, Lent is a time allowing us to spiritually focus. It serves as a spiritual binocular for us.

Binocular Affect

As we look toward Easter, it may seem far in the distance, as though we are looking through the reverse end of binoculars. Ash Wednesday is intended to bring closer to our spiritual vision the impact of Holy Week and Easter on our life and eternity. Like my grandparents scanning the western horizon, our Lenten devotional walk is intended to give us a clearer focus on the redeeming work of Jesus. Lenten services have readings and hymns that serve as binoculars to bring closer and clearer to our spiritual vision all that Jesus has done for us.

On Ash Wednesday, we may feel the scratching of the ashes placed on our forehead — this is part of the binocular affect of bringing closer to our mind the seriousness of our sin. In the sanctuary, we may look upon a purple-draped cross topped with a crown of thorns — this is all part of the binocular affect of bringing Christ’s redemption closer to us. In the worship services, we may miss the singing of the “alleluias” or certain “praise” portions of the liturgy — this is all part of the binocular affect of bringing the solemnity of the season closer to us.

Such traditions are intended to bring closer to us the impact of Christ’s suffering and death upon our life. But through all of the solemnity of Lent, God’s Word enables us to look through those spiritual binoculars and see in the distance the empty tomb and the risen Christ of our Easter celebration!

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GOD'S BLESSINGS
Saints of Oklahoma!

Quilts made with love

The Sewing Group of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Breckinridge, meets weekly from October through April to make quilts for Lutheran World Relief. Last year, the group made more than 100 quilts, thanks in part to Barbara Janssen, who makes quilt tops at home so the group can put the quilts together and tie them when they gather.

Rev. Travis Orr, Immanuel pastor, joins in by carrying the sewing machine and boxes of quilts. He also occasionally lays out quilt blocks in designs to have them ready to sew together.

IN PHOTO: Quilters pause for sack lunches during their workday. From left, Judy Roggow, Sue Ragoss, Pastor Orr, Ladova Roggow, Darlene Keilbarth, Janssen and Michelle Dick. Missing from the photo are Linda Bolte and Harvel Johnson.



Submitted by Harvel Johnson



Submitted by Rita Rains

Blessings in Cushing!

Rev. Ron Rafferty was installed as pastor of Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer, Cushing, on Jan. 20. Those participating in the installation were, from left, Rev. Kory Boster, district second vice-president and pastor, Trinity, Sallisaw; Rev. Barrie Henke, district president and pastor, Holy Trinity, Edmond; Deacon John Ramsey, Rafferty, Rev. WR Rains, district secretary and pastor, Zion, Guthrie; Rev. Carlton Reimer (emeritus) and Rev. Ron Simpson, pastor, Good Shepherd, Midwest City.

Congrats!

Rev. Mark Muenchow was awarded the Oklahoma District School Shepherd Award on Saturday, Feb.



2. David Birnbaum, district education executive, presented the honor during the district Board of Directors meeting. Muenchow was nominated by the National Lutheran School Accreditation visiting team that observed his active involvement and service to Messiah Lutheran School in Oklahoma City.



Daylight saving time begins at 2 a.m. on Sunday, March 10. Remember to set your clock ahead one hour — and avoid being late for church.

ANNIVERSARIES

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

Breckinridge, Immanuel

Ron and Sharon Clinton
53 years, March 4

Broken Arrow, Trinity

Ray and Marilyn Dalla Rosa
53 years, March 4

Jim and Martha Wilson
62 years, March 8

Covington, St. John's

Gerald and Arba Jo Pope
54 years, March 11

Enid, St. Paul's

Roland and Marcella Schroeder
69 years, March 5

Fairmont, Zion

Lyle and Mary Reinhardt
55 years, March 21

Mustang, Christ

Joe and Bettye Haller
67 years, March 15

William and Gen Allen
61 years, March 22

Oklahoma City, Messiah

Richard and Linda Shults
51 years, March 28

Perry, Christ

Robert and Linda Oberholzer
54 years, March 12

Shawnee, Redeemer

John and Barbara Kienzle
63 years, March 7

Tulsa, Christ the Redeemer

John and Roseanna Kretzschmar
51 years, March 23

Belated

Alva, Zion

Phillip and Sandy Murry
59 years, Feb. 19

Ponca City, First



Berno and Janet Ebbesson
55 years, March 29

Tulsa, Christ the Redeemer



Carlisle and Ellen Mabrey
50 years, March 29

Tulsa, Lutheran Church of Our Savior



Jim and Twila Lewis
59 years, March 25



BIRTHDAYS

Celebrating 90 years or more!

Alva, Zion

Art Britcher
96 years, March 7

Broken Arrow, Trinity

Maralyn Brauer
92 years, March 10

Rosamund Scott
91 years, March 13

Covington, St. John's

Louis Schweer
92 years, March 20

Marylou Boepple
90 years, March 21

Edmond, Holy Trinity

Jean Bauer
94 years, March 18

Fairmont, Zion

Mildred Schneider
103 years, March 11

Norman, Trinity

Arlesa Tarver
98 years, March 6

Oklahoma City, Immanuel

Lillian Larwig
94 years, March 26

Oklahoma City, Messiah

Gladycy Williams
97 years, March 15

John Daly
93 years, March 31

John Fetrow
96 years, March 27

Ponca City, First

John Fetrow
96 years, March 27



Tulsa, Christ the Redeemer

Ken Eggers
91 years, March 8

Tulsa, Lutheran Church of Our Savior

June Jordan
93 years, March 15

Belated

Alva, Zion

Helen Beisel
102 years, Feb. 28

Midwest City, Good Shepherd

Verna Anderson
92 years, Feb. 17

Online resources support urban mission, church planting

The LCMS is offering two online resources designed to help those involved in urban and inner-city mission and church planting. **Both are available at no cost.**



The first, a series of one-hour webinars from LCMS Urban & Inner-City Mission, will cover topics such as the theology of the city, mental health, community development, social issues, school ministry, campus ministry, multi-ethnic ministry and more. More information and registration instructions are available at lcms.org/urban-and-inner-city-mission.

The second resource, a series of podcasts from *Mission Field: USA*, will study various questions related to church planting within a Lutheran framework. Topics to be covered include ecclesiology and mission; the Synod's threefold emphasis of *Witness, Mercy, Life Together*®; missiology; the effect of demographic trends on the church and its mission; discipleship through catechesis and assimilation; and ethnic church planting. Podcasts will be released on the first Wednesday of each month. For more information, see lcms.org/church-planting.

Send news

Congregations, please email anniversary and birthday information and photos **no later** than the 15th of each month, two months prior to the publication month.

Deadlines:

- > May issue - March 15
- > June-July Issue - April 15
- > Aug. issue - June 14

Send to: jhedrickokdistrict@gmail.com or Janice Hedrick, PO Box 70, Owasso, OK 74055 (918-396-9629)

Oklahoma has ‘assembly of leaders’

Rev. Martin Herzberg, Paula Keefer, Dianna Just and Delia Collard attended LWML Assembly of Leaders (AOL) in St. Louis in November.

The training was based on Phil. 4:9: “What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things and the God of peace will be with you.”

Attendees were presented information on protocol, technology, best practices, grant selection, and engaging and retaining volunteers. The pastors at-

tended sessions on pastoral leadership.

Presenters at AOL included Oklahomans Patti Ross, LWML president; Bev England, LMLW marketing; and Susan Brunkow, chairman of Leadership Development and past district president.

The four attendees will develop this training into an exciting program to be presented at the district Board of Directors meeting on Feb. 2, and also at upcoming tri-zone Spring Flings. (Check oklwml.org for dates and locations.)



From left, Rev. Martin Herzberg, LWML district pastoral counselor and pastor, Zion, Lahoma; Paula Keefer, VP of Organizational Resources; Dianna Just, district president; and Delia Collard, planning facilitator and Oklahoma City Zone president.



Mercy for infants, parents

From left, Sharon Kraber (left), Hope Pregnancy Center (HPC) director, and Justina Guenther and Tonie Easterwood, also of HPC, accept a room full of donations, including diapers, infant clothing and other baby items from the women of St. John’s Lutheran Church, Hooker. The items were collected at the Lamplighters LWML Advent gathering. Gifts and cash given by women were doubled by a \$250 grant provided by Thrivent Financial through a Thrivent Action Grant.

MESSAGE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Perhaps that is why Sundays are not part of Lent, but intended to be mini-Easter celebrations. Without Easter, Lent has no meaning!

Focus on Jesus

The Lenten season offers to individuals, families and congregations a time for spiritual examination, evaluation and renewal. Lent serves as spiritual binoculars working to focus our eyes, mind and heart on Jesus.

The writer of Hebrews says it so well:

“... let us lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **looking** to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” — **HEB. 12:1B-2**



It almost seems that the author of Hebrews was looking at Christ through spiritual binoculars, because he was seeing the whole story!

