



DISTRICT NEWS

OKLAHOMA

Handling life's TRANSITIONS

The Unfamiliar!

My hometown has changed.

In boyhood days it was a retirement town for local German farmers. There were neatly kept houses and yards with vegetable and flower gardens attached to each. The businesses were well maintained with a steady flow of customers sufficient to keep them going.



Rev. Barrie Henke
District President

But now I go back to visit and it's so unfamiliar. There are no businesses in town. Most of the landmark buildings have been bulldozed down. The Lutheran church is an empty stone shell on the north end of town. The corner of Main and Highway 77 is marked by a crumbling lumberyard with a makeshift patch in the front after a car rammed it. Numerous junk cars and rusting merchandise have replaced the manicured lawns and gardens.

There are some spots that are familiar to me, but most of the town is unfamiliar. I tend to know more people at Morris Heights Cemetery than I do in town.

Changes

Changes were all around me as I toured Orlando. I should be use to changes, but I'm Lutheran so the word "change" is troubling! Changes are inevitable, and can be troubling. But they are going to happen ... ready or not, like it or lump it!

Most changes in our life are beyond our control. They occur because we are sinners in a sinful world. And yet, in such a changing world we have entrusted to us the changeless Gospel of our changeless Christ.

Transitions

I have learned to focus on changes as transition periods. I think the word "transition" is more positive in my mind. It implies that changes are somewhat controllable. Transitioning, by my definition, is the process of working through life changes. We may not like the changes taking place in our life, but the way in which we approach them will directly determine the impact they have on us.

I think Saint Paul held to this truth when he wrote:

"And we know that for those who



love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose."

— Rom. 8:28

Paul saw extraordinary changes in his life, his ministry and his churches. He saw many welcome the Gospel of Jesus Christ and its preachers, and he saw hostility lashing out against

the followers of Christ. He could have bowed his head, given up, then curl up

**SEPTEMBER
BLESSINGS**
Saints of Oklahoma!

See MESSAGE, Page 2

MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

in a fetal position. He could have written hopeless letters of doom and gloom because of the uncontrollable changes taking place.

But he didn't! Instead he wrote about rejoicing always in all circumstances, praying unceasingly and keeping eyes heavenward with expectation to see how God would work His blessings through these changes. Negative changes were transformed into an attitude of positive transitioning. To me, transitioning involves acknowledging the change, then trusting in the Holy Spirit's leading for handling that change.

We are often reactive when changes occur, but with an attitude of transitioning we can be proactive in dealing with any life changes. Birthdays, aches, pains — all are reminders that our life is changing. But following Paul's example, we can be proactive in greeting each change as a transitioning to a new stage of God's blessings in our relationship with Him. We can trust that whatever may come our way, God will work for our good as we cling to faith in Christ.

Here are some life changes: a new knee, a new hip, bypass surgery, cataract surgery, financial setback, family conflicts. Will it be "Oh, woe is me!" or will it be "What exciting plans God must have for me!"

Blessed by God

We cannot stop changes from happening in our culture, our community, our congregation, our family or our personal life. Instead of fighting against them, we can look at them as transitions directed and blessed by God to accomplish His greater purpose through us. How will you approach these changes ... in fearful anger or joyful confidence?

The Holy Spirit gives us wisdom to redefine any change as an exciting and growing time of transition. As we come before God with empty hands, He enables us to align our will with the Holy Spirit's will for the sake of Christ's mission and ministry. The way in which you choose to approach life-changes determines how you will



“ We cannot stop changes from happening in our culture, our community, our congregation, our family or our personal life. Instead of fighting against them, we can look at them as transitions directed and blessed by God to accomplish His greater purpose through us. ”

live out your life. If you face life-changes as God-directed transitions, then with confidence you can anticipate the blessing of His promise that “for those who love God all things work together for good, for those called according to His purpose.”

By right of Holy Baptism, you are one of those called! Clinging to this truth you can live your life in joy and peace, and with excitement anticipating how God's purpose will be revealed through your life.

When transitions come, lift to God empty hands to receive His blessings and an expectant heart. Then, get ready — life will get exciting!



Serving our district in Tampa

The Oklahoma District was represented by these delegates at the 67th Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod July 20-25 in Tampa. For information on the convention, visit lcms.org/convention. From left (seated) David Goss, Rev. Barry Schwiesow, Brad Bunch, Donna Bunch, Barb Schnieder, Rev. Bill Schnieder; (standing) Rev. Travis Orr, Rev. Ron Simpson, Rev. Dwayne Schroeder, Rev. Barrie Henke, Rev. Randy Foote, Ron Cooper, Paul Steitz and Rev. Dr. Christian Tiews. Missing from the photo are Rev. W.R. Rains, Rita Rains, Todd Stevens, Robert Krahn, John Wilkie, Michael Bergstrom and Niles Gransberg.



Confirmed in Okmulgee

Confirmation 2019 at Trinity Lutheran Church, Okmulgee, was held on May 5. Pictured with Rev. Dr. Christian Tiews are, from left, Lillian Tiews, Jillian Remington, Remi Campbell, Hunter Remington and Garrett Norem.



Christ honors its graduates

Congratulations to the Christ Lutheran Church, Perry, high school graduates! Family and friends — and the congregation — celebrated with Kurt Walton, Will Calhoun, Carter Bocox and Madyson Coy on Sunday, May 5, with a breakfast.

— Submitted by Glenda Corn

Class
of **2019**

In Praise to the LORD!

LWML 38th Biennial Convention • June 20-23 • Mobile, Ala.



Patti Ross of Oklahoma places a pin on Debbie Larson, who was elected new LWML president. Ross had served in the position since 2015.

Some traveled by bus, others by plane and still others by car. No matter how Oklahoma LWML members traveled, we all met for a wonderful, spirit-filled weekend at the LWML national convention.

Each day held wonderful activities, speakers, songs and fellowship. Thursday's servant events included helping Lutheran Braille Workers assemble Braille books to be sent all over the world, collecting 300 quilts for Lutheran World Relief, coloring cards and bookmarks for Phil's Friends to give to cancer patients, and writing messages of hope, love and encouragement on postcards for Lutheran Hour Ministries to send to International Ministry Centers in 52 countries.

We met for our district picture and caucuses. Our own Patti Ross, outgoing LWML president, opened the convention and we ended our day "In Praise to the LORD!", which included worshiping and communing together.

Friday opened with Patti leading the banner procession, followed by a Bible study led by Donna Pyle. Delegates voted on Bylaw amendments, a new mission goal of \$2.1 million and 21 mission grant recipients for the 2019-21 biennium (for a list, visit lwml.org/mission-grants).

We heard two Mites in Action speak-

ers as they shared how the mites have helped to spread God's love and Word. We ended our day watching Joe Castillo create beautiful sand art of some beloved Bible stories. Saturday began with a mission flag presentation in which our Young Woman Representatives and Heart to Heart Sisters carried the flags of the countries where LWML mission grants have helped to spread the Word.

We finished the Bible study with Pyle, heard from two more Mites in Action speakers and voted for new officers. Saturday ended with VOICES of Mobile singing beautifully. Sunday we heard from our last Mites in Action speaker and installed the new officers. We ended with worship.

In all, it was a joyful time spent with many sisters in Christ, fulfilling our mission of serving God with our many gifts. We are all filled with the Spirit and encouraged to serve God when we returned to our homes. Attending a national convention is such an awesome experience. The next national convention will be held June 24-27, 2021, in Lexington, Ky. I encourage all to attend and be filled with the Spirit.

More information on the convention is available at lwml.org/2019-convention.

— Submitted by Kasey Meyer
VP of Communication

Time for retreat!

Coming soon to all priceless, valuable women (that's you!): the 2019 District Fall Retreat, a bedazzling women's getaway! This exciting event will be hosted by Oklahoma District LWML Oct. 18-19 at Camp Lutheroma in Tahlequah. What could be more precious than diamonds? You!

The Bible study will be *Treasured*, written by CPH author Deb Burma, and is based on Deut. 14:2: "The LORD has chosen you to be a people for His treasured possession."

We are the precious, treasured possession of our heavenly Father, who sought us and claimed us as His own in Christ. From coal to diamonds, we are continually being transformed in Christ, reflecting His glory and light to a dark world. The qualities of a diamond (cut, color, carat and clarity) describe how Christ takes us from rough and uncut to a gem who carries out His mission.

Plan now to join us. We will walk in the light of God's Word together, enjoy fabulous food and tasty treats, and lift our voices in praise, all as we share encouragement, fellowship and fun in Christ, the light of the world. You may even do some panning for gems.

Questions? Contact Paula Keefer at OKLWMLVPofOR@gmail.com for more information.

Mark your calendar now, invite your friends, and look for registration information at oklwml.org; click the white box in the middle of the page.

— Submitted by Dianna Just
LWML District President



Quilts, and more quilts!

It was a fulfilling day back in 1990 when the LWML members of Trinity, Guymon, took their nine quilts to the Fall Rally for the ingathering for Lutheran World Relief (LWR). That was only the beginning. Every year, the number of quilts made increased until one year, more than 500 quilts made the long trip to Fort Hays or Wichita, Kan., for LWR.

The next chapter of the quilt making began in 2011, in connection with Orphan Grain Train (OGT). An empty OGT truck returning to Norfolk, Neb. after delivering goods stopped at Trinity to pick up the collection. Although most boxes are filled with quilts, the Trinity ladies also packed clothes, medical supplies, home furnishings, assembled kits (school, hygiene, layettes and sewing), crutches, wheelchairs, walkers, toiletries, underwear, socks and more.



OGT accepts everything other than breakable items and books. How blessed the ladies have been to have a building to store goods and to be able to give the accumulated boxes once or twice a year to this Christ-centered LCMS Recognized Service Organization.

Although the number of ladies working on quilts has decreased through the years, each Wednesday, anywhere from three to eight ladies can be found working on quilts, being thankful for the space and donated materials as well as the 4,000 quilts given to OGT.

The Trinity quilters are, from left, Pauline Fischer, Nancy Lines, D'Ann King, Bethine Haynes, Terry Brand, June Wadley, Dianna Jenkins and Myrene Johnson.

Make plans to attend a fall fest

The LWML 38th Biennial Convention in Mobile, Ala., helped each attendee give glory to God for what He has done through the mission work of LWML. Every speaker, mission grant funded and business item addressed was done “In Praise to the LORD!”

Now the Oklahoma District LWML zones will expand upon this theme during its 2019 fall fests as together the ladies will “Proclaim His Name!” The Fall Fest theme is based on Deut. 32:3:

“For I will proclaim the LORD’s name. Declare the

greatness of our God!”

Each zone’s unique fall fest will involve mission presentations, worship, and a Bible study, “Proclaim His Name.” Every woman of the Oklahoma District is invited to attend the fall fest in her zone. Come celebrate God’s wonderful works in our lives as we explore what it means to proclaim God’s name and how, what, and when to proclaim Him!

For more information, visit the Oklahoma LWML website oklwml.org. Click the “Events” tab on top of the page for the Fall Fests 2019 calendar.

Apply for mission grant

The LWML Oklahoma District is now accepting applications for mission grants for adoption at the district convention in April 2020.

Grant applications must be mission focused, with an emphasis on proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and be affiliated with or approved by the LCMS. To obtain a copy of the grant application, visit oklwml.org and click “Forms and Resources” at the top of the page. Under the “Applications” header, click “Mission Grant Application and Guidelines.” There you will be able to download a 5-page document to review and complete.

Grant applications must be submitted by Sept. 30 to bevbaehr23@gmail.com, or mail to:

Beverly Bahr
OKLWML Vice President of Gospel Outreach
1119 Oakridge Drive
Stillwater, OK 74074

Trinity reaches out on July 4

Trinity Lutheran Church, Blackwell, hosted a Fourth of July community-wide celebration that included a complimentary lunch that followed the annual parade. Members of Trinity served pulled-pork sandwiches, hot dogs, chips and cookies to more than 300 people. Raffle prizes were distributed during the event while outdoor games including egg toss, turtle racing, gunny sack racing and three-legged races were played. Tables were decorated with prayers for the country.

— Submitted by Rachel Kahle



VBS recreates Paul's missionary journey to Athens

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Midwest City, had a great week (June 3-7) of vacation Bible school, which averaged more than 85 children each day.

The VBS was titled "ATHENS: Paul's Dangerous Journey to Share the Truth."

The children — ranging from ages 3 through 13 — were divided into seven classes along with 45 staff members. Many students attending were through the outreach of the child development center and the summer camp program

The VBS was an interactive event that included Bible points and special char-

acters each day. "Paul," appropriately attired, opened each day telling about what situation he was in. Each day, the following emphasis was shared:

- ▶ God loves us all.
- ▶ God loves us and takes care of us.
- ▶ God loves us when others don't.
- ▶ God loves us and sent His Son, Jesus.
- ▶ God loves us and wants us to share His love.

Thursday evening we had a hot dog meal with the parents, followed by the children sharing their messages about God's love for us in interactive songs. It was a wonderful, fun-filled event.

Royce Junghanns served as VBS coordinator and led opening and closing each day and the music sessions. The "ATHENS" stage décor was appropriately created by Sue Ogle, Marla Junghanns and Rachel Gober.

— Submitted by Marguerite Christman



Share your news

We are always in need of more submissions for the Oklahoma District insert of *The Lutheran Witness*.

Please submit anything of note in your congregation, including announcements, special events or human interest stories that you or your organization would like published.

We welcome pictures and stories of congregational events, youth events, outreach events, installations, events from your men's or women's group, servant events, conferences, anniversaries, church renovations or additions, and more.

Deadlines:

- > November issue – Sept. 15
- > December issue – Oct. 15

Send to:

> jhedrickokdistrict@gmail.com
or

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

Phone: 918-396-9629



Congrats!

We rejoice with those in the Oklahoma District who are celebrating wedding anniversaries of 50 years or more in September.



Adair, Bethlehem

E. C. & Shirley Peper
58 years, Sept. 16
Fred and Jane Harding
53 years, Sept. 30

Broken Arrow, Trinity

Bill and Opal Raimond
55 years, Sept. 5
Edmond, Holy Trinity
Richard and Lu Barratiere
54 years, Sept. 11
Carlton and Georgianna Schmitz
55 years, Sept. 12

Donald and Jo Ann Knutson
64 years, Sept. 15.
Fred and Carolyn Van Wieren
64 years, Sept. 30

Enid, St Paul's
Walter and Pat Lemke
61 years, Sept. 6

Gerald and Joyce Nolte
52 years, Sept. 23

Fairland, St. Paul's
Harley and Wanda Phariss
71 years, Sept. 19
Walter and Natalie Dauer
56 Years, Sept. 28

Fairmont, Zion
Ted and Virginia Loesch
57 years, Sept. 2
J.C. and Velda Pralle
58 years, Sept. 3
Dennis and Barbara Gerken
50 years, Sept 6

Okarche, St. John's
Delbert and Deborah Hinrich
51 years, Sept. 1

Oklahoma City, Messiah
Travis and Margaret Simpson
56 years, Sept. 2
Al and Marj Seeliger
60 years, Sept. 4
Rev. Fred and Marlene Muenchow
59 years, Sept. 4
Earle and Margaret Wagner
59 years, Sept. 11
Marvin and Dorothy Kramer
59 years, Sept. 24

Perry, Christ

Max and Sherry Adams
58 years, Sept. 2
Allen and Carrol Piel
58 years, Sept. 29

Shawnee, Redeemer
Don and Ruth Sutherland
63 years, Sept. 2

Scott and Jonnie Witt
53 years, Sept. 3
Ken and Gerry Pfeil
51 years, Sept. 7

Tulsa, Christ the Redeemer

Ron and Phyllis Vause
53 years, Sept. 2
Jim and Norma Blackburn
64 years, Sept. 4
Bob and Iris Wilson
62 years, Sept. 22

Broken Arrow, Trinity



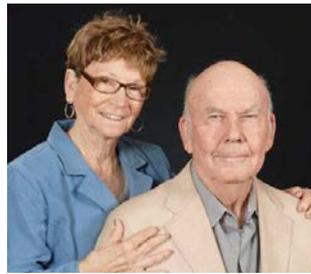
Carl and Judy Hefley
57 years, Sept. 28

Okmulgee, Trinity



Raymond and Ingrid Cline
50 years, Sept. 6

Perry, Christ



Gene and Stella Kroll
65 years, Sept. 2



Lynn and Sandy Moeller
55 years, Sept. 12



Jim and Linda Kukuk
50 years, Sept. 1

Tulsa, Christ the Redeemer



Duane and Donna Anderson
60 years, Sept. 5

Belated

Claremore, Redeemer
Randy and Kathy Iwanaga
50 years, July 24

Mustang, Christ
Frank and Barbara Stegall
55 years, Aug. 15

Tulsa, Christ the Redeemer



Dennis and Pat Morris
52 years, Aug. 26



We congratulate those who are celebrating 90 years or more

Oklahoma City, Messiah

Kitty Ernst 95 years, Sept. 26
Dorothy Grob 92 years, Sept. 29

Lawton, Holy Cross



Jennie Niskern
91 years, Sept. 5

Belated

Messiah, Oklahoma City
Val Reed
99 years, Aug. 7

Lawton, Holy Cross



Wava Brunkow
92 years, Aug. 1

NEW SYNODWIDE EMPHASIS AIMS AT 'MAKING DISCIPLES FOR LIFE'



Making Disciples for Life (MDFL), a new initiative of the LCMS Office of National Mission (ONM), will assist God's people as they witness to Christ and His eternal gifts.

Working alongside the districts and congregations of the Synod, the ONM will provide resources, training and opportunities for congregations to connect across the Synod in *Witness, Mercy, Life Together*® — in Christ, for the world.

"*Making Disciples for Life* ... will put field-tested, theologically solid resources at the fingertips of God's people 24 hours a day," said ONM Executive Director Rev. Robert Zagore. "What's more, this initiative is designed to grow when we work together as a Synod."

The initiative is rooted in Jesus' words in Matthew 28: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20).

The ministries of the ONM are continually developing resources to help the people of the LCMS serve in their unique situations. *MDFL* will make these resources more readily accessible

through a new internet resource center that will use the latest technology to enable anyone to easily find the materials they need.

Yet *MDFL* is more than just resources. As situations change or new conditions arise, the ONM looks forward to working with the people of the Synod to both identify and meet the challenges and opportunities ahead. Church-planting grants, multi-ethnic church grants, planning and training will help congregations reach out to changing neighborhoods and areas that don't currently have an LCMS presence.

Conversations and interaction will play a major role as regional conferences provide opportunities for laypeople and clergy to dialogue with each other and the ministries of the Synod.

In addition, "incubator" congregations that represent varied situations throughout the Synod will serve as testing grounds to ensure the materials can be as useful as possible.

With all that the new initiative aims to accomplish, Zagore emphasized that it is the Spirit who works where and when He pleases through the Word. "We have Christ and His pure, eternal Gospel to share," Zagore said.

Considering pastoral, deaconess ministry?

Contemplate is an event for college-age or older potential students, providing an opportunity to learn more about life in the **Concordia Seminary, St. Louis**, community and the preparation that leads to service as a pastor, missionary, chaplain or deaconess in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Contemplate encompasses time focused on discerning a vocation, attending classes and interacting with current students. A campus tour takes place on Thursday afternoon followed by a welcome reception and dinner with current students and student leadership. Participants are paired with a student mentor who can discuss and answer questions from a student's perspective.

The event will be held Oct. 3-5. For more information and to register, visit csl.edu/admissions/visit/contemplate.

The **Prayerfully Consider Visit** invites men and women of all ages to explore the pastoral and diaconal training happening at **Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), Ind.**, and gives a time for contemplation on the vocations of pastor and deaconess. The event will be held Oct. 10-12.

The visit offers prospective students an occasion to explore the campus, engage the students and faculty, experience the rich fellowship and worship, and consider the vocation of pastor or deaconess.

During this three-day visit, prospective students gather as a group to gain a richer and fuller picture of life as a seminary student and to investigate the options available to them at CTSFW.

For more information and to register, visit ctsfw.edu/ctsfw-events/prayerfully-consider-visit.