


THE OKLAHOMA UNITED METHODIST

# Contact *Weekly*

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Jobs!

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Appointments

Oklahoma Annual Conference 2024

**The World  
FOREVER  
Our Parish**

Thursday May 30 - Saturday June 1

## Preparing for Annual Conference 2024

Part 5  
of our 8 part series

# Historical Observance: 240th Anniversary of Methodism in America

BY REV. DERREK BELASE

In 1784, revival was beginning to break out in the United States. Leaders of a fledgling Wesleyan movement met at the Lovely Lane Meeting House in Baltimore, Maryland on Christmas Eve for a monumental meeting which was the first conference of Methodists in America. Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury, among a few

others, were present.

For the next 200 years, Methodism spread across the United States to every town and city, rural and urban areas and to any place where there was a group of people who wanted to follow Christ in the Wesleyan way.

Ninety years after the founding, the General Conference met in 1864 in Philadelphia. On May 18, a small delegation of the conference met with President Abraham Lincoln at the White House. In

a part of his speech to them, he said, "It is no fault of others that the Methodist Church sends more soldiers to the field, more nurses to the hospital, more prayers to Heaven than any. God bless the Methodist Church, bless all the churches, and blessed be God, Who, in this our great trial, giveth us the churches."

The Methodist movement, which became the United Methodist Church in 1968, has given birth to churches, colleges, universities,





hospitals, child care agencies, counseling centers, community outreach organizations, food pantries and other social services.

In 1984, the UMC celebrated the bicentennial of Methodism. There were celebrations at that year's General Conference and throughout the US conferences, including in Oklahoma. On June 5, the conference produced a show called "Jubilee of Grace and Freedom" consisting of 147 ushers, 23 parking lot attendants, 691 choir members, 40 symphony players, 63 cast members, 14 dancers, 18 planning committee members, and a crew of costumers, directors, sound and lighting engineers, make-up artists, prompters and 40 behind-the-scenes workers.

2024 is the 240th anniversary of Methodism in America. At this year's annual conference, we will mark this observance in a few ways. You may be asking WHY? Is there something special about 240 years? Quite simply this — we have a great opportunity to remember who we are as Methodists as we move into who we will be in the next 240 years.

Our theme for this year's conference, "The World FOREVER Our Parish," was drawn from a John Wesley quote and Matthew 28:16-



**A replica of the original Cokesbury Bell donated by a closed church, on display at the conference office.. Photo by Andrew Himes.**

20 as we look back the bedrock of our faith and look forward to who we are becoming.

In 1984, our conference commissioned a song by Claire Jones and Ray Luke called, "The World Is Our Parish." It was released to churches and used throughout Oklahoma by choirs and in worship services honoring the bicentennial of Methodism.

This song was lost to history and not included in the archival material turned over to Oklahoma City University by Ray Luke's family, but we recently ran across a faint copy of this song in a box of materials from a closed church. We reached out to the family and asked

them if we could re-release this song this year. They agreed!

In addition to the original song, which is more suited for a choir than congregational singing, we are also releasing a version adapted by Tyler Stone of New Hope UMC in OKC. This version is suited for congregational singing.

There was also a series of bells cast in 1984 as replicas of the original Cokesbury Bell from Cokesbury College in Abingdon, Maryland. That original bell survived two fires and is now on display in a museum. In the lobby of the conference office, we have a replica bell on display. It was recently donated to us from one of our closed churches.

On Thursday during our afternoon business session, we will share a little about this history and offer some resources with you that you can use in your churches this fall as we celebrate the next expression of United Methodism in Oklahoma. The choir at New Hope UMC has also recorded a version of the original song which you can use in your local churches. Our best 240 years are in front of us!

# Exploring the Abundance of Scholarships for the 2024 Camping Season

BY WANDA CLARK

As we gear up for another exciting camping season at OK Camps, we want to make sure everyone is aware of the multiple scholarship opportunities that are available to attend one of our camps. We are always looking for ways to ensure that financial constraints never hinder anyone from experiencing the transformative power of camp. Here's a breakdown of the scholarships available for the upcoming season:

## Individual Needs-Based Scholarships

We understand that financial circumstances vary, and we believe that every camper deserves the chance to create unforgettable memories at camp. Our individual needs-based scholarships are tailored to provide assistance to those who require financial support. Through this program, we aim to make camp a reality for individuals facing economic challenges.

## Partnership with Prison

## Fellowship

In collaboration with Prison Fellowship, we are proud to offer a free camp experience to any camper who is also a participant in the Angel Tree Christmas tree program. This initiative not only extends the spirit of giving but also provides a meaningful opportunity for campers to immerse themselves in the wonders of nature and community.

## Lake Country District Partnership

Thanks to our partnership with the Lake Country District, both campers and adult leaders have the opportunity to attend camp at a discounted rate of 50%. We are so grateful for the Lake Country District for continuing to provide this opportunity for their churches!

## Introducing Dangott Opportunities

This year, we are excited to introduce our new Dangott opportunities, aimed at further expanding access to camp. These opportunities are all based on available funds and are limited:

Adult Leaders from United Methodist Churches: We understand the vital role adult leaders play

in shaping the camp experience. To show our appreciation, we are offering adult leaders from United Methodist Churches the chance to attend camp without worrying about registration fees, based on available funds.

## Sonshine Shepherds Discount

For Sonshine Shepherds from United Methodist Churches, we are pleased to offer a special 50% discount on camp fees, recognizing their dedication to guiding and nurturing campers throughout their journey, based on available funds.

“First Time Free” Camper from UMC Promotion: We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to experience camp for the first time. Through our “First Time Free” promotion for UMC campers, we invite newcomers to discover the wonder of camp without any financial burden. This will be based on available funds.

## UMC Church-Based Scholarships

As part of our commitment to supporting UMC congregations, a portion of our scholarship funds will be allocated to UMC church-based scholarships. Church leaders



will have access to a simple Google Form to request financial aid on behalf of their families, ensuring that no camper is left behind due to financial constraints.

For more information on each scholarship opportunity and details on how to apply, please visit [the website](#). We encourage all interested individuals to take advantage of these scholarships and join us for an unforgettable camping adventure in 2024. Let's make this season one to remember for everyone!



Campers worship during a past LEAD camp. Photo by Tabitha Beckman.

**OK CAMPS**  
United Methodist Camping Ministry  
CANYON | EGAN | CROSS POINT

**SUMMER CAMP**

**SIGN UP NOW FOR  
THE 2024 SUMMER CAMPING SEASON!**

[OKCAMPS.ORG/CAMPBOOK](https://okcamps.org/campbook)



# Oklahomans at Work and Play in Charlotte



Oklahoma and OIMC delegates and supporters on the plenary floor during Monday's session at General Conference. That evening, all Oklahomans came together at a local restaurant to get together, play, eat, and refuel as they began a second week.





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IS GOD  
**CALLING  
YOU FOR  
MORE?**





# Key Legislation Moves Through Committees and Plenary Sessions

## Many items largely decided in consent calendars with little fanfare

**T**he Delayed 2020 General Conference, also known as the 2024 General Conference, started its first week with some key legislation and has kept rolling since that beginning.

This is outside of the norm for General Conference. Generally, legislative committees meet throughout the first week, reports are given, and consent calendar items are voted in blocs. This year, the legislation, which could decide the future of the United Methodist Church, was largely decided within those very consent calendars.

### REGIONALIZATION

Committees formed of delegates, chosen by each annual conference to represent their interests and their perspectives, largely voted in favor of worldwide regionalization in committees.

Five of eight regionalization votes were decided - favorably - on the second day of General Conference.

Two more were approved later, and the final piece is expected on this publication day.

### REVISED SOCIAL PRINCIPLES

By end of day Tuesday of the second week, the Revised Social Principles legislation had largely been adopted. Of the six petitions that



**Oklahoma delegates meet together for prayer each morning outside of the food court at the Charlotte Convention Center at General Conference.**

were put before the body, five passed Tuesday and earlier.

The portions of the Revised Social Principles that passed include the preface and preamble, plus the political community section, the economic community section, and the Community of All Creation section.

Still left to decide is the social community section. This section focuses on marriage, family, and human sexuality, along with other social issues affecting the lives of all people, like gambling, substance abuse, and dying with dignity.

### APPORTIONMENTS

The Financial Administration Committee, on which young adult delegate Kyla Powers serves, brought forth a divided report on an increase of conference apportionments.

The proposal was to change the base rate General Church percent from 2.59 percent to 2.9 percent.

A minority report, amendments, and much debate ensued. A motion was made to gradually increase the apportionment percentage over the



course of five years if the pay out rate is 90 percent or higher in the last two years of the quadrium. With amendments attached, the legislation passed.

### **FULL COMMUNION RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

The delegates voted Tuesday, again by consent calendar, to be in a full communion relationship with the Episcopal Church. This is the first step toward that connection, as the Episcopal Church has to take a vote at its next convention, which will be in 2027.

Full communion means that the two denominations would recognize each other's baptism, ordination, communion, and membership.

The Episcopal Church already has full communion relationships with several denominations. If this relationship is approved by the Episcopal General Convention, it will mark a significant relationship among many churches.

### **MORE TO COME**

Though anything can happen during proceedings, the finalization of the regionalization votes, the Revised Social Principles votes, the decision on the clergy retirement plan by Wespath,



**Native Oklahoman Bishop David Wilson leads worship during Wednesday morning's service at General Conference.**

and matters regarding disaffiliation and reaffiliation are expected today or later this week.

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LOCAL CHURCHES?**

Many questions abound regarding the decisions being made at General Conference. All constitutional matters must be ratified by all annual conferences before they are finalized.

Some conferences will have time to hold votes this year, and others will

vote as late as next year. Oklahoma's 2024 annual conference meets a mere three weeks after the conclusion of General Conference, so it will not contain votes on General Conference matters. There will, however, be reports by delegates and conference leaders.

## *Watering the Earth :* **START WITH VISION AND A PURPOSE**

CONTACT US TODAY TO PROVIDE FOR THE MINISTRIES OF YOUR CHURCH AND LASTING GOOD IN YOUR COMMUNITY





# Ministry in a Minute

## A spot to share your ministry moments with the rest of the conference

**RIGHT (OR NEXT PAGE, FOR PDF READERS):** Tishomingo's Firefly Glow Run used Tishomingo UMC for registration and the start and finish point. Photos by Sharon Kay Cochran.

### 2024 Golf Tournament to benefit the OU Wesley

#### | Sponsorship

##### Title Sponsor: \$5,000

Includes logo on every hole sponsorship tee box sign, two golfer registrations, player gift bag insert, logo on the clubhouse banner, website recognition and 12 mulligans for each team

##### Eagle Sponsor: \$2,500

Includes exclusive hole sponsorship tee box sign, four golfer registrations, player gift bag insert, logo on the clubhouse banner, website recognition, 12 mulligans and special holes

##### Birdie Sponsor: \$1,200

Includes exclusive hole sponsorship tee box sign, four golfer registrations, logo on the clubhouse banner and 12 mulligans

##### Par Sponsor: \$900

Includes two golfers, tee box sign, logo on clubhouse banner and six mulligans

##### Hole Sponsor: \$400

Tee box sign

#### Entry Fees

Includes green fees, cart, range balls, beverage tickets, lunch and prizes

**Team (foursome): \$500**

**Single: \$125**

**Mulligans: \$100**

(12 per team)

**Two Special Holes: \$15 each or \$20 each day of the tournament**

#### | Host Course

The 2024 Golf Tournament will be held at the Moore Golf and Athletic Club in Moore, Okla. The course is about one mile west of I-35 on 19th street in south Moore.

The 6,789-yard, links-style course has the humps and bumps you'd expect, with water in play on 11 holes.



**Moore Golf & Athletic Club**  
920 SW 19th St, Moore, OK 73160

#### | Schedule

7:30am..... Registration and practice range  
9:00am..... Shotgun start  
1:00pm..... Lunch and prizes

(Please wear a collared shirt)

#### | The Wesley

##### OU Wesley Mission Statement:

To make disciples of Jesus on OU's campus for the transformation of the world.

For nearly 100 years, the OU Wesley has focused on making disciples of Jesus on OU's campus. The proceeds of the Wesley Golf Tournament and your generous support help us continue to provide worship services, Bible studies, small groups, ESL classes, mission trips and much more for hundreds of students.

Thank you for your support of the OU Wesley. For more information about our ministry you can follow us on Facebook and Instagram or visit [okwesley.org](http://okwesley.org)

#### | Hole Prizes

Previous year's prizes have been...

Free hotel stays  
OU memorabilia  
Gift certificates  
Golf apparel

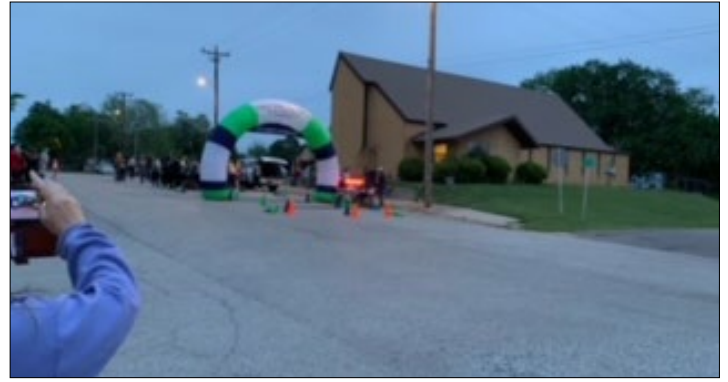
**Miss the hole prizes?**

It's okay! You can still be a winner. We will have tons of great door prizes!

#### | Contact

For more information about either being a sponsor or participant or other sponsorship opportunities in the 2024 Wesley Golf Tournament, please contact Gloria at [Gloria@okwesley.org](mailto:Gloria@okwesley.org) or visit [okwesley.org/Wesley-golf-tournament](http://okwesley.org/Wesley-golf-tournament)





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# Call to Action



Donate to disaster relief. After tornadoes ravaged large swaths of Oklahoma, recovery will begin and will be ongoing. The link to donate is [here](#).

Pray for General Conference, delegates, those traveling, those affected by recent tornadoes, and all of God's creation.

*Share your event or job opportunity in the **Contact**.*

*For consideration, email your listing to [editor@okumc.org](mailto:editor@okumc.org).*