

Expanding in Edmond for the Kingdom

Connect digs into work on first church building

By HOLLY McCRAY

The box sat on the ground, almost overlooked in front of a row of shiny shovels. Yet it held treasures: a Bible and written prayers by the people of Connect United Methodist Church in far north Edmond.

When the congregation broke ground Nov. 22 for its first building, the box was ceremoniously buried on the 8-acre property at the southeast corner of Sorghum Mill and Coltrane.

“Connect UMC is built upon the foundations of prayer and the Word of God,” Pastor Adam Ricks reminded those present.

He prayed, “This is a big step today. The responsibility rests upon us to cause a building to rise here that shall be ... devoted to the glory of the Lord Savior Jesus Christ. God, remind us every day that this is but a tool, a launching-off point from where we will do great ministry in the world.”

The people of the Connect community and the wider faith family have given a great deal to make the project possible, Rev. Ricks said.

The building, 7,000 square feet, will feature a 220-seat sanctuary and educational space. It won't have an office; Ricks doesn't use one.

“Nobody comes into an office asking to become a disciple of Jesus Christ,” he said.

Connect rocks worship at 11

See *Connect UMC*, page 7



Photo by Andrew Himes

Young Caedmon Ricks helps bury a box as Connect UMC breaks ground.



Photo by Doug McAbee

Drew Haynes and Savannah White ink a steel plate for a beam in St. Luke's new Edmond facility.

St. Luke's satellite rising beside interstate

Josh Attaway looked out Nov. 8 on the people ready to sign names and prayers on a steel plate at the Edmond construction site for St. Luke's newest satellite campus.

He recognized those who that very morning had joined the church in Edmond, as well as St. Luke's members of more than 60 years.

He knew God was present in their common mission. “It was a special feeling,” said the Edmond campus pastor for St. Luke's.

The Beam Signing event proceeded just as Methodists did 126 years ago when planting the church on Eighth Street in Oklahoma City. On the first Sunday after the great land run of 1889, a white flag was raised, a trumpet sounded, and the people sang “What a Friend We Have in Jesus.”

See *Edmond-St. Luke's*, page 7

Nonprofits to get fundraising training

Training on Jan. 29 will bring together specific leaders of United Methodist-related nonprofits in the state to learn from certified fundraising consultant Clif Christopher.

The Gathering will be at the United Way of Central Oklahoma, 1444 NW 28th St., Oklahoma City, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. that Friday. The office is three blocks north of the United Methodist Ministry Center.

A year and a half ago, the Oklahoma Conference made the bold decision to realign its budget, to more closely reflect its priority of helping new, younger, and more diverse people grow into world-changing disciples of Jesus Christ.

“In beginning to do so, we have listened to our existing institutions tell us they may need help in becoming more excellent in their work,” said Craig Stinson, director of Connectional Ministries. “Although each group is unique, there are some things we are hearing from many of them.”

He shared these:

1. How to expand a ministry's reach, so that more people know about and become stakeholders in the work;
2. How to tell stories of changed lives so that others, even those outside the church, will invest in the ministry;
3. The need to be excellent in governance, such as identifying what makes a good board member; and
4. How to manage funds in the best way.

“We have good resources” to inform in those areas, said Treasurer Brian Bakeman. “The more we can help each other, the more efficient and effective we become. Everybody doesn't need their own development officer, but we need development people.”

The Gathering will benefit executive staff and board members of campus ministries, senior living centers, prison ministries, mission agencies, etc., said Rev. Bakeman. It is not designed for local churches.

By invitation, about 100 people are expected.

The program is a collaboration by Circle of Care, Connectional Ministries, and the Treasurer's Office. Rev. Dr. Christopher's presentation is made possible by the Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation.

Christopher has worked with hundreds of church entities, in more than 30 states, and secured more than \$500 million for clients as CEO of Horizons Stewardship Co., after a rewarding pastoral career. His three books include “Not Your Parents' Offering Plate” (Abingdon Press), and his blog is featured in MinistryMatters.com.

The January event targets fundraising, but “we're hoping this develops into an organization,” Bakeman said.



Photo by Chris Schutz

Gov. Mary Fallin green-lights the Oklahoma Fosters Initiative.

Circle welcomes state foster care strategy

By CHRIS SCHUTZ

Gov. Mary Fallin's new initiative to find foster and adoptive homes for children who need them is an encouraging step, said Mike Slack, vice president of development for the Oklahoma United Methodist Circle of Care.

Slack was among the officials present at Fallin's Nov. 12 announcement of the *Oklahoma Fosters Initiative*. The governor made the announcement at the Oklahoma Historical Society, across the street from the Capitol.

Fallin urged a wide-ranging group of organizations to band together for a “full-court press” to create 1,000 new foster families in Oklahoma by June 2016.

The governor said she hopes to “change the trajectory of children in our state

See *Foster care*, page 5



Christmas Eve is the most likely time a non-churchgoer will consider going. Will they know your church is an option? Will you be ready?

A social media strategy is available to make the most of this annual opportunity. The Conference Evangelism Committee hopes your church will commit to be a part of this effort to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world this Christmas.

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[www.okumc.org/
HomeForChristmas](http://www.okumc.org/HomeForChristmas)

Albin will teach clergy about Wesley brothers

Orders Meeting set Jan. 19

Tom Albin of The Upper Room will present "Deep Spirituality in the Wesleyan Tradition" at the Jan. 19 meeting of the Orders of Elders and Deacons and the Fellowship of Local Pastors.

Oklahoma's clergy will meet 10 a.m.-3 p.m. that Tuesday at OKC-St. Luke's.

Rev. Albin, an Oklahoma elder, is dean of the Upper Room Chapel and Ecumenical Relations in Nashville, Tenn.

According to the Wesley brothers, "A Methodist is a person who lives by the method laid down in the Bible."

"In our January gathering, we will explore the teaching and practices of Jesus, John, and Charles in relation to spiritual leadership," Albin said. "Our time together will be a spiritual experience more than a lecture and discussion session."

With humor, music, and prayer, he plans to remind clergy "of the patterns and practices that sustain the soul of the leader as well as nurture and mature the souls



Tom Albin of The Upper Room

of those who join us on the journey of discipleship."

Albin continued, "United Methodists are better at activity and advocacy than we are at spiritual maturity and power—the power promised to us by Jesus and modeled for us in the lives of John and Charles Wesley.

"I want the *both-and* more than the *either-or*."

The Wesleyan way—and the biblical way—is to unite knowledge and vital piety, sermon and song, the inward journey with the outward one, he said.

Many spiritual leaders find themselves thirsty, Albin said, as if the well of living water promised by Jesus has run dry. "Come prepared to enter into a community of women and men called to honestly confess our faults and pray for one another, that we might be healed."

On the Kansas prairie, Albin grew up on the family farm. He earned degrees at Oral Roberts University and Fuller Theological Seminary and studied at Cambridge. His published works include adult and youth curriculum for the Church.

He taught at the seminaries of Boston University and the University of Dubuque prior to joining The Upper Room staff in 1999.

All active clergy are expected to attend the meeting, and retirees are welcome. Bishop Robert Hayes Jr. will lead the Wesley Covenant Service for a new year.

Rabbi's cause gains Muslim support



Under the heading "Called to Be Neighbors and Witnesses: Guidelines for Interreligious Relationships," the United Methodist *Book of Resolutions* states that effective dialogue between people of different faiths requires "mutual acceptance, openness, and respect." At an advisory board meeting of OCU's Wimberly School of Religion, we learned of this call being put into practice by board members Rabbi Vered Harris and Dr. Imad Enchassi, as told in this story. OCU is one of 119 United Methodist-related schools in the nation.

By **CARLA HINTON**
The Oklahoman

The Facebook blurb and an email from Rabbi Vered Harris focused on a topic that rarely came up in conversation: her tresses.

"There's a price on my head (of hair)," she wrote to family and friends. "It's a long story, but the short version is this: I have a lot of hair. I am donating it."

Harris, spiritual leader of Temple B'nai Israel in Oklahoma City, went on to explain that she was trying to raise money — \$3,600 to be exact — for pediatric cancer research.

The rabbi said she had faith that her goal would be reached.

Still, she was still stunned a few days later when a local Muslim leader told her that Muslims wanted to donate to her cause and, in fact, had raised her entire goal amount.

"I was just so deeply touched," she said.

"I think that people have so many wrong stereotypes and misconceptions about

Jewish-Muslim relations."

On Nov. 5, she joined several other rabbis from around the country in shaving their heads at the Union of Reform Judaism (URJ) Biennial gathering in Orlando, Fla.

In short, she became part of the "Rabbis Shave for the Brave" movement.

The shave-in was part of a project coordinated by St. Baldrick's, a volunteer-driven charity based in Monrovia, Calif., that provides grants for research to find cures for childhood cancers. The organization coordinates its signature head-shaving events like "Rabbis Shave for the Brave" and other fundraisers to give volunteers around the world an opportunity to raise money to support life-saving research.

Harris, 43, said she had raised almost \$10,000 for the effort as of Nov. 3.

She said the Muslim community's generous response to her appeal is an example of interfaith goodwill that



After donating her hair, Rabbi Vered Harris hugs the mother of young cancer patient Sam Sommer.

thrives even as people of different faiths experience tensions and hostilities in other parts of the country and the world.

Imad Enchassi, who is senior imam of the Islamic Society of Greater Oklahoma City, said he led the effort to raise money for the rabbi's fundraising project.

Enchassi said the Council on American-Islamic Relations gave \$500, the Dialogue Institute gave \$500, and individual members of the Muslim community at large donated the remaining \$2,600 of the faith community's \$3,600 donation.

"When you think about children battling this horrible disease, it hits really deep in the hearts of people," said Enchassi, 50.

"We have never heard of St. Baldrick's, but it's simply the fact that we trust the rabbi. She herself has stood with us against

bigotry and xenophobia."

Harris did not initially ask her congregation to give to the cause, but the imam said he suggested a "friendly wager" or challenge to the temple to raise more funds, and the congregation responded so much so that Harris received donations well beyond her goal.

Harris said she was a little nervous about shaving her head.

The rabbi said she wore her hair long and blond growing up and was known for her lengthy mane. She said she cut it very short about six months before her wedding and her fiancé, Benjamin, now her husband, was none too happy.

Harris said women in her great-great-grandmother's Orthodox Jewish community in Hungary regularly kept their heads shaved. She said her great-grandmother, for whom she is named (Vered means "rose" in Hebrew), decided to break with tradition, preferring to keep her hair.

The rabbi said she has preferred to wear her hair short over the last several years. When she arrived in Oklahoma City as the new rabbi for Temple B'nai Israel, she wore her hair in a short pixie-cut style.

She said she had grown her hair for about two years in anticipation of the head-shaving event.

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Strength for the journey: A collection of ideas and thoughts from our bishop

Giving gifts?

NOTE: Bishop Hayes is calling each of us to action in the Oklahoma Conference. This is the fourth in his five-part series. Did you miss one? Go to www.okumc.org/bishops_corner

“For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance to your faith. If it is serving, then serve; if teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.” (Romans 12:4-8, NIV)

By **BISHOP ROBERT HAYES JR.**

One of the great strengths of our Church has always been its emphasis on the laity. Methodism in America began as a lay movement.

I cannot overemphasize the importance of the lay person's role in advancing the Kingdom of God. Yes, some laity find their gifts lead them into formal pastoral ministry. Yet just as there are clergy who are influential in your development and mine as disciples, there likely are three or four times as many lay people who, through the witness of their lives, bring us into deeper relationships with Jesus Christ.

For me, one of them was my childhood Sunday School teacher, Emma Bingham. I

was the impressionable age of 9 when she made tremendous impact on my life.

Every Sunday morning she was in her classroom, waiting for me and other students to arrive. We had no digital technology to stimulate our imagination — we didn't need those because we had Mrs. Bingham!

She insisted each child bring a Bible to class. (It's a good thing the parsonage was next door to the church. I can't count how many times she sent me home to retrieve mine.)

And when she opened her Bible the characters leaped off the page!

I wouldn't be who I am or where I am today if there had not been a Mrs. Bingham in my life.

Who are the Emma Bingham in your life? Can you recall those saints who took you by the hand and helped shape your life? As I go from church to church, I see so many lay people involved in our churches, sculpting more United Methodists who love and live for God.

It warms my heart to see today's Sunday School teachers, Lay Servants, mentors, and volunteers engaging in all kinds of ministry, but especially with children and youths. Liturgists, musicians and choir directors, ushers, digital technicians, trustees, missions leaders, Stephen Ministers — a host of people give their time and gifts to God's glory. Every person who prepares or serves food for those remarkable covered-

dish dinners is using his or her gifts to create Christian community and fellowship!

Have you ever thought of your church involvement that way?

The Apostle Paul sums it up best in his letter to the Romans: “We have different gifts, according to the grace given each of us.”

Then Paul provides a beautiful list of gifts to put into service as a member in the body of Christ.

Laity, my plea to you today is: Claim your gift! That's right! Claim your God-given talent and use it as an offering to your church and your community of faith! You not only will be blessed, but also will bless others in ways you cannot imagine.

Colgate-Palmolive is a familiar product brand name. What you may not know is how William Colgate claimed his gift of crafting soap.

Colgate worked as an apprentice in a soap manufacturing shop as a young boy. At age 16, he left home to seek employment. Traveling on a canal boat, he told the captain that his ambition was to

make soap in New York City.

After hearing about this dream and realizing the young man had a gift, the old captain gave Colgate some advice.

“Someone will soon be the leading soap maker in New York. You can be that person. But you must never lose sight of the fact that the soap you make has been given to you by God. Honor Him by sharing what you earn. Begin by tithing all you receive.”

That advice changed Colgate's life. He realized that God was the giver of all he possessed, not only of opportunity but even the elements used in making his soap. He became one of America's leading philanthropists.

To my dear brothers and sisters who occupy the pews of our churches: You have so much to offer your church. Honor God by sharing your gift. Invite someone to go to church with you; volunteer your time in a ministry about which you are passionate. Teach, serve, encourage, give generously, and show mercy cheerfully!

Do these things, and the Church as we know it will be transformed. The Emma Bingham of our lives will rejoice!



Bishop Hayes

End-of-year reporting

• **Dec. 15** — Deadline to enter/update your church's 2016 list of officers in the online Conference database (Brick River).

Give special attention to accuracy in email addresses and phone numbers. Having correct information helps assure effective communications at all levels.

If you are designated to do this for your church and need help logging in, contact mmyers@okumc.org

• **Jan. 8** — By this date, all 2015 Apportionment contributions must be received at the Conference Treasurer's Office in Oklahoma City.

Important: any contributions after Dec. 31 must be mailed directly to that office in the United Methodist Ministry Center, 1501 N.W. 24th St., Oklahoma City, OK 73106.

Appointments

Barry Bennett, from El Reno-Wesley to Leave of Absence, effective Nov. 1.

Brandon Blacksten, from Hydro to Tuttle, effective Dec. 1.

Daniel Hammans, new, to Canton, effective Nov. 15.

Micah Welcher, from Altus-Highland Heights/Duke to Helena, effective Nov. 15.

Stephen Cagle, new, to associate pastor, Claremore-First, effective Nov. 1.

Employment

Contemporary Worship Leader: Sand Springs UMC, part-time. Email resume to: office@sandspringsumc.org

Worship Arts Director: Shawnee-Wesley. Full- or part-time. Email resume to David Larson, wesleychurchoffice@sbcglobal.net

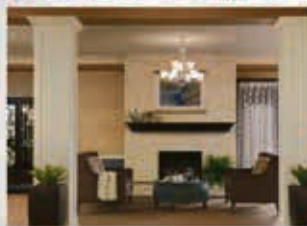

Church Secretary: OKC-Chapel Hill. Full-time. shari@mychapelhill.org


To announce job openings, contact Chris Schutz in the Communications Department, Cschutz@okumc.org, 405-530-2075. There is no cost.

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Photo by Chris Schutz

Swirling their skirts, women and girls perform a traditional dance during a family festival Nov. 15 at The Well.

Life is flowing at The Well

'40,000 square feet of opportunity' emerges in OKC's Capitol Hill neighborhood

By CHRIS SCHUTZ

A south Oklahoma City United Methodist church that traces its history to the year before Oklahoma became a state has taken on a new role and a new name.

Capitol Hill UMC at 123 SW 25th St. closed June 28 and reopened July 1 as a UM outreach ministry named The Well.

The name refers to the story of the woman at the well in John 4. Jesus told her, "Whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (NIV)

Revs. Diana Northcutt and Obed Alba lead the ministry, which is offering a variety of services to the community.

Northcutt likes to say the building represents "40,000 square feet of opportunity."

The Well is reaching out to different segments of the community through children's basketball games in its gym, an American Indian health clinic, martial arts camp, and a Hispanic film festival, Northcutt said.

The ministry also is focusing on the needs of students and teachers at Capitol Hill Elementary School. A high percentage of the students qualify for the government's free or reduced-price lunch program.

Space in the church building is used for classes by Oklahoma City Community College; a room in

church is a senior nutrition meal site Monday through Friday. The church is also available for weddings and quinceanera (girls' 15th birthday) celebrations.

Northcutt and Alba, associate pastor, want The Well to have the reputation of being "a safe place to go."

The United Methodist Church is the only mainline Protestant denomination represented in the part of Oklahoma City bounded by Interstates 35, 240, 40, and 44, Northcutt said. Among other UM churches in the area are Selecman, Lambuth, and St. Luke's Fuente de Vida satellite.

The area is largely Hispanic, but Northcutt said she hopes The Well will attract people of a variety of ethnicities.

On Nov. 15, the ministry hosted a Fall Family Festival, with performances by a troupe of Colombian dancers, music, food, and children's activities.

Booths offering information included Circle of Care's foster care programs, health services, Skyline Urban Ministry, the Oklahoma Department of Human Services, CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates for children), Catholic Charities, and Neighborhood Services Organization.

Main goal of the festival was to raise awareness of the need for Hispanic foster care, Northcutt said.

At this point, Northcutt and Alba also are addressing the issues that can arise with older buildings. The church traces



Photo by Diana Northcutt

New signage announces a new UM ministry is opening its doors.

its worshipping congregation to 1906. The 500-seat sanctuary dates to the 1950s, Northcutt said, and the gym was built in the 1970s.

Parts of the building, including its large basement, are in need of renovation, Northcutt said.

So far, the ministry has gotten the help of an arborist, plumber, and roofer to make improvements.

"God's work is in it all the way," Northcutt said.

The Well is not holding Sunday worship services at this time. That will happen "whenever God has a plan for it," Northcutt said.

In the meantime, Alba is organizing small groups and house churches to help meet spiritual needs in the area.

Great Plains churches ready to help refugees

Congregations across Kansas and Nebraska stand ready to assist refugees from Syria once they are allowed to enter the United States.

That was the message shared Nov. 20 in Topeka, Kan., by Bishop Scott Jones of the Great Plains Conference, which includes 1,032 congregations.

Bishop Jones, in an address to members of the media and the 17 district superintendents, said at least 35 churches have each agreed to sponsor at least one Syrian refugee family when their immigration to the United States becomes possible.

"We have sponsored refugee families in the past, and we are prepared to offer our hospitality for this group as well," Jones said.

The bishop noted that Matthew 25:40 commands Christians to care for people in need. He said the people of Syria fleeing from civil war and famine fit that criteria.

"The United Methodist Church has long played a role in welcoming immigrants to our country," Jones said. "We believe that Christians are called to provide hospitality to strangers in line with Hebrews 13:2: 'Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.'"

The bishop acknowledged the threats to security noted by some U.S. lawmakers following the terrorist attacks in Paris.

He called on elected leaders who affiliate with the Christian faith to rethink their opposition to helping Syrian refugees relocate, while noting that the United States and other nations are under attack by a radical movement within the Muslim community.

"This is a cultural war, and the French are our allies," Jones said. "But the vast majority of Muslims in the world are also our allies, and we need to stand by them against the jihadist movement called dayesh and Al-Qaeda. In that war, one of the strongest things we can do is to show that America ... welcomes refugees who flee the evil and terror of jihadists in their countries and where freedom of religion is respected."

Jones shared a letter that he had written to U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry.

"As bishop of the United Methodist Church in Nebraska and Kansas," Jones wrote to Kerry, "I am prepared to support these congregations and coordinate their efforts. I fully expect the number of such congregations to grow, and I will work with my ecumenical colleagues to find other churches to participate in this as well."

— By Todd Seifert, Great Plains Conference director of communications

Shawnee church to mark milestone

In 1965, the people of Shawnee-Wesley United Methodist Church moved from their downtown location of 47 years into the current building at 302 E. Independence.

On Dec. 13, they will celebrate the 50th anniversary of that move.

The pastor in 1965, Burrell McNaught, will return for the program, along with another former pastor, Jeff Burrell, and current pastor Ben Williams.

Worship begins at 10:30 a.m., followed by a reservation-only catered meal.

Shared memories will include the laying of individual floor tiles by church members and building sets for Nativity, "Living Last Supper," and Vacation Bible School productions.

There have been many mission trips, creation of a handbell choir, collections to "turn the tables," and teamwork to gut and



remodel the sanctuary.

The fellowship of so many people has kept Wesley UMC thriving and reaching out with Christian hearts to serve and to welcome for nearly a century, member Sue Dyke said.

Wesley UMC began 97 years ago in Shawnee. First Methodist Episcopal and Grace Methodist Episcopal churches combined in 1918 to build the Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church at Ninth

and Philadelphia. In the 1965 move, many of the stained glass memorial windows also were moved. An education wing and fellowship hall also were built that year; a sanctuary was added in 1979.

The orange color scheme popular in that era and an elevated pulpit and choir platform were updated in 2001.

A bus barn, storage and clothes-closet building also were constructed in 2001.

Foster care:

Continued from page 1

who are living in crisis." There are an estimated 11,000 children in Oklahoma living in some form of state custody, she said.

Circle of Care has partnered in the last year with the *III Project*, whose mission is "to engage one church to support one family to care for one child through fostering or adoption," Slack said later.

The project is the governor's primary liaison to faith communities for this initiative. Chris Campbell, executive director, will be the keynote speaker for Circle of Care's fundraising banquet in April.

Since 1999 Circle of Care has operated the Child SHARE program, which recruits, trains, and supports foster parents.

The United Methodist agency has held two events in Tulsa this year for church leaders and pastors "to start some enthusiasm for addressing foster care through the church," Slack said.

Goal of the events was "to light a spark and find ways for churches to really own this ministry," he said. The hope is that a leader will emerge in each church to spark efforts to recruit foster parents in that congregation and community.

Gov. Fallin, the daughter of a social worker, said she has been aware since an early age of the problems facing children in troubled families. Her mother "would pick up a child in the middle of the night," Fallin said. Sometimes, she would get out of bed and go with her mother.

"That's what our DHS social workers do all the time," Fallin said.

Flanking the audience in the museum atrium Nov. 12 were displays of studio-quality photos of some of the Oklahoma

children who need homes.

Another speaker told the group about her life until she was adopted at age 17.

"Growing up was always unstable," Marissa said. Her mother relied on drugs and prostitution to survive. Marissa began using drugs in the fourth grade "because everyone else around was doing it."

At age 15, she looked in the mirror and asked herself, "Is this who you really want to be?" She prayed for a change in her life. After her mother's arrest, Marissa was placed in shelters and foster care, leading to her adoption.

Offering the viewpoint of a foster parent was Matt Pinnell.

He and his wife, who had three children and were expecting a fourth, had talked about becoming foster parents, but there were always good excuses not to, he said. Finally they decided "it was time to stop talking and start doing," he said.

The experience has been so enriching that they've decided "we're going to continue to foster," Pinnell said.

Goal of the initiative is to "spread the word across the state" about the children in need, Fallin said. Website with information about the initiative is www.oklahomafosters.com

Slack said the governor's initiative will "bring together people from the public sector, faith-based community, and the philanthropic community" to help children. It will result in "partnerships that Circle of Care has never had before."

Also speaking at the governor's event was Ed Lake, director of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services. The initiative represents "the right way to serve children who are abused and neglected," he said.



Photos by Sue Dyke

Above: Kent and Sydney Casey Ellwanger share a hot dog during the Block Party in September on the lawn at Shawnee-Wesley UMC. Inset: a juggler entertains all ages during the party.



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Circle of Care gives thanks to all of you who make it possible to serve children and families.



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BLESSED BEGINNING — Campus minister Cecelia Brooks baptizes Samantha Jay at the Wesley Foundation for Langston University. Assisting are Ed Long of Stillwater-First UMC and Wesley intern Adrian Williams. Rev. Brooks said Jay's was the first baptism of this semester at the United Methodist campus ministry.

District's campus ministries collaborate on 2 fundraisers

In the Cimarron District, three campus ministries are working together to raise funds and support through several shared events.

The United Methodist ministries at Oklahoma Panhandle State University in Goodwell, Northwestern Oklahoma State University in Alva, and Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford hope to continue to collaborate to strengthen ministry that reaches the college populations in that area of the state.

This fall, supporters from congregations in the district and from the campus ministry boards have donated items for

an online silent auction that closes soon. They range from gift baskets and artwork to vacation accommodations at Angel Fire and Red River, N.M., and Black Mesa.

The auction started Nov. 19 and runs through Dec. 13. All bidding is done on the website <http://cdcm2015.eflea.ca/>

A second event, a golf tournament, is being planned for April 23 at Boiling Springs State Park Golf Course in Woodward.

In Alva, Deb Corr directs The Wesley House; Elizabeth Horton-Ware, The Wesley in Weatherford; and Anna Marie George, The Wesley Foundation, Goodwell.

Briefly

Songs from Native Americans compiled by GBGM

"Singing the Sacred: Musical Gifts from Native American Communities" includes Native American Christian music from more than 15 communities, carefully selected for suitability in cross-cultural use.

The General Board of Global Ministries offers the new songbook and accompanying CD with 21 songs and hymns.

Songs are included from the Mohawk of New York to the Native Hawaiians, from the Inupiat in Alaska to the Tewa and Navajo of the Southwest.

In the introduction, editor Alvin Deer writes, "Music has always been an integral part of Native American life. There were songs for every conceivable event in life. Native American worship music is primarily a corporate, communal

experience. Each piece is intended to invoke a blessing on the entire worshipping community."

COSROW award entries due

Until Jan. 1., the Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW) is accepting nominations for the 2016 Frances E. Willard Award.

COSROW annually honors an individual who makes a distinguished contribution to the advancement of women in ministry in the Conference. The 2015 award recipient was clergywoman Leslie Long, associate professor of religion at Oklahoma City University.

Send a letter of commendation, 100 words or less, to Shirley Franklin. You can email your letter to franknsense@msn.com; (put COSROW in the subject line); or send by U.S. mail to COSROW, c/o Shirley Franklin, 1728 Sandalwood Drive, Norman, OK 73071.

OSU college alum recalls group adventure with campus minister

By MALLORY ROSS

It was an incredibly cold January night when I found myself riding across the country in a minivan, not sure what I had gotten myself into. I knew I was headed toward Washington, D.C. Other than that, I had very little idea of what this trip would entail.

The car was full of the chatter that comes with great friends being together and learning from each other.

Steering the vehicle and the conversation was United Methodist campus minister Michael Bartley, a true teacher and the only person who had any idea what the next few days might bring for our group of Oklahoma State University students.

After a day and night of driving, we learned that we would visit a man dealing with a terminal illness, in a Philadelphia suburb.

Despite his circumstances, he chose to handle his situation with dignity and grace, exuding an inspiring positivity.

We traveled on to Washington, where we learned about the Adams Morgan neighborhood and about a man's vision for a church to fully be the hands and feet of Christ. He was led to start numerous social services for people in extreme poverty. We experienced a little of what these



OSU students interact with campus minister Michael Bartley, center, during fellowship at the Wesley Foundation in Stillwater.

services provided for the residents of the neighborhood.

We talked with people, ate with them, and started to gain an understanding for the way they live life.

I learned a lot on this trip and, by the end, I knew why Michael did not give the trip a title or an objective. Those

would have limited what we allowed to happen.

We students would have gone expecting certain lessons. The experiences would have been diluted by our preconceived ideas.

The way Michael encourages people is truly a gift. He takes the time to ask the questions. He shares his own struggles honestly, creating a space where others feel comfortable to do the same.

I feel so much excitement for the young people just beginning their journey at the Wesley Foundation for OSU in Stillwater because of the incredible things they will learn within that community. They will learn to love others in such a way that their entire lives will be different. They will be challenged to strive toward understanding in a world that doesn't take the time.

They will have the opportunity to know a man who has dedicated 20 years of his life to sharing the love of Christ, who understands that through Christ we can do abundantly more for this world, and that it is our obligation to try.

(Ross, originally from Woodward, serves as a Peace Corps urban agriculture extension agent in Senegal, Africa. She is an OSU alum and was a campus ministry intern while there.)



Photo by Doug McAbee

Boys are ready to dig into the red earth Nov. 8 at the location for St. Luke's-Edmond church building.

Edmond-St. Luke's:

Continued from page 1

"We had such a beautiful day to honor our past and recognize we are part of a bigger story," said Rev. Attaway.

"We're not writing a new book but simply the chapter of a story that begins before us and goes on way after us."

The signed steel plate will be attached to an overhead beam in the Worship Center. On Nov. 8 people also wrote prayers and Bible verses on cards that will be placed inside the walls of the new building.

On property that abuts Interstate 35 and Sooner Road, a half-mile south of Danforth, the church facility of about 40,000 square feet is taking shape. Occupancy is expected in Fall 2016.

How appropriate that St. Luke's overarching 2015 theme is "Something for the First Time."

"It is just the beginning," said St. Luke's Senior Pastor Bob Long in a December video.

He prayed, "We thank You that ... we have heard the call, and we pray that You pour out your Holy Spirit upon us so that what we do truly can come to fruition to bless life."

The new Worship Center's seating will accommodate about 550 people. A large indoor playground will be a highlight, Attaway said. The facility will have a big lobby, child care center, classrooms, and full-service kitchen.

Design features throughout will pay tribute to St. Luke's heritage.

The church's triquetra logo will be used in door handles, on the building exterior, and more. Flooring in the lobby will repeat the diamond shapes with small crosses that anchor the narthex of St. Luke's main campus, 222 NW 15th St., Oklahoma City.

Attaway said, "We know that every time we walk through the doors into the Worship Center, that beam is

always going to be there for us to know about and for everybody to be walking under our prayers and our names."

For the Beam Signing, children's games and activities also were held, and food trucks served up good tastes in fellowship. The estimated crowd was 250.

Attaway grew up attending St. Luke's and in college served there as a youth intern. "This has always been my family of faith," said the Local Pastor.

After earning a bachelor's degree at Oklahoma City University, he entered seminary and is in his final year of study at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary.

"I knew in high school that I was called into the ministry," Attaway said.

St. Luke's is his first appointment and "was a homecoming for me in many ways, to get to come back to my family and yet at the same time do something new."

About 260 people currently worship as St. Luke's-Edmond, 11 a.m. Sundays at Sequoyah Middle School, 1125 E. Danforth. From the main campus, Rev. Dr. Long preaches live via streaming video. On site, Attaway and five more staff lead all other aspects of the service.

During the week in Edmond, community groups for all ages meet at various places and times. The Edmond campus team coordinates those as well as missions and other ministries.

The church and middle school collaborate well, Attaway said. A volunteer mentoring project with students is seeing great results, teachers reported.

Capital campaign theme for the Edmond building was "The Next Chapter." Some financial support also is being provided by the Oklahoma Conference New Faith Communities Ministry Team, according to Attaway.

— Holly McCray

"We break this ground today that a church may meet here where ...

**... the children shall learn to love God and grow in grace and goodness,
... youth shall be inspired to pray and serve,
... the weary and heavy-laden shall find inner peace that the world can neither give nor take away,
... the word of God shall so be read and preached that it shall become the living Word,
... the multitude shall be refreshed in spirit, relieved from pain, released from bondage, and redeemed from sin,
... Your people are sent forth into this community and all the world as champions of justice and peace to all peoples."** (Excerpted from Connect UMC liturgy, Nov. 22)

Connect UMC:

Continued from page 1

a.m. on Sundays at Centennial Elementary School in Edmond until construction is complete at the site a half-mile north of the school. Projected date is October 2016.

Worship attendance averages 120, the pastor said.

The church reaches out in ways that have included a food truck festival, drive-in movie night, and family ice skating fun. Ricks recalled learning to make balloon animals for Connect's booth at Edmond's Heard on Hurd festival. Members rise to the challenge of bringing the most friends to worship.

Ricks has knocked on 2,100 doors this year, he said. "It's what I'm made for."

God called him to pastoral ministry when he was age 17, at church camp, and he's been nurtured in faith throughout his life, Ricks said.

"That small voice. Once in a while you hear the call of the Lord," he said.

Ricks said that Jacinda, his wife, wasn't surprised by his calling. They've been together since he was age 16. She is a registered nurse.

Watch video of the ground breaking at www.okumc.org/okvideo

Ricks started a contemporary worship service at Ardmore-First UMC during his clergy service there.

Then, appointed to Edmond-Acts 2 UMC in 2010, he was mentored in church planting by Senior Pastor Mark Foster.

Connect UMC is a church plant by the Oklahoma Conference. Weekly worship began in 2012. The church's mission is "Connect to God and Connect to Others."

That outward focus has created a great deal of excitement and draws people, Ricks said. Large parts of the budget continue to be allocated to ministering to those outside of the congregation, especially the non-churched. The leadership structure is "nimble" as Connect's participants and ministries continue to grow.

Land for a church campus was purchased outright in early 2014. Now the city is improving area roads, hundreds of homes are under construction, and more schools are planned. The population of Guthrie is expanding southward, Ricks noted.

Connect launched a "Gather the Tools" capital campaign that raised \$480,000 for the new building. The Crossroads and Heartland Bi-District Board of Church



Photo by Andrew Himes

Shawn and Dana Kittredge, far left, lead liturgy as Connect UMC breaks ground in Edmond. Pastor and Building Committee members turn the earth; from left are Adam Ricks, Michael Largent, Ronald Cummins, Lincoln Keck, Doug McClure, Rebecca Parker, and Ryan Bader.

Location and Building is providing \$185,000; and the Conference's New Faith Communities Ministry Team, \$165,000, said Ricks.

The people of Connect have worked to design a facility that will not jeopardize their ability to continue to reach out to others.

"We don't just want a building full of people, but a vibrant asset to the community. We plan to do everything we can to make our neighborhood and community a better place," Ricks said.

On Nov. 9, Edmond City Council unanimously approved the site and building plans.

That date is doubly special for the Ricks family. Daughter Clara Grace was born, joining her parents and big brother Caedmon.

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UMCOR depot can house more volunteers

By LINDA BLOOM
United Methodist News Service

BALDWIN, La. — The new Dixon-Rabb Hall at the Sager Brown supply depot here will allow the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) to respond even faster to any major disaster.

It seems a fitting tribute to the two Church executives who lost their lives in a 2010 earthquake while engaged in mission in Haiti, said UMCOR official Theodore Warnock, who organized a Nov. 17 dedication service for the new hall.

UMCOR's 22-acre campus in Baldwin now has three dormitory-style facilities for the volunteers who arrive each week to assemble health/school/layette kits, cleaning buckets, and other supplies to ship for emergency disaster or development needs.

Currently, the depot averages 50 to 55 volunteers a week. "With the completion of the Dixon-Rabb hall, we have the ability to house 100 people on a regular basis," Warnock said.

Oklahomans are among those volunteers. Kits and other supplies also are regularly collected in Oklahoma and delivered to the Louisiana distribution center.

The new building honors both the memory and the mission of Sam Dixon Jr., who was UMCOR's top executive, and Clinton Rabb, who oversaw mission



Photos by Lori Butler

volunteers for the General Board of Global Ministries.

Denise Honeycutt, UMCOR's top executive, talked about the work and lives of the two men at an event in Little Rock, Ark., the day before the dedication.

A 94-year-old woman at that gathering told Rev. Honeycutt that she had never met either man, but "I feel I know them and love them."

Honeycutt told the group, "There are

people all across the globe who share that same sentiment, knowing and loving these two men for their faithfulness and commitment to God's mission."

Among those present at the Nov. 17 dedication service were wives Cindy Dixon and Suzanne Rabb, both visiting the supply depot for the first time.

"I always think it's a real tribute to Clint when someone does something for young families and young people,"



ON THE ROAD AGAIN — A 25-member Volunteers In Mission team of senior adults from Claremore-First UMC made a 12th service trip to the UMCOR depot in Baldwin, La., in early November. They packed 7,000 health kits on site, said leader Ahnawake Dawson, and also delivered 75 health kits from the Claremore church, 40 school bags from Vinita UMC, and seven boxes of supplies from OKC-Nichols Hills UMC. The team included two volunteers from Bartlesville-East Cross UMC. Left: Ray Dawson sets up boxes. Above: Marie Parsons, left, and Karen Youngquist assemble health kits.

Mrs. Rabb told United Methodist News Service. She said she would like to take her grandchildren to Sager Brown when they are older "so that they know what it means to love beyond yourself."

"Sam loved the church," Mrs. Dixon told those gathered, "helping us understand how connected we are, or need to be, as global citizens, as United Methodists. Reminding us that we are so much more alike than not — (we are) all God's children."