



Photos by Holly McCray

Lay Leader Debra Davis and Superintendent Larry Bauman light the Lake Country District candle during the poignant closing service at Annual Conference on May 28.

Districts complete transitions

Oklahoma Conference adapts for mission

By HOLLY McCRAY

Two-by-two, leaders from 12 districts built a symbolic stone foundation around a single candle on May 28, the final day of Annual Conference in Oklahoma City. That candle's flame then provided the light for eight pillar candles nearby.

Their glow marked the dawn of Oklahoma's new eight-district structure.

"The charge of serving God meaningfully in this new alignment awaits us," Bishop Robert Hayes Jr. told delegates on May 26. "We want more laity and clergy blazing new paths for people to encounter Christ."

Within each district, churches are grouping by affinity as Missional Areas, the superintendent is taking on the role of Key Missional Strategist, and a full-time District Administrator will staff each district office.

Bill Gossett of Duncan described the comprehensive work by the Board of Trustees and

Chancellor John Ray Green's leadership in legal matters during the transition to this new structure, effective June 1.

Theme for the meeting was "On Fire To Serve," sparked by Romans 12:11-13: "Don't burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame. Be alert servants of the Master, cheerfully expectant. Don't quit in hard times; pray all the harder..." (The Message)

In his episcopal address, Hayes vowed to do that throughout this year, his final one as bishop of the Oklahoma Area. He called all Oklahoma United Methodists to matching efforts in order to "finish strong" for God. (Read his speech on page 3.)

Delegates worked into the night May 26 to complete balloting for representatives to the denomination's global General Conference and eight-state South Central Jurisdictional Conference in 2016. Voting concluded at 11 p.m. at Oklahoma City University's Freede Center.

Bishop Hayes has asked the Board of Church & Society, chaired by Mark Whitley, to plan Oklahoma forums on social justice



Jennifer Sorrels, right, of Calumet UMC received the first-ever Oklahoma United Methodist Young Adult Award, from the Board of Laity. Presenter was Aly Shahan, left.

issues prior to General Conference.

Worship at OKC-St. Luke's filled two evenings, with a delightful mix of musical talent and guest preacher Jorge Acevedo of Florida and Bishop Hayes bringing the Word.

For the opening service May 26, Frederick UMC served up the JAMM & JELLIE Children's Choirs, young adult ensemble, bell choir, and Joyful Noise Choir.

In worship May 27, music was by St. Luke's Edmond Campus Worship Band, LifeLight Vocal Ensemble, Chancel Choir

See Annual Conference, page 4

New congregation launches worship in OCU's chapel

By HOLLY McCRAY

People in red T-shirts waved red signs June 7, directing worshippers to the first Sunday service for Mosaic UMC in Oklahoma City. This new church family meets at an unusual location, so that visual welcome was valuable.

Mosaic begins its ministry at Smith Chapel on the campus of Oklahoma City University, at Northwest 23rd Street and Blackwelder. The church will charter in August, according to Pastor Scott Spencer.

Attendance that first Sunday was 151 people.

Mosaic launches with a dedicated core group. The members of two existing churches, OKC-Leland Clegg and OKC-Epworth, chose to unite. As a symbolic gesture, a representative of each poured water into one baptismal bowl the first Sunday.

In the Children's Moment, Rev. Spencer asked the youngsters to pray regularly for the church. Communion was celebrated. And people surrounded and prayed for Mark Maxey before his Holy Land mission trip.

Spencer moved to the metro on June 4, from Ponca City. "Four or five" committees met on June 6.

The OCU chapel doors were locked when he arrived early June 7. But Spencer found reassurance in that moment. A dozen people were waiting for him.

He knew God was already there.

The genesis for Mosaic occurred in 2013. Epworth's aging building was a concern. Last year, Epworth and Leland Clegg started talking about a merger. This spring, they voted to make the change.

Then transition teams formed, with equal representation from the churches. Members became acquainted at joint activities. The combined choir presented an Easter cantata.

In advance of his move, Spencer met with the groups. He said Ponca City-Albright UMC "went over and above for me," as the pastor transitioned to his new assignment. He received a quilt and replica of the Pioneer Woman statue as farewell gifts.

Mosaic's people had gifts for him, too. They had contacted Albright and learned the pastor's favorite sweets and soda.

Spencer treasured connecting with Epworth's and Clegg's pastors. He "walked alongside" Debbie Ingraham and Marla Lobo, "a new experience" in his itinerancy, he said.

Both sent him text messages

See Mosaic opens, page 8



Mosaic UMC worships in OCU's Smith Chapel on Sunday mornings. The first service was June 7.

New district offices

1. CIMARRON

District Email: cimarrondistrict@okumc.org
 Business Phone: 580-254-3913
 Address: 2704 Texas Ave
 City, State, Zip: Woodward OK 73801-2707
 Superintendent: Charlie Graves
 DS Email: cgraves@okumc.org
 District Administrator: Kacey Hulín
 DA Email: khulin@okumc.org

2. COUNCIL OAK

District Email: counciloakdistrict@okumc.org
 Business Phone: 918-742-7496
 Address: 6767 S Mingo Rd
 City, State, Zip: Tulsa OK 74133-3309
 Superintendent: Dan Peil
 DS Email: dpeil@okumc.org
 District Administrator: Tee Higgins
 DA Email: thiggins@okumc.org

3. CROSSROADS

District Email: crossroadsdistrict@okumc.org
 Business Phone: 405-603-8488
 Address: 5601 NW 72nd St Ste 230
 City, State, Zip: Warr Acres OK 73132-5932
 Superintendent: Rockford Johnson
 DS Email: rjohnson@okumc.org
 District Administrator: Jill Perrin
 DA Email: jperrin@okumc.org

4. GREEN COUNTRY

District Email: greencountrydistrict@okumc.org
 Business Phone: 918-923-6199
 Address: 1615 N Highway 88
 City, State, Zip: Claremore OK 74017-2226
 Superintendent: Emery Mason
 DS Email: emason@okumc.org
 District Administrator: Brenda Scrivner
 DA Email: bscrivner@okumc.org

5. HEARTLAND

District Email: heartlanddistrict@okumc.org
 Business Phone: 405-237-3880
 Address: 201 W Main St
 City, State, Zip: Moore OK 73160-5141
 Superintendent: Greg Tener
 DS Email: gtener@okumc.org
 District Administrator: Stacey Sprayberry
 DA Email: ssprayberry@okumc.org

6. LAKE COUNTRY

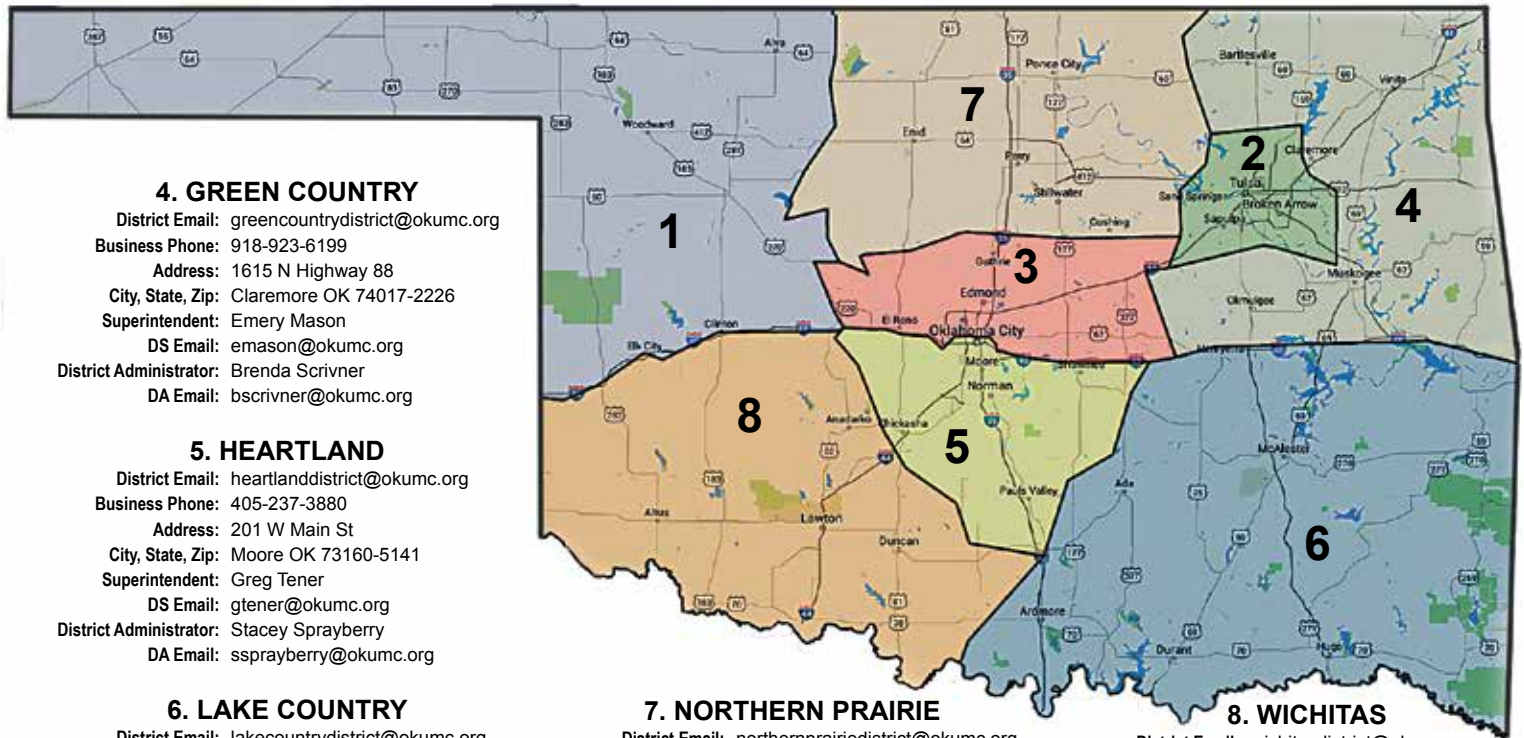
District Email: lakecountrydistrict@okumc.org
 Business Phone: 918-423-0080
 Address: PO Box 986
 City, State, Zip: McAlester OK 74502-0986
 Superintendent: Larry Bauman
 DS Email: lbauman@okumc.org
 District Administrator: Jacklin Drake
 DA Email: jdrake@okumc.org

7. NORTHERN PRAIRIE

District Email: northernprairiedistrict@okumc.org
 Business Phone: 580-382-4030
 Address: 700 W Liberty Ste A
 City, State, Zip: Ponca City OK 74601-2530
 Superintendent: Tish Malloy
 DS Email: tmalloy@okumc.org
 District Administrator: Diane Bull
 DA Email: dbull@okumc.org

8. WICHITAS

District Email: wichitasdistrict@okumc.org
 Business Phone: 580-248-3343
 Address: PO Box 6886
 City, State, Zip: Lawton OK 73506-0886
 Superintendent: Chris Tiger
 DS Email: ctiger@okumc.org
 District Administrator: Stacie Turner
 DA Email: sturner@okumc.org



Buseys receive Bishop Milhouse Award

Oklahoma City University presented the 2015 Bishop Paul W. Milhouse Award to Phil and Cathy Busey. The announcement was part of the OCU report to United Methodist delegates on May 27 at Annual Conference.

Over the years, Phil and Cathy have both been active church members, including at their current church, OKC-St. Luke's. The couple owns Delaware Resource Group and the Busey Group of Companies.

Their outstanding service is exemplified by the El Sistema Orchestra, which they founded, for children in 11 of Oklahoma City's poorest elementary and middle schools. Over 200 students were involved in the music education program during 2014-15. The Buseys fund a large portion of this joint project, administered by St. Luke's and OCU, in support of the Oklahoma City Public Schools.

They also have generously supported new church starts in the Oklahoma Conference over the years.

Their efforts have been recognized with several awards, including the OCU Servant Leaders Award in 2014, the Patriot Award by the U.S. Department of Defense, and the

Minority Business of the Year award by the Oklahoma Minority Supplier Development Council.

In 2014, Phil was inducted into the OCU Meinders Business and Commerce Hall of Honor. He was named SBA Small Business Person of the Year for Oklahoma in 2010. He is an OCU Trustee and serves on the boards of the Economic Club, Oklahoma's Business Roundtable, and Deaconess Hospital.

Cathy serves on the OCU Bass School of Music Advisory Board and the board of the Oklahoma City Philharmonic. She was nominated for the *Journal Record* Woman of the Year award in 2014.

The Buseys have provided scholarships for business and minority students, especially with OCU's Meinders School of Business. They established the school's Busey Leadership Institute; sponsored over 20 students and faculty for the World Business Forum in New York City in 2009; and sponsored three Business Economic Annual Summits at OCU, with proceeds benefiting Meinders School. Phil has taught in OCU's Master of Business Administration program at Tinker Air Force Base.



Phil and Cathy Busey



OCU senior Michael Horn and junior Morgan Mitchell offer reusable tumblers at the concession stand during an Annual Conference session at the Freede Center in late May. The OCU Wesley Center appreciated the opportunity to provide the concessions; all proceeds supported the campus ministry.

The Bishop Milhouse Award was established to recognize people who give outstanding leadership in communities, local churches, and the Oklahoma Conference, in addition to being advocates for the partnership between OCU and the Church. The university is pleased to honor the Buseys in this way.

Award presenter was Charles Neff, OCU's vice president of University-Church

Relations and dean of the chapel, and accepting on behalf of the Buseys was Jeremy Sanders of St. Luke's.

The University-Church Relations Office welcomes nominations at any time for this award, presented annually since 1982.

For more information, call Rev. Dr. Neff at 405-208-5060, email cneff@okcu.edu, or go to the website: www.okcu.edu/campus/religious-life





Episcopal Address, Annual Conference, May 26, 2015

On fire to serve

By **BISHOP ROBERT HAYES JR.**

As I look out upon you today, the words of a gospel anthem written by Albert Goodson in 1963 come to mind. I pray these words help stoke the fire within you for greater service in God's name.

The hymn declares: "We've come this far by faith, leaning on the Lord, trusting in His holy word; He's never failed us yet!"

Indeed it is not by our own strength that we find ourselves here — it has been by leaning upon God, who has blessed us and all along the way has kept our passion brightly burning to love God's people.

When this land was called Indian Territory, there were people of the Wesleyan tradition who had in mind a plan, a course of action to spread the Gospel of Christ to all the people living here. Consequently, they stepped out in faith and sparked fellowships in the most unlikely of places.

A few weeks ago I asked our archivist Christina Wolf to list for me some of those places where their journeys led those early, eager Methodists — sites that now represent the oldest worshipping congregations in our Conference and our state. Even though records are spotty prior to and right after the Civil War, the Methodists' mission to reach people with the message of Christ took them to Eufaula around 1848, Fort Gibson in 1866, Canadian in 1868, Okmulgee in 1869, and Sallisaw and Tishomingo in 1870.

If those first Methodists had not been burning with purpose and mission, we would not be here today, with over 200,000 disciples worshipping in 511 congregations in all 77 counties. Because they were on fire to serve, we are building on a spiritual foundation established 172 years ago.

Oklahoma continues to be one of the strongest conferences in our denomination, and yet there is so much more for us to do.

In 2008, this Conference had in mind a plan, and at our annual gathering in Tulsa, everything changed! Like those early Methodists, we embarked on a course of action to minister more effectively in all places to touch more people who need to know Christ's love for them. We called it our Strategic Plan, and we sought God's blessing on the work we planned. Simply put, that Plan calls us to greater service in order to:

- 1. Grow healthy congregations, reaching out to a younger and more diverse population;**
- 2. Start new faith communities, all varieties;**
- 3. Raise up a new generation of spiritual leaders; and**
- 4. Connect Oklahoma's churches to mission that is larger than they can do by themselves.**

Here are some of the positive outcomes already achieved.

- We aligned our Conference structure to accomplish those goals we set, as well as our Conference staff positions.

- We are dedicating almost \$1 million annually to the *New People New Places* ministry, through our Apportionments, so churches of all sizes and in all areas of Oklahoma can have a partner as they make new disciples.

- The Conference also has shifted funds in the Apportionments to enable us to launch six new faith communities since 2008, and be engaged in three other development projects. The new church starts are: Lawton Community, Edmond Summit, Glenpool Living Water, Mosaic, Edmond Connect, and St. Luke's Edmond. The three development projects are: The Christ Experience, post-tornado support to Cross Timbers in Moore, and establishing a Church Planter Residency program at Edmond Acts 2. There are seven more church starts planned in the near future.

- We have sent 117 excellently trained, newly ordained clergy into our churches, and Oklahoma's United Methodist seminary, Saint Paul School of Theology at Oklahoma City University, is a major participant in equipping new pastors and laity in practical ministry. We are entering the fourth

year of a special training academy, where gifted laypeople are instructed in becoming bi-vocational pastors — which means they keep their full-time jobs while pastoring some of our smaller or more rural churches.

- The Conference also has created a comprehensive plan for Hispanic ministries; reorganized our Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministries and our Camping programs; and the Circle of Care, our ministry to at-risk children and teens, has expanded dramatically.

Let this heartwarming work cause your witness to blaze brighter to serve God's purposes. *We've come this far by faith, trusting God*, as that gospel song says. Let us resolve to keep going. There IS so much more for us to do.

At the past Annual Conference, you overwhelmingly voted to reduce the number of districts from 12 to eight. I am here to report that the work you commissioned us to do has been completed, and the charge of serving God



Bishop Hayes, left, embraces guest preacher/teacher Jorge Acevedo as Annual Conference begins.

meaningfully in this new alignment awaits us.

In each of these eight new districts, the leadership of laity and clergy at the district level and among churches grouped by affinity as Missional Areas can brainstorm, design, and implement ministries and partnerships that best fit their region.

Our rationale is to get as many people as possible involved in disciple-making. We want more laity and clergy blazing new paths for people to encounter Christ!

Our *Book of Discipline* states that The United Methodist Church's ongoing mission is "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world," and "local churches provide the most significant arena for disciple-making."

We must not be complacent about this. It's not just a statement in our *Book of Discipline*. We truly must be on fire to serve.

Let me tell you why.

The church — the universal body of Christ — is experiencing dramatic change in the United States. Like many denominations, United Methodism has been showing a declining influence.

If Christ's church is to survive, we must be relevant for people living today, while maintaining the integrity of our faith and beliefs from our past.

A recent Pew survey states: "The number of U.S. adults who do not identify with any organized religion is growing." The percentage of younger adults who describe themselves as Christians has dropped. And the percentage of Americans who describe themselves as atheist, agnostic, or "nothing in particular" has jumped significantly.

This is a wakeup call to all of us!

In Isaiah 6:8 there is this moving passage: "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send?"

And who will go for us?" Isaiah said, "Here am I. Send me!"

We are living in an age when we need people who are asking, "Is it I, Lord?"

Since 2010, total worship attendance in our local churches has declined from more than 56,000 people worshipping weekly to just over 50,000, according to Conference records. That's a loss of more than 5,500 United Methodists in four years!

This startling statistic is unacceptable!

On any given Sunday, fewer than one-fourth of Oklahoma's United Methodists are at worship. Do you wonder why I want to make increasing our worship attendance a priority?

Let this be a starting place of conversation. How do we address falling worship attendance? Make a note: All worship does not have to take place on Sunday mornings. Creativity, flexibility, and dogged determination will be required.

Our Conference also tracks professions of faith, and I'm delighted at that statistic for 2014. For the first time in many years, we have recorded an increase, however small. This shows promise for new United Methodists, new people on fire to serve God in Oklahoma. I believe the upturn is a result of our new-church starts and the increasing boldness of congregations to risk themselves to develop new sites and different ways to reach out.

But I know we can do better.

Let evangelism also be a topic that deserves the attention of those charting the course for each new district. I do not doubt there will be a variety of ideas that spark innovative evangelism and inspire worshippers.

Are we seeing success in any other areas of ministry? The answer is yes! Statistics prove we are advancing in Spiritual Formation, as measured by ongoing classes and small groups that promote spiritual vitality and discipleship.

And Oklahoma continues to be a denomination leader in Missions. We have doubled the number of people who take part in mission projects, from fewer than 13,000 in the year 2010, to about 25,000 last year.

We've come this far. Let us remain committed to Spiritual Formation and Missions, and become more intentionally focused on worship and evangelism. I believe gains in Stewardship will follow. We must prepare our churches for the next generation of believers.

God is directing us. This is my vision — and I hope it is yours as well. Let us be a strong body of Christ, excelling in all areas of church growth and effectiveness, bringing the life-saving message of Jesus Christ to those who have yet to know him! I envision stronger congregations, led by passionate clergy and laity — all on fire to serve!

As I close, let me address the obvious: After 11 years, I find myself entering my final year as your bishop. A YouTube video that I happened to see shows the end of a race that took an unexpected turn. One runner, from Oregon University, was well ahead — so far ahead, in fact, that he began signaling the crowd to cheer for him. He was confident of victory.

But a runner from the University of Washington kept his eyes on the finish line, and he won that race at the last second.

Going into my last lap, my pledge to you is to finish strong, running *through the tape* and not *to the tape*! I owe this to you, Oklahoma United Methodists who keep the fire burning for Christ. Most importantly, I pledge this to God. In the words of the Apostle Paul: "Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me to do."

Dee and I thank you, Oklahoma, for allowing us to work alongside you. We know our time with you grows short. Yet, together, we press on! (*Excerpted*)

Oklahoma elects 34 for big conferences

Start packing for Portland/Wichita

A clergywoman, an Asian-American layman, and an African-American clergyman were the first delegates elected May 26 to attend United Methodism's General Conference (GC) at Portland, Ore., in 2016.

The 34-member Oklahoma delegation consists of two American Indians, two Asians, four African-Americans, and 26 whites, according to GC racial identification data. Ages range from 27 to 77. There are 14 women and 20 men, and an equal number of laity and clergy.

With their very first ballot at Annual Conference, the clergy chose Linda Harker, senior pastor of McFarlin UMC in Norman. She said she was "very surprised."

The laity, in their second round of voting, elected Don Kim, a member of OKC-Korean First.

Joseph Harris became the second clergy delegate. He is assistant to the bishop and director of Communications.

"It is unusual to have that kind of inclusiveness" on Oklahoma's delegation, said Tal Oden of Altus. He was a GC lay delegate for 12 quadrennia, beginning in 1964.

"I can remember when there was only one woman." That was laywoman Mary Metzler in the 1960s. In the 1980s, Oden recalled, Tom Goto, an Asian, was elected.

"There were no black delegates until after '64," Oden said. For decades, U.S. churches that were predominantly African-American were assigned to the race-based Central Jurisdiction. The 1964 GC decided that should be eliminated.

Oden said inclusivity is crucial. "If you want your Conference represented on general agencies, you have to be diverse," he said. Delegations' members are first to be considered for service on the boards of those Church agencies.

"We were always seen as centrists," Oden said. "We had very liberal and conservative components, but it was clear we would walk across the aisle" to accomplish the Church's work.

The General and South Central Jurisdictional Conferences are held every four years.

Dr. Kim said he was excited to be elected, but then he felt fear, realized the responsibility, and resolved to have courage.

He wants the delegation to share "what we have done right" in Oklahoma and to think about the overall health of the Church.

"We need to be doing a lot of prayers," Kim said. He hopes delegates will "truly represent Christ" as they participate and "not be bogged down by rules and regulations."

Kim, a physician who specializes in internal and pain medicine, said he was an agnostic until his wife, dentist Kay Cho, encouraged him to go to church with her.

Rev. Harker also was the first clergy delegate elected for the 2012 conventions. To be chosen again by her peers is "an



Photo by Holly McCray

Meet Oklahoma's delegates to the 2016 General/Jurisdictional Conferences. They are identified from left, numbers indicate order of election, and C means clergy.

Front row: Barbara Perry—OKC (10); Aly Shahan—Moore (7); Don Kim—OKC (1); Linda Harker—Norman (C1); Debra Davis—Ardmore (15); Valerie Steele—Okemah St. Paul's (C13); Herschel Beard—Madill (3); and Bill Junk—OKC (2).

Second row: Janey Wilson—Ada (5); Cara Nicklas—OKC (6); Chuck Stewart—Stilwell (4); Earl Mitchell—Stillwater (14); Cindy Hull—Waynoka (12); Jessica Seay—Ardmore First (C4); Joe Harris—OKC (C2); and Ahnawake Dawson—Claremore (17).

Third row: Fuxia Wang—OU Chinese Fellowship, Norman (C14); Aaron Tiger—Tulsa First (C8); Reece Player—Altus (16); Sarah Nichols—OKC (8); Brian

Bakeman—Oklahoma's treasurer (C7); Kent Fulton—Edmond (11); Bob Long—OKC-St. Luke's (C3); and Sam Powers—Edmond First (C5).

Top row: Wade Paschal—Tulsa First (C9); Tom Harrison—Tulsa Asbury (C6); Jeff Jaynes—Restore Hope Ministries, Tulsa (C11); Ray Crawford—Claremore First (C15); D.A. Bennett—OKC-St. Andrew's (C12); Lesly Broadbent—Enid Willow View (C17); Matt Judkins—McAlester First (C10); and Tish Malloy—Northern Prairie District superintendent (C16).

Not shown: Tom Junk—Tulsa (9) and Briana Tobey—OKC (13).

honor and a privilege — a humbling experience," she said.

Her main concern is for The United Methodist Church to remain what its name says: united.

"My hope is that we can come together," Harker said. She expects GC to address "topics that are on everybody's mind."

She did not comment on one such topic, same-gender marriage, but said she expects the conference to address "inclusiveness and what that means to the Church."

GC is the top policy-making body for United Methodism globally. Its delegates can revise Church law; adopt resolutions on moral, social, public policy, and economic issues; and ap-

prove plans and budgets for Church-wide programs.

United Methodists from eight states will gather for the SCJ Conference, July 13-16, 2016, in Wichita, Kan. Primary work there is election and assignment of bishops. The Oklahoma Area will receive a new bishop in September 2016, because Bishop Robert Hayes Jr. must retire.

From the Oklahoma Conference, the seven laity and seven clergy who were elected first are official GC delegates. Those 14 plus 14 more are SCJ delegates. Also, six reserves were elected. — *Chris Schutz and Holly McCray*

Left, Rubicel Asencio of Laverne accepts his Certified Lay Speaker certificate from Bishop Hayes at Annual Conference. The bishop honored 12 from the Hispanic/Latino Lay Academy, as Sandra Garza of the Board of Laity introduced them. The eight monthly classes in Spanish are coordinated by Carlos Ramirez of the Office of Mission. The academy recruits and equips leaders, seeking to live out that goal of the Oklahoma Conference's Strategic Plan.



Annual Conference:

Continued from page 1

and Orchestra, and the Cantate Chamber Choir.

About 500 delegates attended afternoon mission education events on May 27.

These eight programs carried forward intentional work that began at last year's Annual Conference, toward healing relationships with American Indians and partnering in ministries with the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference (OIMC).

Cooperation between Oklahoma's sister conferences is apparent both in clergy appointments and following the closing of some Oklahoma Conference churches.

OIMC Superintendent David Wilson reported that Angie Frank Smith United Methodist Church (OIMC) now occupies the former OKC-South Lee Church. Linda Lusnia, associate pastor at Anadarko-First, also pastors two OIMC churches. And an OIMC congregation that meets at the former OKC-

Leland Clegg Church is pastored by Murray Crookes.

- The Annual Conference Offering was \$44,020 as *Contact* went to press.
- 25 men and women were commissioned, ordained, or received on Recognition of Orders.
- 16 clergy members officially retired.
- 42 clergy and their spouses were memorialized.
- 10 churches closed.
- The name of the Department of Congregational Development was changed to New Faith Communities Ministry Team.
- Among guests: four Methodists from Vietnam, including missionaries Ut and Karen Tu; Oklahoma Disaster Recovery Project representatives from Catholic Charities, American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and Church of the Harvest; and a national Generation Transformation team from the General Board of Global Ministries.

Delegates continue reconciliation work

By **CARLA HINTON**
The Oklahoman

Oklahoma United Methodists are continuing their quest to dialogue with American Indians and raise awareness of American Indian United Methodist churches.

About 500 delegates at the annual meeting of the Oklahoma United Methodist Conference spent time visiting American Indian UM churches in the Oklahoma City area and listening to members share stories of their history that are not often discussed.

Bishop Robert Hayes Jr. said the activities held during the May 25-28 meeting in Oklahoma City were part of the Conference's Act of Repentance, aimed at educating United Methodists about the significant role indigenous peoples played in the growth of Methodism in the state and the nation.

Annual meeting delegates learned about American Indian preachers and missionaries who kept the faith in the face of bigotry from their white counterparts in the Church and discrimination from the American government.

David Wilson said Oklahoma has the denomination's highest number of predominantly American Indian churches: 90. He said the majority of those are in the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference (OIMC), which also is led by Bishop Hayes.

Rev. Wilson, who is the OIMC superintendent, said these churches belong to the separate conference by design because of the ways they incorporate American Indian



CHOIR FROM CLINTON — The Clinton Indian Young People's Choir sings in tribal languages for an audience of 400 in the Board of Laity awards luncheon on May 26 at Annual Conference. The youngsters, from Clinton Indian Church and Community Center (OIMC), were directed by missionary Donna Pewo.

Photo by Holly McCray

traditions and culture with United Methodism.

At a panel discussion about American Indians and the faith communities of yesteryear, Bud Sahmaunt, Ph.D., a retired Oklahoma City University professor, told delegates about his grandmother who was forced to leave the family home in Meers, Okla., at age 12 to attend the Carlisle Pennsylvania Indian School, also known as the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, in Cumberland County, Pa.

"She knew no English, and she had never been away from home," he said.

He and other panelists explained that many late 19th-century whites thought American Indians needed to be taught how to assimilate into white society, and they discouraged the Indians from continuing

their way of life and culture. Many young American Indians were "rounded up" and taken without warning to boarding schools, many run by missionaries or others who used faith as a basis for such actions.

Sahmaunt, who is a member of the Kiowa tribe, said his grandmother returned home after 12 years with a new name the Carlisle school had given her — "Virginia" — and the ability to read, write, and speak English. He said that, once home, she used her education to help Kiowas who were trying to understand contracts and negotiations with

whites and she also introduced the Kiowas in her midst to Christianity.

Sahmaunt said he learned from his grandmother's example to emphasize the good that came from her forced removal from her family.

"At that time, they didn't have any other choice, but the boarding schools and mission schools were that mechanism for them to learn," he said.

Through his grandmother's legacy, Sahmaunt said, he and his family understood the value of education and also became Christians. Sahmaunt said he is proud that he has been a lifelong member of the OIMC. He now attends Angie Smith Memorial United Methodist Church in south Oklahoma City.

The retired professor said he thought the presentations and dialogue events at the recent United Methodist conference were a good idea to spur American Indians and non-American Indians to consider each other's perspectives of history.

"It's nice that they are doing it because, if nothing else, it says they are willing to listen to us and hopefully someone will be encouraged to make the whole world better."

"We can't continue to be opposites. We have to listen to each other's viewpoints."
(From *The Oklahoman*, June 6, 2015.

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Passages

MARTIN — Betty Lou Martin, 82, of Glenpool died June 6, 2015. She was the wife of Rev. Donald Allen Martin, who retired in 2001. They married on June 27, 1950.

Among survivors are sons Stephen and Philip Martin.

Service was June 10 at First Church of the Nazarene in Sapulpa.

HESTWOOD — Lenora Grace Hestwood, 94, of Broken Arrow died May 25, 2015. She was the widow of Rev. James Wilbur Hestwood. They were married for 64 years. Among survivors are daughter Connie Davis.

Service was June 12 at Asbury UMC in

Albuquerque, N.M.

CRUTCHFIELD — Benja Lee "Bennie" Crutchfield, 98, died May 31, 2015, in Oklahoma City. She was the widow of Bishop Finis Crutchfield and the mother of Bishop Charles Crutchfield, retired.

Finis and Bennie married in 1941. They served Oklahoma churches until his 1972 election as bishop. His episcopal service was in Louisiana and Texas.

Bennie had lived at Epworth Villa for nine years.

Service was June 6 at OKC-St. Luke's UMC. Memorial gifts to: Wesley Community Center, Houston, Texas.

Employment

Youth Director: Fairview-First. Full-time. Send resume to church at P.O. Box 457, Fairview, OK 73737 or fairviewumc@sbcglobal.net

Administrative Assistant/Communications: OKC-First. Full-time. Email resume to sprc@firstchurchokc.com or call Mark McAdow, 405-239-6493.

Director of Music Ministries and Organist/Pianist: Poteau-First. Both jobs are part-time. To send resume or request application, contact Jim Perkin, pastor@poteaufumc.com

Church Business Administrator: OKC-Chapel Hill. Full-time; experience in

human resources and accounting required. Send resume by June 25 to John Brett, John@raydonex.com

Children's Ministry Director: Piedmont-First. Part-time. Contact Randy Wade, rwade@piedmontumc.org

Director of Children's Ministry: OKC-Nichols Hills. Part-time. For details, contact Trevor Smith, 405-842-1486, or go to www.nicholshillsumc.org. Send resume to revtrevor@gmail.com or to the church, 1212 Bedford Drive, Nichols Hills, OK 73116.

Custodian: OKC-Chapel Hill. Part-time; evenings and weekends. Email resume to Brock Peters, brock@mychapelhill.org

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Lawton	580-483-3130
OKC Metro	405-463-6626
Ponca City	405-802-7697
Ponca City 2	405-802-9687
Shawnee	405-693-7795
Stillwater	405-312-6640
Tulsa Metro	918-794-3876
Weatherford	405-308-7715
Toll Free	866-978-2956

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Photos by Holly McCray

Delegates surround church planter Heather Scherer of Living Water UMC, Glenpool, as Bishop Hayes prays for all of Oklahoma's new faith communities.



Prayers infuse Annual Conference



Chaplain Martin Barnes kneels on stage as Bishop Hayes prays. Monica Hiller pauses in the small Freede Center room where a prayer vigil was held. Aaron Tiger coordinated it.



Heads bowed, the OCU men's rowing team listens as Bishop Hayes prays for them before they travel to a national competition.

New digital tools open doors to grow in grace

Two new digital resources were introduced: "The Door Is Open" (a website for intercultural dialogue) and "Is This Random?" (a spiritual journal app).

After pilot tests, both are expected to launch in fall.

• Carlos Ramirez of the Office of Mission introduced www.TheDoorIsOpen.org during Annual Conference. You can find it online now. Through this initiative, Rev. Ramirez wants to create conversations that deeply connect people of diverse ethnicity and cultures.

"By 2040 there will be no ethnic group that holds the majority, and the sum of all minorities will make up more than 50 percent of the population in the U.S.A.," the website states. "The United Methodist Church acknowledges the need for a society where our differences enrich us and do not divide us."

Thus Ramirez sees a growing need to help all people develop their intercultural skills.

Collaborators will blog, offer classes, and share videos and other resources on the website.

• Craig Stinson described the application "Is This Random?" being developed for cellphones.

It's important for a person to make note of God in everyday life, he said, and cellphones are ubiquitous. Downloading this app will give you a simple, spiritual resource "to practice noticing God," Rev. Stinson said, and the app will have a sharing option.

Youth delegates and the Youth at Conference (YAC) group were invited to be part of the field testing. He is director of Connectional Ministries.

Annual Conference talking points

2016 Apportionments lower

The 2016 Apportionment budget is \$14,882,701.

That is 3.2 percent lower than the current budget. Also, clergy health insurance rates will not increase in 2016.

Although smaller, the new budget will include more money for new faith communities, a primary objective of Oklahoma's Strategic Plan.

• For the second round of *New People New Places* grants, an additional \$125,000 was assigned. Total funding will be \$825,000 for grant awards. Deadline is Aug. 31 to submit your church's application online.

• New Faith Communities Ministry Team (formerly Congregational Development) will receive \$125,000 more, making its total budget \$901,000.

Treasurer Brian Bakeman identified major decreases in 2016 for the District Superintendents' Fund and Active Clergy Health Fund.

Apportionments in 2016 also will be slightly lower at the denomination's general and jurisdictional levels. The North Texas Conference will fully fund the campus ministry at Southern Methodist University, Dallas.

Call for VIM teams after flooding

• The need is great for Volunteers In Mission to help clean debris from flooded homes in Oklahoma, announced Richard Norman, after record-setting spring rainfall.

"Start signing up, VIM teams," urged Rev. Norman, disaster response coordinator. "There has just been so much rain," and agencies that usually assist in such disasters "are overwhelmed."

Go to www.okumc-dr.org UMCOR cleaning buckets donated by local churches are being distributed, too.

• What will 10 cents per member at your church do? Karen Distefano answered her own question during the Office of Missions report.

Ten cents "will introduce

lifelong atheists to Christ on the OU campus, advocate for peace with justice in the Middle East, equip Hispanic laity to spread the good news, convince parents not to marry off their 13-year-old daughters, bring a woman from a remote mountain village to become the first ordained Methodist elder in Peru," and much more, said Distefano, who is Oklahoma's secretary of global missions.

• Two plaques from The Advance honored Oklahoma for (1) the highest total amount of missionary support and (2) the highest church participation in Advance designated giving among the 12 annual conferences of the South Central Jurisdiction.

Circle of Care Sunday moves to December

• Circle of Care President Don Batson announced these five churches ranked highest in 2014 in giving per person to the agency: Jet, Holdenville, Chapel Hill in Clinton District, Capron, and Allen.

• The annual Circle of Care Sunday was moved to December. In 2015, the special offering is set Dec. 18.

Border school also aids younger kids

In the border city of El Paso, Texas, the historic Lydia Patterson Institute has expanded its mission to teach younger students. Curriculum now includes two middle-school grades in addition to high school classes, President Socorro de Anda told delegates.

News to note from Oklahoma seminary

• Michael Carpenter and Matt Patrick were named the first Saint Paul Oklahoma Fellows. Each received a full scholarship to study this fall at the Oklahoma campus plus a clergy appointment and stipend.

• Bishop Sundo Kim of Korea recently donated \$100,000 to Saint Paul School of Theology. He is the founder of Methodism's largest church, an 85,000-member congregation in Korea. A total of 16 pastors from Korea earned doctorates at the Kansas City campus this past academic year.

Funds OK'd for copyright licenses

Delegates approved Apportionment funding for bulk copyright licenses that will include every local church for a wide variety of media, especially videos and music.

The agreements will apply to media licensed through Christian Video Licensing International (CVLI) and Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI). Go to their websites to find complete lists of titles, and note that those two companies do not license all media you might want to use.

A recent TV news story reaffirmed the importance of adhering to government copyright laws.

The Oklahoma County Senior Nutrition Program stopped playing movies at 18 centers after receiving a notice from the Motion Picture Licensing Corp. Copyright licenses must be confirmed before the movies resume.

Minimum fine is \$10,000 for violating the law, Sam Welch explained to delegates. He chairs the Department of Communications.

Record assets at Foundation

Total assets of the Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation reached a record high in 2014.

At year's end, they totaled \$268.4 million. That's up from \$262.1 million in 2013.

A major milestone was completion of the Oklahoma United Methodist Pastor Education Fund, a \$3 million scholarship endowment.

Two dozen new videos from Annual Conference tell of the Church's ministries in Oklahoma. View and download them at www.okumc.org/okvideo for mission education moments, small groups, promoting Apportionment giving, etc.



2 get 'Outstanding Small Church'

Two small-membership churches in greater Oklahoma City were honored for their efforts by the United Methodist Rural Advocates and the Conference's Small Church Commission at Annual Conference.

The "Outstanding Small Church" awards luncheon May 28 recognized OKC-Crown Heights and Nicoma Park United Methodist Churches.

Crown Heights was recognized for outreach that includes offering tutoring, Meals on Wheels, music lessons, and collecting books to send to Liberia.

Nicoma Park operates a thrift shop that furnishes clothes and medical equipment to low-income citizens in the neighborhood.

The church gives non-violent offenders "the opportunity to complete their community service in an environment where they see faith in action within a Christ-based facility," according to a statement read May 27 by Bishop Hayes as part of the Small Church Commission's report.

Additional awards

- Laywoman Shirley Adams and clergy Sam Powers and Marcia Martin received the Denman Award for Evangelism.
- Frances E. Willard Award, by the Commission on the Status & Role of Women — Leslie Long, associate professor of religion at OCU
- Asbury Award, by the Board of Higher Education & Campus Ministry — Jim Key, a member of Stillwater-First UMC
- All-Star Award, by the Mission & Service Ministry Team — 16 churches excelled in support of missionaries and missions
- It Worked for Us, by the Board of Laity — Ada-First, Bartlesville-First, Hinton, Enid-First, Cache, Wilburton, Adair, Edmond-First, Moore-First, Perry, West Tulsa, and Beaver



Photo by Ron Wallin

These five graduates from Saint Paul at OCU will minister in Oklahoma. From left: Wendie Jencks-Wilson, Joel Thompson, Melissa Pearce, Brad Rogers, and Jennifer Reynolds.

Wiggs counsels grads of Saint Paul at OCU

By CHRIS SCHUTZ

Light streaming through the stained-glass windows of the Smith Chapel on May 29 illuminated the fifth commencement for Saint Paul School of Theology at Oklahoma City University.

Speaker David Wiggs advised the nine members of the Class of 2015 to keep their minds open to the opportunities that will arise for them.

"A key to effectiveness is to love those people to whom we are sent," said Rev. Wiggs, senior pastor of Tulsa-Boston Avenue UMC and a former district superintendent.

His first two appointments were to youth ministry.

Some seminary graduates may think "youth ministry is 'a little bit beneath me,'" Wiggs said. He even was advised that taking those assignments would be a "big mistake."

However, in his view, "we are serving God wherever we find ourselves."

The new graduates are part of "Christ's body of chosen people,"

Wiggs said. That body is made up of "marvelously functioning parts."

He complimented the graduates. "You have endeavored where others have given up."

Bishop Robert Hayes Jr. said the Class is a part of the "unique partnership" with Saint Paul's other campus in greater Kansas City. He urged church members to keep the seminary in their prayers.

Graduates are:

- Mose Dupre, Midwest City, who earned an M.A. in Theological Studies. Dupre concentrated on Biblical studies.
- Melissa Pearce, Edmond, Master of Divinity.
- Wendie Jencks-Wilson, Elk City, M.Div. with a specialization in Wesleyan studies.
- Changsu Kim, Baldwin City, Kan., M.Div.
- Rashim Merriwether Sr., Fort Smith, Ark., M.Div.
- Jennifer Reynolds, Yukon, M.Div. with a specialization in Christian Religious Education.
- Brad Rogers, Oklahoma City,

Gift labyrinth points finger toward spirituality

A lap-sized hand-carved labyrinth, to be used while a person is seated, was an unusual gift to Saint Paul School of Theology at Oklahoma City University from the Class of 2015 on graduation day, May 29.

Most labyrinths are laid out on the ground and people walk through them as they pray. But this one will allow a person to trace a path with a finger, said graduate Melissa Daniels Pearce of Edmond.

The labyrinth will be available in the seminary's Harris Chapel, a room in the northeast corner of the Smith Chapel building at OCU.

The 18-inch-square labyrinth, carved from West African wood, will fit on a person's lap or can be placed on a table.

It was created by New Jersey artist Andrew Morel. "While working, he prayed for our seminary and particularly for the leaders being shaped," Pearce said.

The Class wanted to give something special for Harris Chapel, which she described as "the heart of our community."

She described herself as "an avid labyrinth walker." In prayer, she said, "you have to allow for concentration." The acts of walk-



Photo by Chris Schutz

Graduate Timothy Trommater of Liberal, Kan., celebrates with his sons after the ceremony May 29.

M.Div. with a specialization in Restorative Justice and Prison Ministry.

- Joel Thompson, Helena, M.Div. with a specialization in Wesleyan studies.
- Timothy Trommater, Liberal, Kan., M.Div.

Rogers said he is affiliated with OKC-Penn Avenue Redemption Church's prison ministry. He hopes to "grow there in that ministry (and) serve as best I can."

He felt a calling to prison ministry after hearing the testimonies of former inmates during a report by Criminal Justice & Mercy Ministries (CJAMM) at a previous Annual Conference. He said he feels "very at home. I do feel called."

Classmate Trommater was greeted by his sons, Weston, 2, and Jacob, 5, at the reception following the ceremony. The family was preparing to move to Jackson, Mich., where Trommater is to be an associate pastor at First UMC.

ing a labyrinth or tracing a small one with a finger aid in concentration, Pearce said.

Pearce, formerly a grant writer, felt the call to go to seminary when she was 32. At the time, she was attending three Bible studies, and each one just made her ask more questions.

"I wanted to go deeper and further," she said, and that led to seminary.

She now is considering doctoral work and wants to begin the process to become a deacon with a certificate in spiritual direction.

— Chris Schutz

“What do you guys do?”

By DAVID BATTLES

This question comes up at every Annual Conference. Am I surprised by the question? No. I was baptized a Methodist as an infant; I grew up in a parsonage home; I attended church camp and worked at camp one summer; I was involved in Wesley Foundation during college; and I served on various church committees as an adult. And yet, I didn't know what the Foundation did—until I went to work for the Foundation over 21 years ago.

SO WHAT DO WE DO?

The short answer is we strengthen and support the ministries of the Oklahoma United Methodist Conference. We do this primarily by attracting and managing endowment funds for Oklahoma United Methodist churches, institutions, and agencies. Our endowment funds support almost every ministry in the conference. An endowment fund preserves the principal and provides annual payments to the designated ministry or ministries.

WHO ESTABLISHES ENDOWMENT FUNDS?

Endowment funds are established by Oklahoma United Methodist individuals and families who have remembered United Methodist causes in their estate plans or have established a planned gift (charitable remainder trust, charitable gift annuity, etc.). They decide which ministry or ministries they want to support through their endowment fund. We often assist families and individuals in making these legacy gifts.

HOW DO WE ENCOURAGE LEGACY GIVING?

We present educational seminars on estate and legacy planning. We also provide a free guide, *Planning Your Legacy*, in both a booklet and online version. This guide will encourage you to think about how you want your assets to be distributed at death and assist you in gathering the information your attorney will need. With this guide, the process will be much easier, less expensive, and fulfill your desires for family and the ministries you cherish.

If you would like to learn more about estate and legacy planning, **please contact me at 800-259-6863 or dbattles@okumf.org**. There is no obligation, and all inquiries are confidential.

TWO NEW MEMBERS OF OUR FOUNDATION TEAM



Darrell Cates and **Justin Tockey** have recently joined the Foundation. Darrell is an elder in the Oklahoma United Methodist Conference and most recently served as McAlester District Superintendent. He will serve as Director of Conference and Church Relations and will primarily serve the districts in the western part of the state. He will be located in Oklahoma City. Justin is a member of Sand Springs United Methodist Church and most recently

served as a financial adviser. He will serve as the Planned Giving Officer for the districts in the eastern part of the state. He will be located in the Tulsa area.

We are very pleased to have both Darrell and Justin join the Foundation team. In the near future, they will be contacting pastors and church leaders to review the status of the church's legacy and endowment program. Darrell and Justin will be a resource for starting, reviving, and promoting your endowment program. Please welcome them when they contact you.

CONGRATULATIONS

TO REVEREND MARK POLSON AND TULSA CHRIST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH FOR WINNING \$1,000 FOR YOUR ENDOWMENT. HIS NAME WAS DRAWN FROM OVER 400 ENTRIES DURING ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN MAY.



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Mosaic opens:

Continued from page 1

of encouragement that first Sunday. Rev. Ingraham's new appointment is as Skyline Urban Ministry director. Rev. Lobo became associate pastor at OKC-Wesley.

Mosaic UMC draws its name from I Corinthians 12:12-14, which compares the united body of Christ to the human body and its many parts.

Spencer cited Henri Nouwen's "The Mosaic That Shows Us the Face of God." An excerpt: "We can admire the beauty of each stone. But as we step back ... we can see ... a beautiful picture, telling a story none of these stones can tell by itself."

The Merger Document states: "The histories of both churches reflect established congregations that encourage diversity, nourish social action, and support issues of justice and mercy, so that we consider it to be a union of like-minded and passionate congregations ..."

"We will establish our presence ... as a regional, progressive, justice-seeking congregation."

Epworth's building, which the church had occupied since 1919, was sold in December. Both congregations held final worship services on May 31.

At Epworth's closing, worshippers sang "Forward Through the Ages" as they carried the Bible, sacramental vessels, cross, and other objects out of the building. Then butterflies were released.

A congregation of the Oklahoma Indian



Photo by Holly McCray

Jerry Thompson kneels to a child's level for Communion on June 7 in the first worship service for Mosaic UMC, meeting at OCU's Smith Chapel. Serving beside Thompson is Pastor Scott Spencer, in striped shirt.

Missionary Conference now meets on Sunday mornings at the Clegg property, 102 E. Hefner Road.

Spencer's office also is there. The church website is www.mosaicokc.org. Worship begins at 10:30 a.m. Sundays.

"We anticipate a dynamic, prayerful process over the next year," states the Merger Document.

"Come and see!" declared Spencer, repeating a call to action found in several Scriptures.

Save the date

1. July 17-20
Mission u
3 studies: The Pursuit of Happiness, Latin America: People and Faith"; "The Church and People with Disabilities"
Where: OCU campus
Deadline to register: July 12
Contact: 918-967-2407, flojconk@sbcglobal.net
2. Aug. 24-28
Mediation Skills Institute for Church Leaders
Where: OKC-Church of the Servant
Sponsor: Discipleship Ministry Team
www.okumc.org/mediation
(Cost rises after July 24)
3. Aug. 31
Deadline to apply for New People, New Places grants
www.okumc.org/nppn
4. Sept. 26
"Human Trafficking" study
Where: OCU campus
Sponsor: Council on Youth Ministry
www.okumc.org/youth