

CJAMM leader Adam Leathers scales a pockmarked rock at Alamosa, Colo.

Just causes

Activism on big issues enhances faithful living for these 3 United Methodists

Leathers' advocacy rocks

By HOLLY McCRAY

Adam Leathers rocks it, literally and metaphorically.

A keen free climber*, he's scaled cliffs in Arkansas and Colorado, and in Oklahoma's Wichita and Arbuckle Mountains.

He challenges mountains of injustice because he's also passionate about working with people who are marginalized. Rev. Leathers became executive director of

Criminal Justice & Mercy Ministries (CJAMM) for the Oklahoma Conference in 2013.

His social activism isn't limited to his job. You will find him standing vigil on the eve of an execution, promoting knowledge about addictions, and seeking out legislators at the state Capitol. He lives in Guthrie.

His first job after college was pivotal, he said.

Adam and Virginia Leathers met and began married life while studying at

See *Climb*, page 4



Pastor Semaj Vanzant gives the prayer Feb. 23 in the state House of Representatives. He was invited by Rep. George Young. Story, page 4.



Alpaca Biak Bay, in background, watches laywoman Pat Hoerth give William his daily shower during summer at Turtle Rock Farm near Billings. "The alpaca boys are pretty charming," Hoerth said. Story, page 5.

'Young people are going out and trying to change things'

Youths will lead summit on human trafficking

By CHRIS SCHUTZ

Human trafficking does not only occur in other countries – the exploitation of people happens here, too. That's the message that youth ministry planners hope to convey when they present a Human Trafficking Symposium to the public on Sept. 26 at Oklahoma City University.

Youths from churches around Oklahoma have been immersed in the topic for much of the year, including a United Nations/Washington, D.C., educational tour that took place during Spring Break.

Josie Worthington of Tulsa said

symposium preparation has been extensive by the 12 youths selected by their churches for the UN/DC tour. The group read books on the topic of human trafficking, wrote essays, and decided whom to invite to speak.

People don't know enough about the subject, Josie said. "I just want

people to know what's happening and put a stop to it."

She also wants people within The United Methodist Church to know that "young people are going out and trying to change things." She is now a freshman political science major at the University of Tulsa.

Primary speakers for the symposium are:

- Barbara Amaya, who is the author

of "Nobody's Girl," which is described as a memoir of lost innocence, modern day slavery, and transformation; and

- Susan Greer Burton, director of Women's and Children's Advocacy for the denomination's General Board of Church & Society (GBCS), based in Washington, D.C.

Amaya tells how she was manipulated, abused, and exploited for over a decade by traffickers in Washington, D.C., and New York City. She has become an advocate for the rights of human trafficking victims and all victims of abuse and exploitation.

Burton is program director for Seminar Design, Education, and Leadership Formation with the GBCS. Since joining the board's staff in 2001, Burton has encouraged seminar participants to deepen their faith,

See *Youth*, page 8



Register now for symposium Sept. 26



A Conversation About Depression, Suicide, and the Church

Oct. 6 at Moore-First UMC

Leaders: Julie Geddes and Sanaria Okongor, suicide prevention specialists; and Linda Harker of McFarlin UMC

Sponsor: Conference Council on Youth Ministry

Register: www.okumc.org/timetotalk



Happy 70th birthday, Egan Camp!

Saturday, Sept. 19

- 5K Trail/Obstacle Run, 9 a.m.
- Wee Dash, 10:30 a.m. (ages 12 and younger)
- Lunch / birthday cake, 11:30 a.m.
- Dedication of Holliman Medical Station, 1 p.m.
- Also tours, inflatables, arts and crafts

Egan's first summer camp took place in 1945. The 51 acres along Baron Fork Creek, near Tahlequah, were bought in 1943 by Jim and Violet Egan and donated to the Methodist Church.

Register by Aug. 31 to get the T-shirt!

CampEgan@okumc.org
918-456-6489
www.egancrc.org

Clergy will hear McNeal

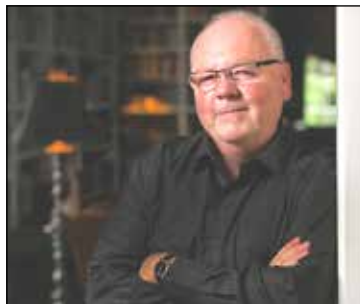
Sept. 22 is Bishop's Day Apart

Realigning the church's mission with God's ultimate Kingdom agenda will be the topic of author Reggie McNeal's Sept. 22 talk at Bishop Robert Hayes' annual Day Apart for clergy.

The bishop invited McNeal, author of "Kingdom Come: Why We Must Give Up Our Obsession With Fixing the Church and What We Should Do Instead," to speak at the event, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at OKC-St. Luke's.

Hayes will offer morning and afternoon devotions.

McNeal, who serves as Missional Leadership Specialist for Leadership Network of Dallas, will address some of the challenges facing the 21st century church.



McNeal

Clergy who register by Aug. 28 will get a copy of the book in time for the event. Those who sign up after Aug. 28 will still receive a book, but delivery is not guaranteed before the event.

The \$25 fee covers registration and the book.

To register, go to :
**www.okumc.org/
BishopsDayApart**

For more information call Connie Barnett at 405-530-2006.

Is God speaking to your heart?

Sign up for September ministry rally

Have you responded in some way to a call to ministry? Do you want to find out more about what it takes to become a lay, licensed, or ordained minister in The United Methodist Church?

If you answer yes, register now to attend a Call to Ministry Rally and Retreat on Sept. 12 at OKC-Wesley United Methodist Church, NW 25th and Classen.

And if you know someone who is pondering God's call to become a pastor, tell them about this rally and help them sign up. The invitation is for people who are in high school or older.

Last fall, more than 100 people participated in the inaugural rally/retreat.

The Sept. 12 free event will be 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Lunch will be provided for all who register.

Welcoming and worship

will open the gathering. You will experience great music, inspirational preaching, and the sacrament of Communion.

The morning will be filled with learning, inspiration, and group building. You will hear from others who have experienced God's call in their lives.

In the afternoon, participants will learn about the Candidacy Process, be introduced to Group Mentoring, and clergy mentors will be assigned. Members of each new small group will get acquainted, select future meeting dates, and work together on first steps. Those in high school will meet as an informal group.

Reservations are needed to ensure sufficient materials and food. Sign up by 4:30 p.m. Sept. 5; contact Connie Barnett, cbarnett@okumc.org, 405-530-2006.



OCU offers connections to churches and youths

Have studies, will travel

"Last Sunday I was at Mosiac UMC (in Oklahoma City), leading a congregation-wide study on church history, and for the next three weeks I will be with the youth at First UMC, Prague, leading a study of Wesley's General Rules," reports Charles Neff. He is Oklahoma City University's vice-president for University-Church Relations.

"Over the last 12 months, I have had the privilege of being in churches across our annual conference, big and small, delving into a rich diversity of topics ranging from the spiritual practices of Jesus to the books that didn't make it into the Bible."

In addition to Rev. Dr. Neff, other clergy staff and faculty at OCU also travel to congregations and camps across the state to offer studies.

Among the subjects are the books and themes of the Bible, church history, Wesleyan studies, apocalyptic literature, Christian spirituality, and the life and teaching of Jesus.

We welcome your invitation to lead a Sunday School class or special weekday class in your local church or a camp setting. Based on distance and availability, presenters can lead one to three sessions.

To request a study at your church, contact Neff at 405-208-5060 or cneff@okcu.edu.



Sister Rosemary Nyirumbe has received honors for her work with girls rescued from warlord Joseph Kony in Uganda. She and a girls' school are the subjects of the documentary "Sewing Hope," narrated by Oscar Award-winner Forest Whitaker.

Sister Nyirumbe to visit campus Sept. 23

Sister Rosemary Nyirumbe of Uganda, named by Time Magazine as one of the *100 Most Influential People in the World*, will spend Wednesday, Sept. 23, at OCU.

She will give presentations about her humanitarian work among women and children displaced by the violence of the Kony militia.

• Clergy members of the Oklahoma Conference are invited to a free luncheon that day from noon to 1:30 p.m. in the McDaniel student center. (RSVP required;

call 405-208-5060.)

• All are welcome to a community forum at 7:30 that evening.

Nyirumbe, a member of Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, directs St. Monica Girls' Tailoring Center in Gulu, Uganda. The girls learn to support themselves and their families through such trades as sewing and cooking. Her work is the subject of the book "Sewing Hope" and a documentary of the same name.

Reserve group seats to see the Stars

From champion athletic teams to award-winning performances, OCU students excite, inspire, and entertain all year long! Come and see for yourself!

OCU again is offering free tickets for church groups to attend home sporting events and theater, musical, and dance performances during the school year. Tickets are available on a first-come basis.

Find event schedules on the school's website: www.OKCU.edu.

To reserve seats, contact Rita Himes in the University-Church Relations Office, 405-208-5060, rhimes@okcu.edu.

Nominations open for Milhouse Award

The OCU University-Church Relations Office is seeking nominations for the 2015 Bishop Paul W. Milhouse Award. Established in 1982, this award recognizes United Methodist laity who show outstanding leadership in community, local church, and the annual conference, and who advocate for the partnership between OCU and the Church. To nominate someone, contact Charles Neff, cneff@okcu.edu, 405-208-5060. Deadline for all nominations is Oct 1.

The Oklahoma United Methodist
Contact
1501 N.W. 24th
Oklahoma City, OK 73106

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Strength for the journey

Risking all to pursue Christ

NOTE: Bishop Hayes invited three laity to be guest writers while he is on sabbatical.

By **BILL CHISSOE**

Legacy can be defined as anything handed down from the past, as from an ancestor or predecessor. My full name is William Francis Chissoe III. My father was William F. Jr., and his dad was William F. Sr. My son is William F. IV, and my grandson is William F. V.

I jokingly tell folks that we are secretly starting our own dynasty. The fact that my grandson carries my name, which was also the name

of my grandfather, is a constant reminder that I have received a legacy and I am handing on a legacy.

But a legacy is defined by more than just a name.

A synonym for legacy is inheritance. While the two words can be used interchangeably, in my mind, there is a difference.



Chissoe

An inheritance typically refers to tangible assets such as money, a house, or a business. A legacy, on the other hand, refers to intangibles: values, attitude, character traits, and matters of faith.

A legacy does not guarantee adoption by the next generation, but it is the foundation from which that generation will build its legacy.

An ancient writer said, “We are like dwarfs sitting on the shoulders of giants. We see more, and things that are more distant, than they did, not because our sight is superior or because we are taller than they, but because they raise us up, and by their great stature add to ours” (emphasis mine). Some time later, Isaac Newton expressed the same idea as “standing on the shoulders of giants.”

We all stand on somebody’s shoulders.

To me, legacy is like a long ladder. Each generation contributes a rung to the ladder, and the succeeding generation stands on it to create another rung. We all will leave a legacy to our descendants.

But what will it be?

You and I need to consider seriously the legacy we are passing on to our children, and the sooner, the better. I believe the Bible gives us some guidance on this.

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise.” (Deuteronomy 6:4-7, NIV)

Also:

“Start children off in the way they should go, and even when they are old, they will not turn from it.” (Proverbs 22:6, NIV)

I don’t think the writer of Deuteronomy is saying you must memorize the 10 Commandments and recite them to your children or make your children recite them before they can have their breakfast.

I think he is saying that your thoughts, words, and deeds should reflect God’s rule in your heart, and you should be comfortable speaking about that to your children.

Making your relationship with God part of your everyday conversation not only keeps Him in the center of your life, but also gives those who come after you a foundation for building their own rungs of the ladder.

Have you ever heard someone say, “My dad always said ...” or “My dad would always ...”?

That’s legacy in action!

I believe the most important part of my legacy to my children and grandchildren is an image of what a vital relationship with God looks like in a person’s life.

The motto of United Methodist Men is: “Declaring the centrality of Christ in the lives of men.” The best way for me to make that declaration is with my words and how I relate to others. And I don’t believe I can make a very convincing statement if it’s not true in my life.

So, here’s the deal. None of us can do this on our own. But we have this promise:

“Delight yourself in the LORD; and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He will do it. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light and your judgment as the noonday.” (Psalms 37:4-6, NIV)

It’s your rung of the ladder. What will your legacy be?

— **Bill Chissoe is the Conference president of United Methodist Men and a member of Norman-McFarlin UMC.**

Making disciples, creating leaders, transforming lives at OSU

The ministry of the Wesley Foundation at Oklahoma State University is focused on five fundamental pillars: *Hospitality, Worship, Healing and Wholeness, Leadership Development, and Shared Community.*

At the start of the Fall 2015 semester, we highlight here a few of the names and faces representing the seeds of leadership that are planted, cultivated, and harvested at this United Methodist campus ministry in Stillwater.

The OSU Wesley facilitates paid and unpaid internships for students and recent graduates

Kelsey, of Inola UMC, is a senior studying Elementary Education. She first became involved at the Wesley through volunteering for special events such as United Methodist Game Days and tailgate events. Later, she discovered opportunities including Open Mic Nights and “Exposed: Worship for Women.”

This year, Kelsey is serving a year-long ministry position with financial support from her home church.

She said, “As an intern at the Wesley, I hope to give



Jon Swanfeld of Tulsa and Sophie Gibson of Edmond have been OSU Wesley’s student leaders of the PB&J Project, which challenges students weekly to buy peanut butter and jelly sandwiches in order to raise funds for an orphanage.

students encouragement and comfort for whatever is going on in their lives. I hope to build relationships. I have the opportunity now to do for others what the Wesley has done and continues to do for me — ultimately being a part of a staff who works to make the Wesley a home for all those who enter.”

The OSU Wesley cultivates leaders who continue in various forms of ministry after graduation

Mallory got involved at the Wesley through a women’s book study, then weekly worship and the Greek Faith Council. She later served as a ministry intern in 2013-’14, with support from Woodward-First UMC.

Now in her second year of service with the PeaceCorps in Senegal, Mallory recently wrote Janina Graves, the Wesley’s coordinator of Student Ministry. “It truly is amazing how often I pull encouragement from my time at the Wesley to

get me through tough days,” her letter stated.

“I learned so much from the staff and community of the Wesley in the time I was involved there, and I am beyond thankful for that! Please be encouraged by the work you do because it has made a huge impact on my experiences here and my life!”

Michael Bartley, executive director of the Wesley, received a letter from Sterling, a recent OSU alumnus from Tulsa. Sterling began participating at the Wesley through weekly meals and the program “In the Professor’s Corner.”

He shared, “The Wesley ministry laid some of the most fruitful seeds in my life at a time when they were landing on some pretty dry, barren ground. I think they have started to take root, and I appreciate how the people and environment of the Wesley led me closer to Jesus, invited me to explore who he really is, and gave me the courage to let Him break into my heart.”

Sterling and his wife created and currently lead several small group studies and fellowship meals for university students in Switzerland. They have plans to move to Burkina Faso, to live and serve in Christian community.

With the ongoing support of local churches and private donations, the Wesley Foundation at OSU continues to provide meaningful, challenging opportunities for leadership development of the young adults at the university.

To learn more about how you can support OSU students, contact Rev. Bartley at osupastor@gmail.com or 405-880-7194. **Go Pokes!**

www.wesleyosu.com



Fun facts:

- In the past three years, a dozen OSU Wesley students have provided leadership to Project Transformation Oklahoma.
- In the past 10 years, five OSU Wesley alumni have become clergy in The United Methodist Church.



Just causes

Climbing:

Continued from page 1

Alamosa, in Colorado's San Luis Valley. They "saw a lot of poverty" in the valley, Adam said. Its key industry, farming, employed numerous migrant field workers. A nonprofit radio station billed as "a voice for the migrant worker" offered Adam a job after graduation.

When growers required more work by the migrants but refused to pay higher wages, "it was my first time to really see injustice," he said.

"I see people who work hard and aren't able to get ahead. That's not fair."

That radio job launched his activism.

The couple lived in greater Kansas City on the Saint Paul seminary campus while Adam pursued a clergy career.

Living in the inner city, "we saw the cycles of crime and poverty," he said. "Again, we saw people working hard, but they weren't rewarded for it.

"We also saw the Church by and large not responding in ways we hoped. I was raised United Methodist, and we were supposed to do that. It was embarrassing."

He volunteered for a homeless ministry and pastored a congregation of mostly homeless people.

Adam also made an Oklahoma connection. A seminary class on restorative justice, taught by Stan Basler (an adjunct professor and CJAMM's first executive director), impressed him greatly. The class included a prison immersion experience.

The Leatherses moved to Oklahoma when Virginia was accepted to the University of Oklahoma, and Adam was appointed pastor at Wellston UMC.

He also volunteered for New Day Camp, an extension of CJAMM's ministry, for children whose parents are incarcerated.

One of those children, now grown, served as a New Day Camp adult leader this summer. Knowing the young man's



Dangling above Oklahoma City's downtown, Adam Leathers starts his rappel down the Sandridge Energy the Shatterproof challenge to raise awareness about addiction.

background, Adam was excited to learn of his interest in the ministry.

Oklahoma United Methodism is "out there in the streets and doing good," Adam said.

"If you want to be in the mission field for justice issues, this CJAMM is far and away No. 1 in all of Methodism. We have amazing volunteers and employees. This feels like the place where we need to be to make effective change."

Born in Colorado, Leathers grew up on outdoor

adventures and healthy living practices. He recently combined his social activism and his love of rock climbing. His physical effort raises funds for worthy causes.

In April, he rappelled down a 30-story Oklahoma City skyscraper for a campaign that targets addiction. And in the fall, CJAMM will benefit from pledges he earns in a 24-hour rock-climbing contest. He hopes to complete a vertical mile.

(*Free climbers wear ropes and harnesses for safety but do not use them to assist their progress on the rock.)

Pastor looks to Jesus and family

By HOLLY McCRAY

Semaj Vanzant's smile grew bigger Aug. 4 as he spoke about the Back2School Bash, a ministry by The Christ Experience United Methodist Church, which he pastors a few blocks from Oklahoma's Capitol.

On the previous weekend, the church had provided backpacks and lots of supplies to schoolchildren. Rev. Vanzant clearly was pleased by the members' efforts and by the number of inner-city students they helped. He highly values education.

Educators are prominent in generations of Semaj's family, including a New Orleans school superintendent and a principal. They've led in advocating for education. They've built relationships with civic leaders.

Growing up, Semaj recalled, "I was always in the company of a lot of legislators" in Louisiana. In high school, he helped create a civic program for New Orleans teens.

His family legacy also includes a vibrant church life and helping "the less fortunate," he said.

"With joy" because they could help, his family gave food and car rides to people.

Some church friends lived in government housing just 2 miles from the middle-class family's home.

"We were never sheltered. Nobody was ever too dirty

for us to hug," Semaj said.

They also were active in black fraternities/sororities, which are "always advocating against inequalities and for justice," said Semaj, an Alpha Phi Alpha member.

Not surprisingly, political science was his major at Gannon University in Pennsylvania.

He grew as a leader and activist through student government. Semaj said he was Gannon's first African-American student government president. He campaigned as "the choice for your voice."

"I've always had a natural desire to help other people and a lot of them," he said. Working to change systemic issues has the widest impact, he noted.

Deep into a July night in 2005, God called Semaj's name and said, "It's your time to serve."

"I woke up that next morning overwhelmed with this spiritual awareness that I was not who I was before I went to sleep," he said.

He cried as he ironed a shirt for worship, and "hated the fact that I cried — I'm a football player!" He cried during worship. During the invitation, he went forward.

He had planned a career in politics. Instead he entered seminary.

Studying at Princeton Theological Seminary, Semaj



Semaj Vanzant and an unidentified woman take part in a "Black Lives Matter" demonstration at Oklahoma City University.

Eco-spirituality is focus for deaconess

A box fan hummed and birds twittered outside open windows in July as Pat Hoerth discussed her concerns for God's good earth.

This United Methodist deaconess grew up "immersed in nature" on a 1,600-acre farm in north central Oklahoma.

Her father often woke the children to see sunrise. "We spent evenings laying out on blankets, watching the stars," Pat recalled. And when plowing disrupted nesting creatures, dad took the animals to the house for the family to nurture, then release.

Pat's farmer dad also twice led Oklahoma as governor and was a U.S. senator. He was Henry Bellmon.

Eight years ago, Pat and her sister Ann returned to the centennial farm near Billings and established a retreat/educational center on a portion of the property. At Turtle Rock Farm, they focus on spirituality and sustainability.

Organic farming, raising chickens, beekeeping: "It just kept emerging that there were some things we could do as models, as teaching, and as environmental improvement," Pat said.

Engaging people in eco-spirituality and working for environmental justice is Pat's calling as a deaconess, which is a certified ministry for laywomen. She was commissioned in 2008. She also is a trained spiritual director.

Her childhood on the farm certainly influenced her. In college she majored in sociology and journalism. Then a seminary class "changed my life," Pat said.

She learned "why the story of evolution is theologically important" while studying at Phillips Theological Seminary.

The class on the new cosmology and Christianity was taught by Elizabeth Box Price. Hoerth has earned two master's degrees.

A deaconess is expected to do cutting-edge ministry, Pat said, and "I knew I wanted to teach this understanding. We'll never know all the wonder that is this planet. It's just so important. It hurts when bad things happen."

Both at Turtle Rock Farm and as a guest presenter, Pat teaches people to live mindfully in the environment. You do have to build in ways to pay attention to creation during your day, she noted.

She chuckled when asked where she especially notices God. She responded, "Where can't you see God?"

Sometimes she directs event participants on "a cosmic walk." They track a timeline that spirals outward chronologically, representing billions of years. It pleases her when they realize "we're really small compared to all of this," Pat said.

Making that connection can lower anxiety and lead to productive discussions on environmental issues, she said, instead of political debate.

Pat made this tool portable to guide small groups at churches, etc. In 2014, she presented it at the global Assembly of United Methodist Women (UMW).

For Mission u 2016, a national UMW educational program, she wrote the children's study book on climate justice. She was an adult study leader at Oklahoma's Mission u 2015.

Pat serves on the Environmental Coalition of the Oklahoma Conference's Board of Church & Society. She is a presenter for the Coalition's new educational program, "Where in the World Are We — and You — on Changes in Weather, Climate, Nature?" She represented the coalition in the 2015 Oklahoma City Earth Walk.

People tell Pat, "We're so glad you're out there doing that" sustainable farming at Turtle Rock. "We live in the city and can't do all that."

Their comments challenge her. "Thank you, but it's not just about us doing this," she mused. "It's been compelling me to consider what can be done in the city."



Pat Hoerth monitors the water in Doe Creek as a Blue Thumb volunteer with the Oklahoma Conservation Commission.

Pat is pursuing ways to help people in the city connect with nature. She also has an Oklahoma City home, where she plans to nurture a pepper patch and photographs birds drawn to feeders in her yard. She supports the work of an urban farm. She provides spiritual direction from an office provided at OKC-St. Luke's.

You can follow her blog at <https://TurtleRockFarm.wordpress.com> — Holly McCray

as models for his social justice advocacy

served internships with Rudy Rasmus of Houston, who is an acclaimed pastor known for reaching out to the poorest people, and with Church Without Walls, also in Houston. Now Semaj is studying for a doctorate from Saint Paul School of Theology at Oklahoma City University.

Semaj claims "a voracious appetite for the Scripture."

"I see God on the side of the oppressed, downtrodden, disenfranchised, marginalized," he said. "Jesus would hang

'Christ was never just in the temple. I want the same attitude'

out with them to bring them in (to the Kingdom). Christ was never just in the temple.

"I want to have the same attitude. God has put me in places to do that."

In 2011, Semaj became senior pastor of the Oklahoma City congregation, which is mostly African-American. Linda Truitt is associate.

Secure in his leadership ability and a self-described extrovert, Semaj said two of his most valuable ministry tools

are the Bible and a current news resource.

He seeks to impact lives at the point those two intersect.

"Our society as a whole is surface. We would judge a whole book by its cover, without any desire to discover the depths of that person," he said. "My fight is to see deeper, be deeper, let conversation happen. My stance comes through my race, but not only race.

"A lot of my fight for economic justice, education reform, and equality for all comes through my race because I know it the best."

In January, an Oklahoma lawmaker proposed a ban on wearing hoodies in public, citing criminal cases. Joining other African-American pastors who objected, Semaj rallied his congregation to wear hoodies for Sunday worship, and he preached while wearing one.

The proposal did not pass at the Capitol.

Also that month, Semaj was keynote speaker at a Tulsa vigil on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. He told that audience, "Stand up against those things that are wrong, and stand in solidarity with the less fortunate," according to a report by the University of Tulsa *Collegian*.

In 2014, The Christ Experience Church hosted a social justice seminar presented by the Conference United Methodist Women. Semaj has also welcomed local police officials

'My stance comes through my race, but not only race'

for a roundtable at the church concerning the Spring Lake housing subdivision.

He speaks with enthusiasm about the growth in impact and in people for the congregation that meets at NW 17th and Kelly Avenue. Semaj sometimes walks the community as he prays.

He recently preached a series titled "Love. Period."

Carla and Semaj Vanzant have two young sons. "We teach them there is something more to people than skin color and the way they look, whether in a suit or rags," the pastor said.

The boys also are at the heart of his greatest fear, he admitted. Semaj knew an African-American pastor in Louisiana who was recently killed by a policeman.

"While I know that is a reality, I can't let that hinder me," Semaj said. (Of note: His own father was a policeman.)

"While I know that is a reality, I can't let that hinder me."



YOUNGSTERS HELP BABIES

— In each Vacation Bible School at Pauls Valley UMC, children are challenged to raise money for a mission project. They helped Neighborhood Services Organization (NSO), in Oklahoma City, this year. The kids raised about \$480, and adults added to that the next Sunday. Almost \$800 went to NSO. The children also made blankets to give along with diapers and other infant items. From left, kids are: Ryder Johnson, Dawson Ammons, Ashton Owens, Avery Thompson, Natalie Shreve, and Eric Thompson. Adults are NSO President Stacey Ninness, Pastor Mark Watson, and NSO client advocate Monica Gordner.

The global church

WINGS OF PRAYER — In Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, Bishop Mary Ann Swenson saw thousands of schoolchildren bring millions of folded paper cranes as prayers for peace and met elderly atomic bomb survivors. She visited in August with a World Council of Churches team, supporting the humanitarian pledge to ban nuclear weapons worldwide.

(UMNS, Aug. 17)

VIDEO CONTEST — Sept. 14 is the deadline for “Living Grace,” a competition designed for young adults to show God’s work through their eyes, in compelling 3-minute videos. The project is funded by A Foundation for Theological Education, and partners include the United Methodist Publishing House and Leadership Education at Duke Divinity School. Winners in each category will receive \$3,000. www.livinggracematters.com/about

PROPERTY LAWSUIT — The Illinois Great Rivers Conference filed a lawsuit Aug. 6, seeking to keep property now used by a breakaway congregation in Grand Chain, Ill. The action follows a highly publicized property settlement between the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference and a fast-growing church there that left the denomination and paid that annual conference for the buildings, land, and other obligations. A trust clause is part of the denomination’s *Book of Discipline*.

(UMNS, Aug. 7)

MARRIAGE CLASS — Prison ministry volunteers in July hosted a marriage seminar at First United Methodist in Huntsville, Texas, for the families of those behind bars. “The reason my wife and I volunteer in the Restorative Justice Marriage Ministry is simple,” said former inmate Greg Alvis, who was incarcerated for 22 years. “We went through the same experience. I am sure that our attendance at marriage seminars back then is the foremost reason we are celebrating 27 years of marriage this November. We were able to grow together while living apart.”

(UMNS, Aug. 17)

EDUCATION ON EBOLA — A video animation created to dispel myths about the disease Ebola has directly reached nearly 60,000 people in two northern districts of Sierra Leone in the three months since it was released. United Methodist Communications helped develop “Ebola: A Poem for the Living,” in 17 languages. “We can tell you that 69 percent of the households we have reached now practice the five key preventive measures. We hope to increase this to 80 percent by the end of this project in September,” said Annisha Vasutavan of Catholic Relief Services.

(UMNS, Aug. 14)

BRILLE HYMNAL — Zimbabwe Bishop Eben Nhwatiwa presented the first ever Braille hymnal in the Shona language to 16-year-old Laura Muzambi, who then sang as she moved her fingers cautiously over the raised dots on the page. “You have a blessed future, and your passion for singing will not go to waste,” said the bishop.

(UMNS, Aug. 17)

OKC-Quayle will celebrate 125 years

In September, a series of events will celebrate the 125th anniversary of OKC-Quayle United Methodist Church, 5001 N. Everest Ave.

The church traces its start to 1890, when a small group of spiritually-minded people, with missionary zeal and a sense of civic pride, became the nucleus of the church.

Prior to 1901, the group met as a prayer band at 320 E. Grand St. Worshippers gathered for 10 years before formally organizing as a church.

Today the congregation is active in ministry areas that address homelessness, literacy, substance abuse, prison outreach, youth mentorship, health, and more.

In marking this grand anniversary, the church begins with prayer. Quayle and sister church The Christ Experience UMC are planning tent revivals at 6 p.m. Sept. 11 and 12 at Glen Ellyn Park, located at NE 23rd and Glen Ellyn Street.

A prayer conference is planned from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sept. 12 at Quayle. Guest evangelist will be Bishop Raphael Green of Metro Worship Center in St. Louis, Mo. Registration for the conference is \$25.

On Sept. 13, joint worship services are planned by Quayle and The Christ Experience at 10 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., also at Glen Ellyn Park.

Quayle’s members are asked to consider giving to the church a special gift of \$125, “one dollar for each year that God has al-



A 1960s photo shows Quayle’s youth choir. Adult leaders are, at front: Estelle Carruthers, Raymond Rucker, and Edith Sneed; and, far right, Wanda Irby.



The Quayle congregation met at Second and Lindsay, 1940-1962.

lowed us to grow and give,” said Victor McCullough, senior pastor. UM deacon Erica Thomas is Quayle’s associate pastor.

Other opportunities linked to the anniversary are included in this story:

Passages

WALLACE — Donna Jean Wallace, 75, of Oklahoma City died Aug. 13, 2015. She was the widow of Rev. Charles P. Wallace Sr., who died in 2010. Donna and Charles met at Asbury College in Kentucky and married on Aug. 18, 1962, at Roseville, Ohio.

A reading specialist, Donna had a long career as a teacher in a number of Oklahoma schools. She also served for a time as a social worker in the state.

Among survivors are daughter Deborah Jean Wallace and son Charles “Chip” Wallace Jr.

Service was Aug. 18 at Arlington Memory Gardens, Oklahoma City.

BULLOCK — Vera Bernice Kelln-Bullock, 89, of Weatherford died Aug. 3, 2015. She was the widow of Rev. Bob Bullock, who died in 2012.

She worked as a nursing professional for over 50 years. Vera and Bob married on Feb. 2, 1991. Vera was an active church member, certified lay speaker, a Volunteer In Mission, and a United Methodist Woman. Among survivors are daughter Faye and sons Tom and Steve.

Service was Aug. 8 at Weatherford-First UMC, where she was a member. Memorials to: Circle of Care, VIM, UMW, or Weatherford-First UMC bell choir.

- A commemorative book is being compiled. Members who are age 70 or older are invited to share their memories of Quayle and how it helped in their spiritual walks with Christ. The book will include memories, honors, photos, and tributes.

- A blood drive from 10 a.m. to noon Sept. 19 in Quayle’s fellowship hall

- An anniversary musical at 4 p.m. Sept. 20 will feature the Cherub Choir, Young Voices for Christ, and Adult Mass Choir.

- A banquet at 6 p.m. Sept. 26 at The Bryant Center, 2200 Bryant Ave. Tickets are available; contact the church office.

- Anniversary T-shirts are being sold.

MATHES — Clarabelle Burks Mathes, 92, of Oklahoma City died June 25, 2015. She was the widow of Rev. W.C. Mathes, who died in 1999.

Clarabelle and W.C. married on Christmas Day 1943. They helped raise over 100 children during the seven years he served as superintendent of the Methodist Children’s Home, Tahlequah. W.C. also was superintendent of Tulsa and Woodward Districts.

Among survivors are her sister June Mathes and son-in-law Delbert Clancy.

Service was Aug. 17 at Epworth Villa, Oklahoma City. Memorials to: Circle of Care Children’s Home or OCU’s W.C. & Clarabelle Mathes Endowed Religious Scholarship Fund.

Elderly residents talk to teens about bullying



Youths from St. Luke's United Methodist Church and retired residents of Epworth Villa talk about bullying today and in decades past.

Collaboration offers help with addictions

"What difference can one local church make in this huge issue of addiction?"

Office of Mission Director Jeremy Basset asked Peter Messiah that question on the 2015 Annual Conference stage.

Dr. Messiah directs Prevent/Recover, a ministry collaboration by the Conference and Oklahoma City University.

Messiah noted that churches' leaders want to do something but may lack the resources and knowledge of how. Prevent/Recover can help with that.

This ministry is vital in Oklahoma, and not only for obvious reasons, Messiah said.

He called "astounding" statistics that show, as a direct consequence of drug use, 687 people died in Oklahoma in 2009 (the latest data reported by the U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy).

Compared to those in the state that year who died from vehicle accidents (743) and firearms (482), "it is clear that prevention and recovery should remain at the forefront of our collective mindset," Messiah said.

Things aren't getting much better, he said. Addiction-related costs total a whopping \$7.2 billion annually for Oklahoma and its residents, according to "Oklahoma Drug Abuse: State of Addiction," a more recent news media series.

"These statistics may be easy to brush away with deflective phrases like *not my child* or *not in my home*, maybe even *not in my church*," Messiah stated.

However, he said, it becomes harder to delegate prevention and recovery as "someone else's problem" when you learn that:

- 60 percent of youths identified as bullies in grades 6-9 are incarcerated by their mid-20s;

- Many of that incarcerated group have multiple felony convictions; and



Prevent/Recover

www.okumc.org/prevent_recover

- 67 percent of bullies as well as victims of bullying are more likely to become involved in drug and alcohol abuse.

Messiah went on to share, "Researchers have found that middle and high school students who bully their peers or who are bully-victims are more likely to use alcohol and other drugs than students who aren't involved in bullying.

"Prevention should be our shared concern when we know our youth are hurting."

His passion for prevention and its universal need was clear when he also noted LGBT people are more likely to turn to drugs and alcohol to numb feelings of rejection, and that churches must practice welcoming all.

Messiah urged a congregation to focus its addiction ministry on what that church can do. ("Don't be a counselor if you are not one.")

"Providing prevention and recovery services can be an overwhelming task for the local congregation. Many vendors will try to force a program or product on you. Well-meaning individuals will want to establish an opportunity within the life of the church."

Using his own name as a pun, the Prevent/Recover director offered hope. "If you find yourself wanting to do something, but don't know how, I encourage you to get on your knees first and pray to Jesus, then get on your phone and call the Messiah."

To contact him: Pmessiah@okumc.org, 405-530-2036.

By CHANDLER KESSLER

On July 19 in Oklahoma City, St. Luke's United Methodist youth group gathered with new friends at Epworth Villa, a nonprofit UM-related retirement community, and discussed the topic of bullying.

Both the youths and elders shared past personal experiences with bullying. It was interesting to know older generations went through the same problems that we still face today.

Devan Wells, a 16-year-old, bravely shared his testimony first on that Sunday afternoon.

"When I was younger I used to always get bullied for my weight," he said. "It wasn't always easy, but I learned to take that anger and turn it into something more positive."

Another teen, Caleb Jones, said he has been bullied simply because of what he enjoys doing. "I would be called names because of my hairstyle and for my love of the violin," he said.

A very different perspective was shared by Wilma Reppert, an elderly Epworth Villa resident.

She admitted that she had been a bully! The room became silent as the teenagers listened to her touching story.

"We would do horrible things to

innocent people and be completely unsympathetic," Reppert admitted.

I think every teen who heard her felt compelled to make a difference today.

Witnessing all the testimonies, I realize bullying still is happening in schools all around the United States. It's an ongoing issue that may never change.

But I have learned we can take that energy and turn it toward something more positive and be agents of change. We can try standing up to the bully and being nice to more people. Even simply complimenting a person we don't know will make a remarkable difference to someone.

All the elders had some recollection of being bullied. It was apparent that the bad memories can fade, but they never disappear.

Thanks to Epworth Villa for sharing such valuable life lessons with us.

(Kessler, age 15, is part of St. Luke's youth group.)

Births

NSABIMANA — Twins Alexia and Nadine were born Aug. 6, 2015. They are the daughters of Alina and Rev. Gerard Nsabimana, pastor at Stroud.

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Legacy Planning Using a Farm or Ranch – Part 4

John, who is 65, and Susannah, 60, own a farm in western Oklahoma. John farms and teaches business in a nearby college. They have two children and four grandchildren, who all live in North Carolina.

John plans to teach for five more years, and then he and Susannah plan to retire in Asheville, N.C.

Recently, John and Susannah met with the Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation. Their goals are:

- (1) to supplement their retirement income;
- (2) to provide a bequest to their children; and
- (3) to provide a bequest to their church.

The fair market value of their farm is \$1 million. If John and Susannah sell it, the capital gains tax will be over \$200,000, leaving about \$800,000 to meet their goals.

The couple wondered if there is a better

option than selling the farm. The Foundation had answers for them.

One solution would be to combine a Charitable Remainder Unitrust and an insurance trust. Under this “Unitrust and insurance trust” plan, John and Susannah would transfer their farm to the Unitrust. At the same time, they would establish an irrevocable life insurance trust (ILIT). The insured would be John and Susannah.

By transferring the farm to a Unitrust, they would receive 5 percent annually of the fair market value of the trust, avoid the capital gains tax, and also receive a charitable income tax deduction.

During the first five years of this plan, they would contribute \$50,000 annually from the annual Unitrust payments to the ILIT to pay the premium on a second-to-die life insurance policy. Based on their life expectancy of 28.8 years, the ILIT would receive insurance proceeds of over \$800,000. Those proceeds

would be distributed to their family members as an inheritance according to the trust’s terms.

Since the ILIT is owner and beneficiary of the insurance policy, those proceeds would not be subject to income or estate tax. There is an additional provision for taking advantage of the gift tax annual exclusion.

John and Susannah would receive an income net of premiums estimated at over \$1.6 million during their lifetimes, for a total of \$2.4 million from the Unitrust and the insurance trust.

And their United Methodist church would receive an endowment of over \$1.7 million from the remainder.

John and Susannah were very pleased with the results of the “Unitrust and insurance trust” plan. They decided to move forward

with it as their legacy.

The various methods of legacy planning using a farm or ranch, discussed in this four-part series, have the common thread of benefiting families now and The United Methodist Church after their lifetimes.

Every farm or ranch family’s goals are unique. However, it is important to be aware of the options available to achieve those goals.

The Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation is a resource to assist you in exploring those options.

Please contact David Battles, CPA, at 800-259-6863 or dbattles@okumf.org to learn more. There is no obligation, and inquiries are confidential.

THE OKLAHOMA UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION
4201 N CLASSEN BOULEVARD, OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73118-2400
WWW.OKUMF.ORG • 800-259-6863



Youth:

Continued from page 1

seek vocational discernment, and grow in understanding of the biblical mandate to “do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.”

Josie said learning about “people being treated so inhumanely” was an eye-opener. Information about human trafficking led to her decision to major in political science, with the goal of going into advocacy and nonprofit work.

She learned that human trafficking “is not just women, and it’s not just sexual,” she said. It can involve anyone of any age, gender, or race. Victims also can be forced to perform labor.

Degradation of human rights is “hard to wrap your mind around,” Josie said.

Through the tour, Josie said, she gained “a better understanding of how the Church tackles these huge issues of human rights.”

Some of the youths will teach parts of the symposium.

Josie’s talk is titled “Journey of a T-shirt,” in which she will address trafficking through consumerism. Each T-shirt in a store is “touched by so many people,” and the workers may not have fair wages, hours, or working conditions, she said.

Tour member Blake Lemmons of Hennessey plans to teach a role-playing game in which people find out what it’s like



In the U.S. capital, Garrett Johnson of OKC-New Hope and Josie Worthington of Tulsa-Boston Avenue pause near the Jefferson Memorial (background).

to be stranded in a foreign country, without knowing the people or the language, and being taken advantage of in various ways. The game is well-suited to youth groups, he said.

While in D.C., the group met with the staff of U.S. Sen. James Lankford of Edmond to discuss concerns about human trafficking and how it is being dealt with in Oklahoma.

Josie said she would “love to see more

action being taken” in Oklahoma. An example would be “how police handle situations that could be human trafficking situations.”

To register for the Sept. 26 summit, go to www.okumc.org/youth. Cost is \$15 per person, and scholarships are available.

In addition to the Council on Youth Ministry, sponsors are the Board of Church & Society and Discipleship Ministry Team.

Employment

Special Needs Ministry Director: OKC-St. Mark’s. Part-time. Development and oversight of special needs ministry. Email stmarks@stmarksbethany.com or call 405-789-9033.

Director of Youth Ministries: Duncan-First. Full-time, with some benefits. Musical ability a plus. Email resume to greg.tolle@duncanfumc.org.

Director of Children’s Ministry: OKC-Southern Hills. Part-time. Email resume to Connie Gibson, conniejgibson@att.net.

Custodian: Edmond-New Covenant. Full-time. Janitorial duties, room set-up, and supply maintenance. Email resume to dcollett@ncovenant.org.

MDO/Preschool and Nursery Director: OKC-Chapel Hill. Year-round. Email resume to John Brett, john@raydonex.com.

Pianist: Crescent-First. Part-time. Contact Richard Cato at rdcato_1@yahoo.com or 405-732-4915 / 405-210-4473.

Youth Director: Cushing-First. Part-time. Call Kathy Leithner, 918-225-5683.

Male and female contemporary worship singers and a sound engineer: OKC-St. Andrew’s. Part-time. Call Ginny Pass at 405-692-4242 ext. 102, or email gpass@saokc.org