

# Grants announced for *New People New Places*

*Projects small and large,  
from Bartlesville to Lawton*

By **HOLLY MCCRAY**

On Feb. 21, the Annual Conference Council (ACC) endorsed 24 projects to receive *New People New Places* grants, totaling \$629,665, this year.

Award amounts range from \$1,970 to \$150,000. The projects vary, too.

- The church in Wright City is on the move with a running program. Adult mentors and girls ages 9-18 exercise together, building physical and spiritual strength.

- “Toy Makers of Hugo” connects two merging UM churches and the community. Volunteers make and give away wooden toys. Interaction grows discipleship.

- Young adults will learn about faith when they meet at Full Moon Café in Tulsa. “Bar

Church” also will engage them in local mission.

The 2015 Oklahoma Conference budget designates up to \$700,000 for *New People New Places*. This program seeks to reach more Oklahomans, especially younger and more diverse, “to become world-changing disciples of Jesus Christ,” materials state.

Grant applications were submitted by 85 churches and ministries, Craig Stinson reported to the ACC. Those requests added up

to almost \$3.4 million. Rev. Stinson is Conference director of Connectional Ministries.

The NPNP review team faced difficult choices. Ultimately, 12 projects received full funding and 12 were partially funded. Stinson sent out letters of notification to the churches and ministries the last week of February.

**Read a summary of winning projects on page 5.**



Photo by Nyla Wallin

**CHRISTIAN RITUAL** — At the United Methodist Ministry Center, ashes form the shape of a cross on the forehead of receptionist Linda Johnston, left, placed by Kristin Terrell-Wilkes, Office of Mission coordinator. On Feb. 18, Conference staff members marked Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. At the headquarters in Oklahoma City, the noon service was led by Carlos Ramirez, who is coordinator for Hispanic/Latino ministry in Oklahoma and an Office of Mission associate director. Scriptures that refer to ashes as symbols of repentance include Job 42:1-6 and Daniel 9:3-5.

## Moving through Lent

### *PrayGround exercises spiritual muscles*

Creativity is at play in the PrayGround at Ponca City-First UMC during Lent. You will find a sandbox of sorts, but not swings or a slide.

The PrayGround’s equipment will move you closer to God.

Spaced through two rooms are 13 activity stations, each with instructions for both contemplation and action. Disciples can get spiritual exercise there any time the church is open.

Cathie Gilliland and Carolyn Hopkins introduced PrayGround this year at Ponca City-First. Hopkins leads the church’s prayer ministry, and Gilliland directs children’s ministries.

They had seen PrayGrounds at the Conference’s specialty camps for younger children, where they volunteer.

Gilliland laughed about her introduction to the concept. She had misread the word as “playground” on signs during two summer-camp seasons.

In Ponca City, people visit the prayer stations randomly, just as children move at whim around a playground. Gilliland suggested a guest engage in only one or two activities per visit.

A welcome sign declares: “Visit as many or as few stations as your time allows, but do not rush. Enjoy your time with God and come back often.”

People also are told to expect noises at some stations. “Sometimes prayer is noisy,” the instructions note. “Be aware of what you hear in the silence, as well as what you see in the noise.”

The project is open to the Ponca City community as well as the congregation. Adult accompaniment of children is requested.

The PrayGround “seems to make you so much more aware of prayer and different types of prayer,” Gilliland said. “It’s very interactive. It conditions you to try to be intentional about prayer.”

Her strong belief in the power of prayer drives her hope that the project will help other people grow in their spiritual practices.

“Prayer has affected me so much,” she said. Gilliland survived a heart attack just over a year ago.

“I knew, when I was on the floor, I was talking with God in my head, and I was never scared,” she said.

Some of the PrayGround activities at Ponca City-First are summarized here.

**1** The Wilderness Station uses the sand previously noted. The Scripture is the story of Jesus facing temptation during 40 days in the desert. Reflect on what tempts you, write that in the sand, then smooth out the words while praying for forgiveness.

**2** Fingerprint Prayers match colors to categories of people, and ink daubs mark prayers for them on a large drawing of a cross.

**3** Lint or Lent? Ask God to remove lint (sin) in your life as you use a lint roller to tidy your clothes.

**4** A Creation Puzzle that includes animal shapes calls attention to caring for all the world.

**5** Shredder Prayers features that piece of office equipment! Write your sins on a piece of paper, offer a silent prayer of confession, shred that paper, and accept God’s forgiveness.

— Holly McCray

Save  
the  
date

• **Day at the Legislature**

**March 23, all day**

Morning events: State Capitol.  
Lunch and afternoon workshops:  
St. Paul’s Cathedral, 127 N.W. Seventh

Sponsor: Oklahoma Conference  
of Churches

<http://okchurches.org/what-we-do/day-at-the-legislature>

• **Dedication service at Canyon Camp**

**April 18, 1 p.m.**

Celebrating the newly completed Foundation Cabin and Paul & Ann Milburn Cabin

RSVP 405-542-6967

• **UMW Spiritual Growth Retreat**

**April 24-26, Canyon Camp**

Leader: Judy Horne,  
Conference UMW  
song leader

[www.okumcministries.org/UMW/programs.html](http://www.okumcministries.org/UMW/programs.html)

• **OSU Wesley Foundation ‘Imagine’ Update**

**April 30, Tulsa**

Boston Avenue UMC

[www.wesleyosu.com/Imagine](http://www.wesleyosu.com/Imagine)

• **Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders**

**Aug. 24-28, OKC**

UM Church of the Servant  
Sponsor: Oklahoma Conference  
Discipleship Ministry Team

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

## New in The DVD Library

### Films from CORR spur discussions about racism

Two documentaries that aim to shed light on prejudice and race relations have been added to The DVD Library at the United Methodist Ministry Center in Oklahoma City.

The documentaries, "The Last White Knight: Is Reconciliation Possible?" and "Prom Night in Mississippi," were produced by filmmaker Paul Saltzman, who spoke in Oklahoma at a seminar about prejudice. He was hosted by the Conference's Commission on Race & Religion (CORR) for an October program at Oklahoma City University.

Both films, shown during the program, "evoke feeling and provoke discussion," Saltzman said at the CORR workshop. "We want to create safe space to have difficult conversation."

Saltzman is founder of the nonprofit Moving Beyond Prejudice organization, which has made presentations to over 40,000 young people, at-risk youths, and community members.

• **"The Last White Knight,"** released in 2012, tells of Saltzman's own violent confrontation in 1965 with white supremacists, including Byron de la Beckwith Jr., a longtime member of the Mississippi Ku Klux Klan.

At the time, Saltzman was a civil rights worker. The confrontation, which culminated in Beckwith punching Saltzman in the head, was triggered by Saltzman's voter registration work in Mississippi.

Four decades later, Saltzman called Beckwith, and the two agreed to meet. Saltzman filmed their meetings over five years and then created the documentary.

The meetings led to a sense of reconciliation between the men. Beckwith remained a member of the KKK.

• **"Prom Night"** (2009) tells the story of the 2008 senior prom at Charleston High School in Mississippi. Until then, segregated proms had been held, although classrooms had been integrated for decades.

Actor Morgan Freeman offered to pay for the prom, under the condition that it be racially integrated. The video comes with an educators' companion guide for discussion of social justice and anti-bullying.

### DVDs encourage generosity in giving

Two video kits to help achieve a church's stewardship potential also have been added to The DVD Library. They are:

• **"Extravagant Generosity: The Heart of Giving,"** built on Robert Schnase's book "Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations." The video connects the spiritual role of

generosity to daily financial discipleship. It includes four video meditations, four 60-second worship clips, and an introductory video. There is also a guidebook for small-group leaders.

• **"Committed to Christ: Six Steps to a Generous Life,"** by Bob Crossman, director of the New Church Leadership Institute for the Arkansas Conference. This kit includes six gathering-time loops and six 45-second sermon lead-ins. There is also a printed guide for small-group leaders.

These resources and more are available for free rental from The DVD Library in the Department of Communications, United Methodist Ministry Center, 1501 N.W. 24th St., Oklahoma City.

Contact Chris Schutz at 405-530-2075 or [cschutz@okumc.org](mailto:cschutz@okumc.org).

View the library's full resource list at [www.okumc.org/dvd\\_library](http://www.okumc.org/dvd_library).

## OCU offers elementary teacher certification

For more than 100 years, Oklahoma City University has enriched our state through sending out pastors, youth workers, attorneys, business leaders, and a host of other professionals. Among them are the quality educators teaching in schools large and small.

They touch the lives of countless students each day.

To further expand the ranks of excellent teachers, OCU recently added a Master of Arts program in teaching elementary education. This set of courses provides an opportunity for a person who already has a bachelor's degree in another subject to become a certified teacher in elementary schools.

This is the only master's degree program in Oklahoma that allows candidates to earn certification in one year.

There are two facets: certification and master's work.

- The certification portion consists of 30 hours of coursework and field experience, spanning summer, fall, and spring sessions, achieving certification at the end of the spring session.

- The master's portion consists of two courses taken during a second academic year, while certified candidates are teaching.

Elizabeth Willner, director of teacher education, described the ideal students for this new program: dedicated, intelligent adults who care about elementary-age children.

"If you're teaching a children's Sunday School class and you can't wait for it to begin, or if you live for the start of Vacation Bible School, you may be just the type of



**Ana Raygoza leads her first-grade class in an English lesson at Oklahoma City's Westwood Elementary School. She earned a bachelor of science degree from OCU in 2009.**

person we're looking for in this program."

Our state faces a shortage of about 1,000 elementary-school teachers. This is OCU's way of offering a quality education at an accelerated pace that can help address this vital need.

You may contact Dr. Willner at 405-208-5935 or [ewillner@okcu.edu](mailto:ewillner@okcu.edu) to learn more about the Master of Arts in Teaching.

She also enjoys speaking to church and community groups and welcomes invitations to share her insights and messages of hope.

## Senior papers examine local-church ministry

Each senior in OCU's Wimberly School of Religion writes an extensive research paper as part of the graduation requirements. An annual spring term highlight is when they share the results of their work.

Eleven students gave presentations the evening of Feb. 12 in the Watson Lounge of the Chapel. Their topics ranged from philosophical to practical.

Some explored ministry in The United Methodist Church or with children and youth, as expressed in these titles.

- *Worship in the United Methodist Tradition*
- *Sacred Worth: A United Methodist Approach to Interfaith Cooperation*
- *Social Media and Technology in Youth Ministry*
- *Wonderfully Made: Special Needs Inclusion in the Church*
- *Raising Children and Youth in the Church to be Resilient, Drug-free, and Loved*
- *Incarceration Prevention for Children with Incarcerated Parents and the Church's Contribution*

Following graduation this spring, some of the students have plans for graduate study, others for seminary, while others plan to immediately serve the local church in ministry.

We celebrate these young people and their dedication to making a difference in the Church and the world.



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

# Discovering your purpose

"Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify, your name." (John 12:27-28, NIV)

By **BISHOP ROBERT HAYES JR.**

A customer walked into a sporting goods store and asked for a compass. The clerk responded, "Sir, do you want the kind of compass that takes you places, or do you want the one that only makes circles?"

In our culture, perhaps one of the greatest tragedies is that so many people live without a purpose. They move aimlessly through their days. Their compass for living only leads them around in circles.

A day should come in your life when you ask yourself: What is my purpose? Why am I here? What does God want me to do with my life?

For some people, those questions may

surface early in life. But those inquiries may not ever occur to others.

Yet they are so important.

I believe you can use wisely this sacred season of Lent. Seek your purpose and you will find a better and more holy way to live.

The Bible makes it clear that, as young as 12, Jesus knew what direction his life was going to take. The second chapter of Luke describes this young Jesus astonishing the scribes and elders at the temple. Unknown by his parents, he had remained behind at the temple after a religious festival. When his parents found him and asked why he stayed, Jesus replied, "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?"

Throughout his life — his baptism, facing temptations in the wilderness, and all the stages of his ministry — Jesus stayed on course, steady in his purpose.

He never wavered ... until the shadow of the cross loomed larger and larger.

Yes, even our Lord had to reassess his purpose in that moment.

I know it's hard for us to envision Jesus then, wrestling in the privacy of his own soul. We forget that he had a heart as human as our own; he had to fight what we must fight, and he had to use the same weapons we are offered.

No one wants to die. Yet Jesus knew

death was closing upon him, and he came to a soul-searing moment in the garden when he had to choose a direction. His purpose had been so clear previously.

Yet this time we find that rare scene where Jesus is talking aloud to himself.

"My soul is troubled," he declares, as recorded in John's Gospel, "and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'?"

"No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name."

This honorable man knows that he is going to die. Even in his distress, Jesus commits himself to God's plan for him. Holding nothing back, he asks only that God will stoop to use him for God's glory. And having done so, he is content to leave all things in the hands of his Father.

Jesus says, "Not my will, but Thy will be done," according to Luke's Gospel.

Our Savior struggled. But that greatest purpose, which saved you and me, was won because his faith and trust in God would not permit him to lose direction.

Finding purpose in life is not an easy thing to achieve. Our natural inclination is to govern our own lives, thinking we can do the best job of charting our course. But it is God who truly can give your life meaning.

Somehow you must find the capacity to do as Jesus did.

Instead of praying that God will allow you to escape what threatens or troubles you, ask that God will use your troubles for God's purposes, so others will believe.

What an amazing concept Jesus modeled for you and me! God can take our problems, shortcomings, and fears and USE them to glorify His name!

Praise God! Here is the very heart and soul of our faith! This is our purpose as Christians, inspiring us, enabling us to reach toward living fully, and empowering us to overcome all that confronts us.

Robert Browning wrote, "We are His glory; and if we be glorious, is not the thing achieved?"

On your Lenten journey, it is my prayer that you will discover every calling that serves God's purpose is holy. Healing, teaching, feeding the hungry, clearing garbage, policing a city, guiding a Scout troop, spending your life to serve others ... you have been created by God for a purpose.

God has placed you here for a reason!

If you have not yet discovered that direction for your life, look within yourself during this Lenten season and pray that God will reveal to you that compass point. And if you already know God's purpose for you, pray that God's name will be glorified through your life.



**Bishop Hayes**

## Employment

**Youth Minister:** Bristow UMC. Part-time. Contact Katie Hill, [pastorkatiehill@gmail.com](mailto:pastorkatiehill@gmail.com), 918-367-3227.

**Youth Director:** Sand Springs UMC. Half-time. Send resume to Pastor, P.O. Box 336, Sand Springs, OK 74063, or [dtabberer@sandspringsumc.org](mailto:dtabberer@sandspringsumc.org).

**Youth Director:** Sayre-First UMC. Full-time. Contact Mike Blevins, 580-928-2100, [mikeblevins@cableone.net](mailto:mikeblevins@cableone.net).

**Administrative Assistant:** Sapulpa-First UMC. Full-time. Submit resume by fax to 918-227-0646 or by email to [allen@sapulpaumc.org](mailto:allen@sapulpaumc.org).

**Youth Director:** Sapulpa-First. Part-time. Email resume to [jeanne@sapulpaumc.org](mailto:jeanne@sapulpaumc.org) or fax to 918-227-0646.

**Director of Discipleship:** Marlow-First UMC. Full-time. Send resume and cover letter to P.O. Box 247, Marlow, OK 73055; email to [mbscraper@clergy.okumc.org](mailto:mbscraper@clergy.okumc.org); or call 580-658-2765.

**Administrative Assistant:** Douglas Boulevard UMC in Midwest City. 20 hours per week. Send cover letter and resume to [pastor@dbumc.com](mailto:pastor@dbumc.com).

**Director of Music Ministries/Worship Leader:** OKC-First Church. Full-time. Email Pastor Mark McAdow at [SPRC@FirstChurchOKC.com](mailto:SPRC@FirstChurchOKC.com).

**Internship:** OKC-Church of the Servant. Internship runs through May and may be extended through summer. Email Sang Nguyen, [snguyen@churchoftheservant.com](mailto:snguyen@churchoftheservant.com).

**Secretary of Discipleship:** Edmond-First UMC. 25 hours per week. **Technology Coordinator:** 25 hours per week. Email Sam Powers at [sam@fumcedmond.org](mailto:sam@fumcedmond.org).

**Director of Children's Ministry:** Owasso-First UMC. Full-time. Send resume to Jim Cinocca at 13800 E. 106 St. N., Owasso, OK 74055; email [jimcinocca@fumcowasso.org](mailto:jimcinocca@fumcowasso.org); or call 918-272-5731.

**Business Manager:** Moore-First UMC. 30 hours per week. Send resume and cover letter to SPPRC at 201 W. Main St., Moore, OK 73160; email [info@moorechurch.com](mailto:info@moorechurch.com).

**Youth Ministry Director:** Fort Smith (Arkansas) First UMC. Email Robert Cloninger at [rcloninger@fsfumc.org](mailto:rcloninger@fsfumc.org).

**Youth Director:** Fairview-First UMC. Full-time. Send resume to church, P.O. Box 457, Fairview, OK 73737; [fairviewumc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fairviewumc@sbcglobal.net); or [melissa.mainord@att.net](mailto:melissa.mainord@att.net).

**Campus Minister:** University of Central Oklahoma. Full-time. Contact Derrek Belase at [derrekbelase@yahoo.com](mailto:derrekbelase@yahoo.com).

## Birth

Thacher Reed Collins was born Feb. 12, 2015. He is the son of Cassie Wheeler-Collins and Rev. Barry Collins, pastor at Fort Gibson UMC.

## Appointment

Lisa Hines, to Turley and Tulsa-Boston Avenue associate, full-time; from Turley, part-time; effective Feb. 1.

**YOU ARE INVITED!**

## Friends of Children Banquet

Friday, April 17, 2015

6:30 p.m.

Please join us as we celebrate the mission, work, and impact of Oklahoma United Methodist Circle of Care.

### Two Locations:

Oklahoma City  
Quail Creek Country Club

Tulsa  
Southern Hills Marriott

*The presentation will be the same in both cities.*

*Using telecommunications technology, Circle of Care's supporters across the state will be united on this evening of celebration and hope. The program will include testimonies from clients and 2014 ministry highlights!*

Sponsorship opportunities: call 405-530-2081

- **Statewide Sponsor**  
\$10,000 – Two tables (8 seats each)  
*Name printed in both programs, program mention, and invitation to pre-event reception*
- **Table Sponsor**  
\$1,000 – One table (8 seats)  
*Name printed in local program, and program mention*
- **Individual Dinner Reservation**  
\$50 per person



**RSVP at:**  
[FOC.circleofcare.org](http://FOC.circleofcare.org)  
or 405-530-2081



From the Oklahoma Conference Archives

In this 1889 photo showing First Methodist Church of Oklahoma City (Methodist Episcopal (North) denomination), one of the men pictured is A.G. Murray, its first minister.

## On the record

### Couple collects McFarlin memories for oral history project

By CHRIS SCHUTZ

Self-described historians Joe and Beverly Sanders are doing their part to record the history of their church, McFarlin United Methodist in Norman, through the spoken memories of others.

The Sanderses are participating in an oral history project of the Commission on Archives & History of the Oklahoma Conference.

For archival purposes, the Commission is collecting video interviews of Oklahoma United Methodists discussing their churches' history, said Jerry Gill, who is helping coordinate the project.

The Sanderses are dedicated to compiling a record of McFarlin memories, said Joe Sanders. He operates the video camera while his wife asks the questions.

They are longtime members of McFarlin UMC, and even wrote the book "With God's Help: Building the McFarlin Church." It was self-published by the church.

The church was founded before the Land Run of 1889.

Part of the current building dates to 1924, Joe said. It was financed by rancher and feed store operator Robert M. McFarlin. Oil was discovered on land that he owned near Holdenville. Income from drilling gave the Norman Methodist the means to support building a church in memory of his baby son, who died of typhoid fever. McFarlin's son, also named Robert, is buried in Norman's IOOF cemetery.

Current McFarlin UMC members will be able to tell the story of a \$6 million addition to the east side of the church, completed in 2001 after a number of delays, Joe said.

The Sanderses have completed about 20 recordings and several more are ready for processing, said Beverly, a retired math teacher.

"It's so important we get these done before people die," said Joe, a military retiree.

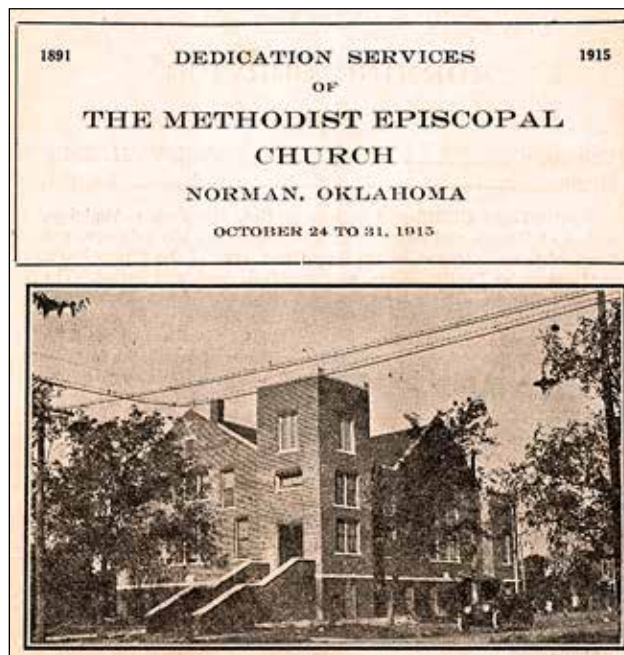
Beverly said she's learned that people have varying attitudes about being interviewed. "Either they're all for it, or they're people who simply do not want to talk about themselves." Others are shy about talking into a microphone and try to recommend someone else to interview.

In some cases, interviews go better if a husband and wife are filmed together and are able to prompt one another about details, she said.

In the course of making these video recordings, she's noticed, "Don't have a pre-formed expectation of what you're going to learn in the interview."

Dr. Gill said the Commission's oral history project will help churches document historical milestones and anniversaries, promote their missions and ministries, and publicize church initiatives.

The Commission has video equipment for loan to United Methodists who are inter-



A 1915 bulletin cover shows the Methodist Episcopal Church-South in Norman. A major renovation was celebrated on that date. The church later was renamed McFarlin Memorial.

ested in recording interviews.

The recordings will be placed in the Conference archives, housed in the Dulaney-Brown Library at Oklahoma City University, and at the Oklahoma History Center.

"It's part of our effort to tell our Methodist story," said Gill, who serves on the Commission on Archives & History and has a doctorate in history. A member of Stillwater-First, he helped that church secure recognition as UM Historic Site No. 489.

## Small youth group, 15,000 good deeds

What's the power of a single hug from a stranger? Does the good deed stay with the recipient all day? Will the recipient in turn perform a good deed for someone else?

That's what youths at Minnehaha United Methodist Church in Minneapolis, Minn., asked each other before setting a goal to complete 15,000 good deeds by 2015.

Their own good deeds counted, as did the good deeds of those who benefited from their efforts and then decided to join them.

Each January, members of the church's Confirmation group — sixth- through 10th-graders — decide on a project they'd like to work on for the year.

At the beginning of 2014, they unanimously decided on 15,000 good deeds.

"It's a chain reaction," youth group member Kate Graham said. "If you make one person happy, they will make other people happy. We were more aware of our actions when we were doing the project."

The first good deed by the group, totaling eight to 12 youths, was to give hugs to anyone in the congregation who wanted one after worship one Sunday — people the youths knew well and those they didn't really know at all.

"We did different things to push us outside of our comfort zones," said Leilani Thompson, coordinator of youth ministries.

A favorite good deed for many of the youths was making sandwiches for the 363 Days Food Program, a local nonprofit that provides sandwiches to the homeless and hungry.

"I really enjoyed making sandwiches, even with my broken arm," said youth group member Calvin Mattson. What he learned from the good deeds project: "Don't give up."

Other good deeds included packing meals through *Feed My Starving Children*, washing dishes after a church service, babysitting at church special events, playing games with special-needs students at school during breaks, holding doors open for students at school, and buying coffee for strangers at Starbucks.

Their efforts paid off. They reached the 15,000 mark in early December and decided to keep going. As of early February, they had completed more than 19,400 good deeds.

The youth worked together to figure out how the good deeds would be counted and how to invite others in the church and community to participate. They put a large glass jar in the church narthex, where anyone could report his or her good deeds each month. They communicated to the congregation by kicking off the project with a video introduction, a website, and updates via social media and in worship services throughout the year.

The students chronicled their work in a video and sent it to "The Ellen DeGeneres Show" on ABC.

Even with no budget, the youth figured out how to positively impact their community in a big way.

— from the Minnesota Conference

### Know more:

- For information on the oral history project or on equipment check-out, contact Conference archivist Christina Wolf, [cwolf@okcu.edu](mailto:cwolf@okcu.edu) or 405-208-5919, or a member of the Commission. The website is [www.okumc.org/archives\\_history](http://www.okumc.org/archives_history).



# New People, New Places

Sketches on this page introduce the 24 churches/entities that received *New People New Places* grant awards.

This Oklahoma Conference grant program, in its first year, was born of great desire to draw more people to God, welcoming them into United Methodist local church life, the central setting for disciple-making.

The NPNP budget, \$700,000, is supported by giving to Apportionment Line Item 458 on the Conference Contribution Form.

## **"Spot 31" — \$55,000**

St. Matthew's UMC, Tulsa

At-risk children who live in the neighborhood of Tulsa-St. Matthew's began showing up spontaneously after school. First 30, then 50, and now often 100 children arrive. At Spot 31, they learn to be disciples of Jesus Christ through this exciting new mission outpost.

## **"HomeGroup Ministry" — \$3,250**

First UMC, Moore

Using a deeply Wesleyan model of growing as disciples through home groups, all participants in this already successful ministry at Moore-First are challenged to invite others who are not participating in a church into their groups.

## **"International Ministry Multipurpose Building" — \$150,000**

Edmond Chinese International UMC

Chinese and other international students, many in the United States for the first time and many with no prior experience of Christianity, find a welcome at this young, energetic church. Edmond Chinese International UMC has a well-defined plan for making disciples of Jesus Christ. With a rapidly growing number of participants, the current church facility is being used at maximum capacity. There are young adults and children of varied nationalities eager for opportunities to become a part of this fellowship and study to become disciples, but, much like Mary and Joseph, there is simply no more room!

## **"Runner Girls" — \$1,970**

Wright City UMC

Girls ages 9-18 in this small southeastern town grow mentally, emotionally, socially, and spiritually by running with their mentors. The pastor, who also is a runner, has created a small book that teaches church members how to grow as disciples and how to mentor young disciples one-on-one. This program could be replicated in many other places.

## **"The Salt" — \$100,000**

(formerly St. John's UMC, Oklahoma City)

Starting by connecting with third graders and their families in the church's neighborhood, families that are multicultural, bilingual, and multi-generational are becoming disciples of Jesus Christ through this missional church. The Salt has a specific plan for discipleship, measurable goals, and a timeline for becoming self-sustaining in five years.

## **"United Methodist Motorcycle Association" — \$32,000**

Christ UMC, Tulsa

Motorcycle riders attending rallies and other events are the "new people" who experience worship, study, and discipleship through this ministry.

## **"Kings and Queens Ministry" — \$20,000**

St. Mark's UMC, Bethany

Children younger than 18 who have been diagnosed with physical or cognitive/intellectual disabilities grow as disciples of Jesus Christ through the Kings and Queens Ministry at Bethany-St. Mark's.

## **"Wesley Internship" — \$35,000**

Wesley Foundation, University of Oklahoma, Norman

After graduation from college, seven young adults will be trained as interns who will learn to lead in various areas. This project is modeled on the successful internship program of the Wesley Foundation at the University of Georgia.

## **"Shaped by God's Mission" — \$3,000**

Young Adult Mission & Service, Oklahoma Conference

Many young people first learn discipleship through "doing." An experience of serving in God's mission helps them become disciples who then invite others to join future mission groups. By training these leaders we not only serve others in need, but help make disciples of the servants themselves.

## **"Women's and Children's Outreach" — \$20,000**

OU Chinese Fellowship, Norman

Spouses and children of Chinese students at OU, many of them new Christians, receive assistance with childcare, medical care, and tutoring in English, in addition to worship and discipleship.

## **"Alpha Course" — \$2,000**

Oak Park UMC, Bartlesville

Younger professionals, ages 30 to 50, are invited to participate in the Alpha course at a downtown restaurant.

## **"Toy Makers of Hugo" — \$10,000**

(formerly Hugo-First and Hugo-Wesley UMCs)

People from two merging Hugo churches and the community have all come together to create wooden toys to give and share as a ministry. Even more than the finished products, intentional discipleship comes through the work of creating the toys together. The involvement and commitment from those both inside and outside the church show this to be a connected, effective ministry.

## **"Going Out, Inviting In" — \$34,850**

Stroud UMC

New people and new businesses moving into Stroud will be invited into a life of discipleship.

## **"Neighbor Dinners" — \$7,000**

St. Paul's UMC, Lawton

Unchurched people in Lawton find a low-key, non-threatening invitation to dinner and worship outside the walls of St. Paul's UMC in this partnership between the church and the Lawton Food Bank.

## **"Bar Church" — \$12,695**

St. Paul's UMC, Tulsa

Young adults who meet at the Full Moon Café will learn about faith and participate in local mission through the ministry of Tulsa-St. Paul's.

## **"International & Intercultural Ministry Experience" — \$4,000**

Wesley Foundation, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater

International and intercultural families connected to OSU are offered religious resources through this grant.

## **"Recovering Ministries" — \$25,000**

Chapel Hill UMC, Oklahoma City

Through one-on-one counseling, Bible studies, and ongoing classes, women released from prison or drug rehabilitation centers form healthy relationships that help them discover their purpose and calling as disciples of Jesus Christ.

## **"PowerHouse After-School Ministry" — \$25,350**

Durant UMC: Caddo and Durant campuses

Youth and children in both towns grow together as disciples in this after-school program that connects multiple ministry sites and resources, in a way that could be replicated in other places.

## **"Outreach to Families" — \$6,400**

Living Water UMC, Glenpool

People of all ages in the Glenpool area can grow as disciples of Jesus Christ if they discover this new-church start, Living Water. This grant will help the new church expand its outreach through specific parenting and financial classes.

## **"Daily Bread" — \$5,000**

Penn Avenue Redemption UMC, Oklahoma City

Inmates and their families worship each week at OKC-Penn Avenue. This grant will help provide a meal and fellowship prior to the worship services.

## **"Children's Ministry" — \$23,000**

CrossTimbers UMC, Moore

Children attending a new elementary school in Moore who desire to participate in this new church's burgeoning program of discipleship don't have enough space to meet, nor enough adult leaders. These funds will expand CrossTimber's capacity to reach out to non-religious and nominally religious young families and begin new discipleship programming to connect those young families into the life of the church.

## **"Ice Angels' Mobile Commissary for the Homeless" — \$44,650**

Epworth UMC, Oklahoma City

Homeless people in central Oklahoma City receive water, food, and clean clothes in exchange for their dirty ones through this mobile ministry of OKC-Epworth.

## **"U - So You Think You're an Adult?" — \$5,000**

Village UMC, greater Oklahoma City area

Young adults living in The Village who find themselves without a support system, to help them meet needs such as basic home repairs, car maintenance, cooking, parenting, and finances, can find supportive new neighbors at The Village UMC.

## **"Paint and Pray" — \$4,500**

Wesley UMC, Oklahoma City

People with a passion for art learn about God and translate it to canvas.

**It's now time** for your church group to explore ideas to reach new people in 2016.

- On April 11, attend a seminar or join a webinar on how to apply for grants.
- Submit your project application online between early June and Aug. 31.
- Find out more at [www.okumc.org](http://www.okumc.org).



## Colleges retreat for spiritual study

Students and directors from six of Oklahoma's campus ministries traveled to Kansas for the All-Wesley Retreat, a jurisdiction-wide event Feb. 13-15. University of Oklahoma freshman Steven Carlisle, at left, draws during a guided meditation and prayer time. Below, Communion includes chocolate candy. A speaker quoted the movie character "Forrest Gump," whose box of assorted chocolates was an analogy for life's unpredictability. A total of 130 people, from 10 Wesley Foundations in four states, attended the retreat at Camp Horizon, Arkansas City, Kan. The 70 Oklahomans represented OU, East Central University, Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College, Northeastern State University, and the University of Central Oklahoma.

Photos by Nathan Harkins, OU senior



## The global church

**Book of Discipline** — What are the essentials that bind all United Methodists, and what can be adapted for use outside the United States?

General Conference delegates in 2012 assigned the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters to assist in developing a truly global *Book of Discipline*.

The international committee met recently in Mozambique.

The central conferences are seven church regions in Africa, Europe, and the Philippines. But unlike their counterparts — the five U.S. jurisdictions — central conferences have authority to make "such changes and adaptations" to the *Discipline* as missional needs and differing legal contexts require.

"Many parts of the *Book of Discipline* are not applicable to churches in different nations, different languages, under different state constitutions and legal systems," said Wilfried Nausner, a committee member and district superintendent in Macedonia and Albania. (Feb. 16, UMNS)

**Superhero status** — Imagine No Malaria, a UM initiative to prevent and treat malaria, received a Superhero Award from the Rotarians Action Group on Malaria. The award was made in Geneva, Switzerland, at the annual meeting of the Alliance for Malaria Prevention, which is a coalition of more than 40 partners.

To date, Imagine No Malaria has raised 86 percent of its goal. United Methodists seek to achieve the \$75 million goal before the 2016 General Conference. (Feb. 24, UMNS)

**One Great Hour of Sharing** — Resources for this Special Sunday, March 15, are at [www.umcsgiving.org](http://www.umcsgiving.org). The United Methodist Committee on Relief ministers in more than 80 countries. (Feb. 23, UMNS)

**Aid worker mourned** — Kayla Mueller, age 26, died 6,000 miles from her Arizona home, killed as she followed her call to offer humanitarian aid in Syria.

Friends and family say she was walking the path she believed God set for her. "She saw the suffering before her and tried to respond," said Kathleen Day, who was Mueller's campus minister at Northern Arizona University.

Mueller's death was confirmed Feb. 10. She was captured in August 2013 by the Islamic State. (Feb. 16, UMNS)

**Severe winter** — Union UMC in Boston had a dilemma. A snow emergency parking ban and snow piled as high as the stained-glass windows made it clear that worship Feb. 15 would be difficult, if not impossible. So the congregation logged in at FreeConferenceCall.com for about 23 minutes of praising God together.

Jay Williams, Union's lead pastor, said Boston had 95.7 inches of snow as of Feb. 16.

The idea for worship via conference call first arose two years ago, "because we were in the same predicament," he said. With more notice this year, 75 people took part in the call.

**Why not?** When James Karpen offered background about the United Methodist Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew to performers of its new resident theater company, he described it as the church of "why not."

In some churches, he said, people suggest trying something new and others respond with all the reasons why it can't be done. "My experience here was the opposite," he told them.

So, when Theatre 167 created a play about its new home on Manhattan's Upper West Side, the title became: "The Church of Why Not." (Feb. 18, UMNS)

# Ohio clergy swap pulpits

## Human Relations Day action addresses racial tensions

Thirty UM clergy in the greater Cincinnati area of Ohio swapped pulpits to promote diversity and spark dialogue on Jan. 18, Human Relations Day — one of six special Sundays in the Church.

The next day was national Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

The pulpit swap was just one outcome of *Circles of Grace* conversations taking place across that district of the West Ohio Conference.

*Circles of Grace* was birthed from an invitation by West Ohio Bishop Gregory Palmer for congregations to engage the broken chaos of our world with the love of Jesus Christ. In a letter to constituents, the bishop asserted that church members should gather for in-depth, substantive conversations about the things that divide us as United Methodists.

After controversial grand jury decisions not to indict police officers in the U.S. deaths of African-American men Michael Brown and Eric Garner, preachers in the Ohio River Valley District noticed polarized responses in their congregations.

They began to meet regularly to discuss the developing tension.

One African-American pastor in the district reported harassment from another driver on his way to one of the meetings. Another, whose congregation includes police officers and public servants, shared how those congregants felt misjudged by news reporting.

The pulpit swap grew out of recognition that this tension provided an opportunity for growth and transformation.

Each guest preacher shared a message about the ministry of reconciliation. An opening video, titled "How Long," showed images of the U.S. civil-rights movement juxtaposed with images of protests in Ferguson, Mo.

The guest preachers asked listeners to consider images with common threads: African-American parents worrying that their children might lose their lives; police officers' spouses nervously waiting for them to come home.

The preachers asked the congregants to imagine a line with numbers 1 through 10, representing polarized perspectives between police support and police criticism. Then they asked:

- What number would you identify with along the line?
- For every position on the number line, could you name a person with that viewpoint in your circle of influence?

Also, a series of four *Circles of Grace* training sessions for laity and clergy has begun, led by diversity specialists.

— from "Faith in Action," Feb. 23, General Board of Church and Society

## Passages

**MONTGOMERY** — Rev. Reed Lane Montgomery, 79, of Oklahoma City died Feb. 6, 2015.

He was a retired Local Pastor who served churches in Waurika and Red Rock.

Survivors include his wife Jane and sons Robin and Ryan.

Service was Feb. 14 at Mayflower Congregational Church, Oklahoma City.

**Alene Crogan**, 74, of Pryor died Feb. 6, 2015. She was the mother of Rev. John Crogan, pastor at Hulbert UMC, and mother-in-law of Rev. Stephanie Crogan, pastor at Okay UMC.

**One hope for the pulpit swap was that it would help people of varied perspectives find common ground.**

## Ministry to May 2013 tornado survivors

# Disaster response cases drop to fewer than 500 families

Workload is reduced, but the Church's disaster response continues after the deadly May 2013 storms in the state's central region. United Methodists vow to serve "until recovery is complete" after disasters.

The shrinking list of needs indicates we are closing on that goal in Oklahoma.

Among 4,000-plus family units impacted by the tornadoes, 450 to 500 cases remain open, according to Kevin Walker of Moore.

He is a project manager for the Oklahoma Conference's UM Disaster Response ministry and currently directs volunteer and contractor deployments.

"Any one particular recovery plan for a homeowner may take months and even years to complete," Walker said. "This can be demanding mentally and physically on the staff and victims. We hit delays or discover unseen damage."

One Volunteer Reception Center, in Moore, remains in service. Centers at El Reno and Shawnee have closed.

Today more construction professionals are in the field, and fewer volunteer teams. The caseload has declined for trained case managers who assist people one-on-one.

Walker said an outstanding collaborative effort, led by five major nonprofit groups, certainly has benefited the recovery.

This collective Oklahoma Disaster Recovery Project (ODRP) "allows things to be

**Ashley Brandt provided statistics about the generosity poured out by people and groups for the tornado survivors. She is volunteer logistics coordinator for ODRP.**

**That collaborative reported 3,298 volunteers have deployed through the Oklahoma Conference's UM Disaster Response ministry since ODRP opened in September 2013.**

**Brandt reported work from January 2014 to Feb. 24, 2015:**

- **Total volunteer teams: 92.**  
**Total volunteers: 1,344.**
- **Total projects: 656.**
- **United Methodist teams: 38.**  
**UM volunteers: 546.**
- **Oklahoma UM teams: six.**  
**Volunteers: 92.**
- **Others: 28 Presbyterian teams and 26 groups from colleges and both faith-based and nonprofit service organizations such as New York Says Thank You.**

more seamless, working more efficiently," Walker said. Groups desiring to help "are not overrunning one another" in the field.

He also noted that not all needs involve construction. Some people receive counsel-



© Photo by Mike DuBose, UMNS

**Members of a volunteer team remove concrete rubble from the home of Ronald Samaniego. From left: Jennifer Morgan, Mel Rogers, and Stephanie Birdwell deployed through Moore-First in late May 2013.**

ing; some families need items such as cars and specific clothes.

A year ago, Walker said, at least one volunteer team was on site every week, and school Spring Breaks in March 2013 brought multiple teams per week. Currently, no teams are scheduled on some weeks.

"In the end, forging a relationship and restoring home and life to what it was before the storms make the long days and countless hours of this wonderful ministry worth it," Walker said.

— Holly McCray

## Iowa volunteer learns to trust

By **LYNAE TOOM**  
Iowa UM volunteer

Going into the week, I was broken almost beyond repair, or so I thought. The day we got to Oklahoma it snowed and snowed, then snowed some more. We were not able to work, which did not help my attitude.

I remember thinking: Really, God? Here we all are, willing to do Your work, and You make us stay in our host church?

That was the beginning of a gut-wrenching, eye-opening week.

Because of things in my past, I had become scared of and hardened to love. But God had big plans for breaking my walls down during my week in Oklahoma.

While snowbound at the church, I found out that a girl from our group was struggling with some of the same experiences I was. That first day and a half we spent talking, and I helped her make some sense of her situation. That made me realize that I could help people with my testimony. I did not suffer for nothing. The Lord had big plans for my life: helping those who have suffered the same trials as me.

God had taken a sledgehammer and broken down part of the wall around my heart.

The Lord continued to smash that wall. The second day we met our homeowner. She invited our team in. She was a wreck — emotionally, spiritually, physically — she had lost everything.

After listening for about an hour, we got to work.

Over the next few days, we each took turns (working) on her roof and being with her in the house. She talked to us about our lives, our spiritual walks — and kept reminding us how blessed she was that we were there.

My homeowner allowed God to use her to speak to me, and because of that I have developed a love of serving this broken world, whether domestic or abroad. I have since been able not only to allow God to love me, but also to allow others to love me, as well as allowing myself to love others.

I had been a Christian for a few years, but I did not really know why. After that last night in Oklahoma, I knew God was going to use my trials for His glory. However, in order to allow Him to use me, I had to give Him ALL of me; I had to trust Him with my heart.

I am now a senior in college. I am looking into a career in nonprofit work, focusing on inner-city missions. Now that I have been freed from my bondage and have found true love, all I want to do forever is love.

*Lynae Toom attends Morningside College, Sioux City, Iowa, and her home church is Pella (Iowa) United Methodist Church.*



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# Three ways we are strengthening ministry in OK



## ARISE SEMINAR

Our next ARISE seminar is scheduled for **Thursday, March 26**, at the Foundation office, 4201 N. Classen Blvd.

**ARISE consists of four areas: Prayer, Purpose, People, and Plans.** The first three are presented in a one-day seminar. Senior pastors and key laity (influencers) are invited to attend and carry the ARISE message back to your church. We will then work with your leaders in a supporting role to make the most of this opportunity. At a later date, we are available to consult with the local church on topics under the Plans section.

Contact Mike at [mwiley@okumf.org](mailto:mwiley@okumf.org) or 800-259-6863 for more information or go to [www.okumf.org/ARISE](http://www.okumf.org/ARISE) to register. There is no cost, but seating is limited. Lunch will be provided.



## REMEMBER YOUR CHURCH

When planning your estate, it is so important for the future of our Church to be a good steward of that which God has provided you. This means completing a written estate plan. How you share your estate speaks volumes about your values and your concerns for loved ones.

For more information about planning your estate, go to [okumfgift.org](http://okumfgift.org) or call David Battles at 800-259-6863. Remember your church when planning your estate!

## NOTHING BUT NETS NIGHT

With the Oklahoma City Thunder, Thunder Cares organization, and NothingButNets, you have the chance to attend a Thunder game and save lives at the same time — each ticket buys a life-saving net to prevent malaria!

Get your tickets for the April 10 game against the Sacramento Kings. Contact Barbara Gayle at [bgayle@okumf.org](mailto:bgayle@okumf.org) or 800-259-6863.

Don't pass up this simple chance to save the life of a family in need — reserve your spot today!



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## Regional training equips local officers

By HOLLY MCCRAY

Recent laity training targeted key officer roles in every church, such as finance chairpersons and local lay delegates to Annual Conference.

Among the learning opportunities were classes in Stillwater and McAlester Districts in early January, as well as a Feb. 7 state summit sponsored by the Conference Board of Laity.

Conference Lay Leader Chuck Stewart of Stilwell said the Board felt the summit would be helpful because Re-Ignite Workshops were not scheduled.

*'Even for the seasoned veteran, processes change.'*

— Shannon Lemmons

According to Conference Connectional Ministries Director Craig Stinson, Re-Ignite was set aside this year because of extra work by leadership at all levels on the missional realignment of districts.

Lisa Hefner, a member of Prague UMC, found value at both the "I Am Laity" Summit and the Stillwater event. She is chairperson of small groups at her church.

"We can all be educated, bring it back to our church, incorporate it, and get (people) involved," she said. "The bishop has an agenda. We all need to be on the same page."

She collected a Finance Committee to-do calendar and a relevant website address, and she gained personal insight through a personality assessment tool.

From the Cokesbury book table, she purchased "The Christ Walk." That spurred her to coach



From churches across Stillwater District, laypeople circle up for officer training during the evening of Jan. 8 at Stillwater-First UMC. Shown leading is Superintendent Tish Malloy.

several Prague members during Lent to pray and walk 1.6 miles daily — "the distance from Nazareth to Jerusalem," she said.

Across years, Hefner has attended lots of United Methodist training. She liked that the recent events had longer classes and officer-specific topics.

In Stillwater, she learned about church finances from Shannon Lemmons, who has an ac-

counting degree and is administrative assistant for the Enid District. Lemmons also presented at McAlester; she often is tapped to lead training events.

"Something we have to remember is there is the potential for new officers every single year, and they need to be trained and encouraged to ask questions," Lemmons said. "Even for the seasoned veteran, processes change."

In the Enid District, attendance more than doubled when laity training was held on weekday evenings instead of weekends, she noted.

Lemmons has created a remarkable training manual for treasurers and others who manage a church's money. The section "A Year in the Life of a Finance Committee" can be viewed and downloaded at [www.okumc.org](http://www.okumc.org).