



On Easter Sunday 2014, Tulsa-Asbury UMC proclaims Christ's resurrection through massive digital images on its walls. The scene is centered by a symbolic empty tomb.

Photo provided by Asbury UMC

## Asbury creates digital masterpieces for worship

By **JOSEPH HARRIS**  
Director of Communications

Averaging more than 2,700 people in Sunday services, Asbury UMC in Tulsa is the Conference's largest worshipping congregation. When I discovered Asbury was making radical changes in those services, I decided to go and find out why this growing and successful church is risking something new and different.

Asbury has spent months on sanctuary renovations and invested more than \$1 million to install an innovative multimedia system called *Environmental Projection* (EP). Its capabilities immerse your senses in profound ways.

EP is the art of visually transforming the surroundings and architecture of a space from a blank palette into a digital masterpiece.

Asbury is able to captivate and educate the people in the pews through the use of

projection technology, digitally painting the sanctuary walls with images and videos. Five projectors are utilized.

The technology stimulates the imagination and, combined with music, takes worshippers to another level. Bible imagery can be stretched across the entire front of the sanctuary!

The system also gives Asbury the ability to live stream worship to an unlimited Internet audience.

Additionally, the Tulsa church moved from five Sunday morning worship services to three: a chapel service at 8 a.m., traditional worship at 9:15 in the sanctuary, and modern worship at 11 in the sanctuary. (Previously Asbury held their modern service in a separate building, two sanctuary services, praise and worship in the fellowship hall, and the chapel service.)

When I recently attended the revisioned sanctuary services, the powerful EP imagery

heightened the experiences for me.

Massive images washed across the sanctuary walls: stained-glass windows, a crown, cross, the Communion bread and cup, a historical painting. These as well as sky scenes with moving clouds and oversize key words lifted this worshipper to a new level of participation in the gathered community.

In the traditional service, the first thing I noticed was both the full orchestra and choir on stage. Asbury has modified the stage area for more flexibility. The traditional service used the EP capabilities discreetly and strategically to enhance the music and the message delivered by Senior Pastor Tom Harrison.

The 11 o'clock service drew a younger, more multigenerational audience, packed into every seat. The enthusiastic welcome embraced everyone in the sanctuary as well as all joining in through live streaming. The EP experience in this service was often spec-

tacular, engulfing entire walls and the back of the sanctuary. A praise band led music, rather than a choir and orchestra, and you not only heard but also felt the sound, rising in glory to God. The worshippers seemed deeply engaged in everything that was happening.

Dwight Yoder, the church's executive director, said the changes came about as a result of a comprehensive study for Asbury UMC, conducted by the nationally known BARNA Christian research group. The study found that worship attendance was beginning to flatten and identified signs of members looking inward more than pushing outward to reach others.

As part of a renewed outward focus, Yoder explained, leaders wanted Asbury to be more approachable and attractive in its commitment to "developing all generations for significant lives in Christ" over personal preferences.

Projection, page 8

### Bishop's retreat

(for clergy)

'Get Their Name'

Sept. 22-23 at  
OKC-St. Luke's UMC

— Page 2

**WHAT IS YOUR PATH?**

**Call to Ministry Rally and Retreat**

**Sept. 6 at Moore-First UMC**

— Page 2

### Evangelism training

• Sept. 20 at  
Tulsa-Boston Avenue

• Oct. 18 at  
OKC-Chapel Hill UMC

Variety of workshops  
and speakers

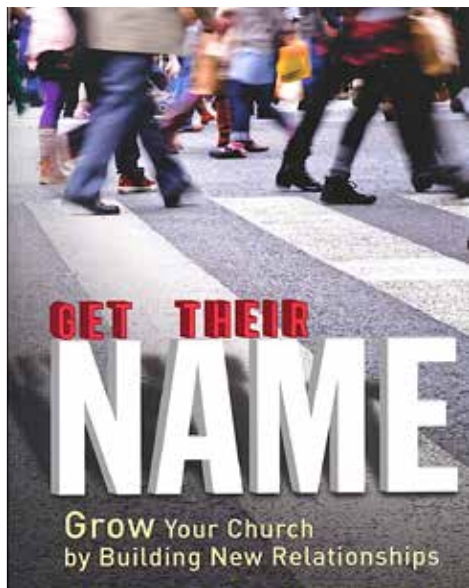
— Page 7

New People, New Places

**Grant application deadline: Sept. 15**

Any church of any size  
and any Conference agency may apply

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



Book, "Get Their Name," by Farr/Kotan/Anderson

## Bishop's Retreat

**Monday, September 22 and  
Tuesday, September 23**

**St. Luke's UMC,  
Oklahoma City**

- Presenters: Authors Bob Farr, director of Congregational Excellence, and Kay Kotan, Small Church Initiative coordinator, Missouri Conference.
- Registration fee is \$25, which includes Monday lunch, Tuesday breakfast, and all handouts.
- Event begins Monday at 8:30 a.m. and concludes Tuesday at 11:30 a.m.
- Register online: <https://okumc-reg.brapp.com/BishopsRetreat>
- A detailed schedule of events is located on the registration form or at [www.okumc.org](http://www.okumc.org).
- For more information, contact Connie Barnett at [cbarnett@okumc.org](mailto:cbarnett@okumc.org).

## Sept. 6 rally: Is God calling you?

Is God speaking to your heart? 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 answered yes to any of those questions, plan to attend the "Call to Ministry Rally and Retreat" on Sept. 6 at Moore-First UMC.

This special gathering follows a poignant altar call by Bishop Robert Hayes on May 28 during the Annual Conference ordination service. He asked if any worshippers were experiencing "an itch, a tug, a stirring." "God is trying to get your attention," the bishop said. "If you feel that pull to the altar, won't you come?"

He added, "Know that we are here to help you discover what God wants you to do." At least 20 people responded.

The Sept. 6 rally, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., will be a day of learning, inspiration, and building support groups, according to information from Chuck Nordean, Conference director of Clergy & Congregational Development. Speakers will talk about God's call in their lives.



**Superintendent George Warren, left, and Bishop Hayes kneel in prayer with young people May 28.**

The morning will include welcome and worship led by the bishop, with music by The Moore First Praise Team.

Lunch will be provided for all registered. In the afternoon, the ministry candidacy process will be explained. Group mentoring will be introduced, clergy mentors assigned, and small groups begin work.

Make reservations by 5 p.m. Sept. 1. The rally is free of charge. Contact Connie Barnett, [cbarnett@okumc.org](mailto:cbarnett@okumc.org), 405-530-2006.



**Volunteers paint a colorful U.S. map at Gatewood Elementary School.**

### Nominations open for Milhouse Award

OCU's University Church Relations Office is seeking nominations for the 2014 Bishop Paul W. Milhouse Award.

Deadline is Oct. 1 for applications to be delivered to that office.

Established in 1982, this annual award recognizes United Methodist laypeople who show outstanding leadership in the community, local church, and annual conference, in addition to being advocates for the partnership between OCU and the Church. Through their gifts of time, money, and encouragement, they increase The United Methodist Church ownership of OCU.

To make a nomination, contact Charles Neff, vice president of University Church Relations. Rev. Dr. Neff may be reached at [cneff@okcu.edu](mailto:cneff@okcu.edu) or 405-208-5060.

## OCU wrestlers support elementary school

By SILAS ALLEN  
The Oklahoman

As she took a break from spreading mulch at Gatewood Elementary School, Shilo Barrett watched her friends painting, planting flowers, and putting together playground equipment.

Barrett, 20, was one of about 300 volunteers who helped build a playground May 3 at the Oklahoma City school. She and her teammates from Oklahoma City University's wrestling team volunteered as a community service project, she said.

"They've been keeping me busy," she said.

Starting at 8:30 a.m. and working into the afternoon, the volunteers spread mulch, did landscaping work, installed benches, and built a community vegetable garden.

The playground will be open after school hours to serve as a community park, said Kristen Vails, a member of the Gatewood Elementary community advisory board. The group also hopes to build a walking track at the location, Vails said.

The playground was funded through a grant from KaBOOM!, a nonprofit that builds playgrounds in high-poverty areas, and Foresters, an international financial services company based in Toronto, Ontario. Individual and corporate donations also helped, Vails said.

Until now, Gatewood Elementary didn't have playground equipment or a park within



**College students move a mountain of surfacing material for a playground.**

a mile of the school. The volunteers transformed what had been just an open, grassy area where children played during recess.

Neighborhood parks generally serve as community gathering places, Vails said, and they encourage children to be more active. But until recently, the Gatewood neighbor-

hood didn't have such a place. Allowing residents to use the playground after school hours will help, she said.

"This will definitely fill that need," Vails said.

*(Reprinted with permission, The Oklahoman, Copyright 2014)*





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

# The joy of being called

“As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ‘Come, follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will send you out to fish for people.’ At once they left their nets and followed him.” (Matthew 4:18-20, NIV)

By BISHOP ROBERT HAYES JR.

Bill is a dear friend who, like me, enjoys memorable quotations. Since my college days, I have collected a great number of books that contain quotes ranging from the sublime to the ridiculous. So has Bill.

Every morning at 6 o’clock, Bill sends a text message with his quote of the day to me and a few other friends. Bill is my dependable automatic alarm clock, waking me with the “ping” of my cellphone, letting me know his selected verse for the day has arrived.

Many of the sayings are inspirational,



Bishop Hayes

and some keep me laughing throughout the day. He recently sent this quip by Rita Rudder: “When I eventually met Mr. Right, I had no idea that his first name was Always!” (There may be other women who agree with her!)

However, it’s his quotes about life that most challenge and encourage me.

As we quickly come upon Labor Day, a text that I received from Bill has caused me to consider our daily work. The quote, by H. Jackson Brown Jr., states: “Find a job you like and you add five days to every week.”

What an insight!

There are several ways to describe the work we do.

- Sometimes a job is called an *occupation*, which suggests that is the way we fill time.

- Some people refer to daily tasks as their *livelihood*, meaning how they earn income for living expenses.

- And when we describe what we do as *vocation*, we seldom realize the significance of that word.

Vocation reflects a Christian view of life because it means “a calling.”

When describing Jesus’ encounter with Simon Peter and Andrew, the passage in Matthew’s gospel is clear: The two brothers already had an occupation — they were fishermen. At the moment Jesus met them, they were pursuing their livelihood, casting out their net to catch fish to sell.

But when Jesus invited them to be participants in a *vocation*, they couldn’t resist that call.

I find it so intriguing that they left everything and followed Jesus in that very moment. What would entice someone who has spent years doing the one job he knew best to leave it in an instant?

Here’s why.

Fishing nets could not satisfy them; livelihood is not life. Jesus appealed to their deepest uncertainty. Those brothers yearned to be part of a movement that would link their hearts to a greater cause, wider than the sea, more appealing than catching fish.

One commentary explains it this way: “Jesus satisfied their longings. There was such an authority in his invitation to ‘come, follow me’ that these men, used to wrestling with storms in darkness, found in him a worthier manhood. His eagerness caught their youth, his certitude their loyalty, his tenderness their love; and some divine solitude in him called to the depths of their soul.”

Jesus still invites people into a trusted vocation. He links your uncertainty with your occupation or livelihood to his cause — to a calling greater and nobler than anything else you can desire.

How do you fill the time or earn your living? You may be a teacher, student, pastor, farmer, doctor, lawyer, volunteer, or a thousand other roles. When you come to

understand that your work has become a *vocation*, that’s when you offer up the best within you. You give full measure to what you are *called* to do, seeing every person as a unique creation by God, worthy of love, time, and attention.

Cecil Frances Alexander wrote poems and hymns in the 1800s. She was the wife of a parish minister in an impoverished area of northern Ireland.

She loved people. One biographer said she “went from one house to another, from one bed of sickness to another, from one sorrow to another she went, always carrying food, warm clothing, and medical supplies to the poor and sick.”

Her husband asked her to write a hymn to accompany a sermon about Andrew and Simon Peter’s call on the shore of Galilee. She wrote these words:

“Jesus calls us o’er the tumult of our life’s wild, restless sea;  
day by day His sweet voice soundeth,  
saying ‘Christian, follow me.’”

If your occupation does not have in it a sense of the Divine for you, it will always be just a job. It will never satisfy the gnawing hunger of discontent. But when you heed the voice of the One who bids you to follow Him, your work truly becomes your *calling*.

Saint Augustine wrote, “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.”

## Legacy Planning Using Real Estate – Part 2

John and Susan have property with expansive views on Mt. Crested Butte. Over the years the lot has increased in value. It is now worth \$400,000. John is 72, Susan is 70, and they are beginning to think about retirement and the need for retirement income.

They have been discussing their options with their CPA. One option was giving 25% of the property to their church prior to the sale. (See *Legacy Planning Using Real Estate – Part 1, Aug. 8 issue of Contact.*)

Another option would be to establish a Charitable Remainder Unitrust. The Unitrust is a special trust that pays income to family members. After all of the payments have been completed, the remainder is distributed to qualified charities.

Since John and Susan desire to leave a legacy to their church, this is a very attractive option. In addition, the trust bypasses capital gains tax and provides a charitable income tax deduction. If they sold the property, the capital gain would be \$360,000. By establishing the Unitrust, they would avoid the capital gains tax and receive an income tax deduction of \$170,360.

The trust would pay John and Susan 5% of the fair market value for their lifetimes. After their lifetimes, their church would receive the remainder. See *Summary of Benefits, at right.*

Contact David Battles, CPA, at 800-259-6863 or [dbattles@okumf.org](mailto:dbattles@okumf.org) to learn more about how you could benefit from a gift of real estate.

Please note: The names and images are representative of a typical donor.



### Summary of Benefits

Property Value	\$400,000
Capital Gains Tax Savings on \$360,000	\$67,680
Charitable Deduction Tax Savings on \$170,360	\$56,220*
Total Tax Savings	\$123,900*
Income to Family (20.9 years)	\$510,000
Remainder to their church	\$600,000

\*Includes only Federal income tax



THE OKLAHOMA UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION  
4201 N Classen Blvd • Oklahoma City, OK 73118  
800-259-6863 • [www.okumf.org](http://www.okumf.org)



Photos by Melissa Duncan

**Seth Love of Muldrow's Trinity UMC wrestles a section of fence. Youth Force Team Emerald, right, assembles the lumber for a ramp.**



# Youth Force wields its power

By SARAH LOBBAN  
The Oklahoman

Like most young people, Cassie Duncan looks forward to summer. But with only a few weeks left for the recent Norman High School graduate to catch her breath before she headed off to Oklahoma State University, there was much more than relaxation on her agenda.

With about 100 other youths between the ages of 11 and 18, Duncan was a member of Youth Force Cleveland County.

United Methodist Youth Force missions are held in various parts of Oklahoma throughout the summer. Duncan's church, Goodrich Memorial UMC in Norman, hosted one of the events.

Youth Force Cleveland County kids, along with adult volunteers, came from six United Methodist churches in Oklahoma and one from Texas.

Teams — called God Squads — built ramps, free of charge, at the homes of eight people who are elderly or have disabilities that make using stairs difficult or unsafe.

The work was hard, especially in the heat, but Duncan said her faith pushed her to keep going. She likened the experience to her daily jogs.

"I force myself to get up at 6 a.m.," she said. "In the middle of the run, I'm think-

*A total of 771 participants worked in six Oklahoma communities during Youth Force 2014.*

ing: why do I do this? But by the end, I'm sprinting. The sun is just coming up and I can watch it rise, and I think: this is why. At the end of the week in Youth Force, when I see how happy the people we've gotten to help are, that's the most important thing."

Duncan has participated in Youth Force every year since seventh grade.

The volunteers choose a different project every year. It can be anything from building walls inside a house, to retiling roofs, or working on floors to stabilize a home.

One of the youngest Youth Force Cleveland County participants, AJ Laizure of Norman, 12, is in seventh grade at Longfellow Middle School this fall. It was his first time in Youth Force, and he plans on doing it again next year.

"The daughter of the woman we made the ramp for said she really loved it," AJ said. "I want to keep helping like that. And I made a lot of friends this week, too."

Youth Force Cleveland County is over-

seen by Melissa Duncan, Cassie's mother. Melissa Duncan has been involved with the program since 2005. She said the one-week camp has a tremendous impact on the volunteers and the people they help.

"One of the things we like to think is that, yes, we're building part of their home, but if we've done our job, we've formed a relationship with the homeowner, and we've built something more than a ramp," Melissa Duncan said. "It's so much more than physical. It's the spiritual we want to build."

Many of the homeowners were not only in need of a ramp, she said, but also might not have the resources to pay to install it. Youth Force and churches cover the cost of building materials, and the volunteers contribute their time.

Duncan was quick to spread the credit for Youth Force's success to the community. For example, Forest Building Materials in Norman gave a discount on wood for the ramps, and Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College opened its dorms to the church group for the week, also at a low cost.

"It's a wonderful experience when it happens," she said, adding with a laugh, "but it does take an army."

*(Reprinted with permission, The Oklahoman, July 12. Copyright 2014.)*

## Opportunities

**Maintenance Supervisor:** Full-time, salaried. Canyon Camp, Hinton. Send resume to David Combs, 31600 Camp Rd., Hinton OK 73047; email [canyoncamp@okumc.org](mailto:canyoncamp@okumc.org); or call 405-542-6967.

**Intern for Youth Ministries:** Part-time. OKC-Nichols Hills UMC. Contact Pam Cottrill, 405-842-1486, [revpcottrill@gmail.com](mailto:revpcottrill@gmail.com).

**Pianist:** Pawnee-First UMC. Call 918-762-3997 or email [pawskeumc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pawskeumc@sbcglobal.net) for details.

**Operation Hope Prison Ministry Director:** Full-time. Tulsa. Description: [www.ohpm.org/user/web-storage/2014/OHPMdirector.doc](http://www.ohpm.org/user/web-storage/2014/OHPMdirector.doc). Send resume to [operationhope@ohpm.org](mailto:operationhope@ohpm.org).

**Director of Youth Ministries:** Full-time. McAlester-First UMC. Contact Matt Judkins, [mbjudkins@gmail.com](mailto:mbjudkins@gmail.com).

**Youth Director:** Part-time. Madill UMC. Contact Brett Thomasson, 580-795-3732.

**Day Care Director:** OKC-Sunny Lane UMC. Send resume to [business1011@cox.net](mailto:business1011@cox.net) or call 405-677-3347.

**Music Director:** Part-time. OKC-Lakeside UMC. Contact Randy McGuire, [lakesideumc.pastor@coxinet.net](mailto:lakesideumc.pastor@coxinet.net), 405-843-5777.

**Communications Assistant:** Part-time. Okla. Conf. Dept. of Communications, OKC. Contact Nyla Wallin, 405-530-2073, [nwallin@okumc.org](mailto:nwallin@okumc.org).

**Director of Children's Ministries:** Full-time. OKC-New Hope UMC. Contact Cali Eck, [cali@newhopeokc.org](mailto:cali@newhopeokc.org).

## Passages

• Kaymah Warner of Oklahoma City died Aug. 13. She was the daughter of Anne and Bishop Bennie Warner, pastor of OKC-South Lee.

• Wayne Mingus of Troy, Ill., died Aug. 5. He was the father of Rev. David Mingus, pastor at Cleveland and Hominy.

• Tammy Jones of Muskogee died Aug. 5. She was the stepmother of Rev. Jeremy Jones, pastor of Warner UMC.

## Ray Buckley to lead Lay Servants course

Native leader Ray Buckley will teach a course for Lay Servants on Sept. 26-27 in Oklahoma City.

His book "Dancing With Words: Storytelling as Legacy, Culture, and Faith" will center the training, hosted by OKC-Wesley Church, 1401 N.W. 25th.

The event begins Friday evening, includes five sessions, and concludes at 6 p.m. Saturday with a commissioning service.

This is the Fall Advanced Course offered by the North/South Oklahoma City Bi-District Committee on Lay Servant Ministries (formerly Lay Speaking Ministries).

Author/illustrator Buckley is of Lakota/Tlingit/Scots descent. His stories, poetry, and art are widely respected. Most recently he wrote "Hard To Dance With the Devil on You Back." He is interim director of the Center for Native American Spirituality and Christian Study.

Registration, \$35, includes meals. Fee rises to \$40 after Sept. 9. Buckley's book for the course is available from Cokesbury.

Find the brochure at [www.okumc.org/LayServantTrainingDates](http://www.okumc.org/LayServantTrainingDates). Registrar is Jim Scott of Midwest City, [jaswscott@cox.net](mailto:jaswscott@cox.net).



## Media Library

### Check out a mission video

Videos related to the 2014 *Mission* studies are available for free checkout through the Media Center Library.

You can find a complete DVD list online at [www.okumc.org/resourcelibrary](http://www.okumc.org/resourcelibrary). Browse the library's resources in person at the United Methodist Ministry Center, 1501 N.W. 24th, Oklahoma City.

To request a DVD, email [mediacenter@okumc.org](mailto:mediacenter@okumc.org) or call 405-530-2075.

### "How Is It With Your Soul?" study

• *Opening Ourselves to Grace: Basic Christian Practices.* Four sections, 13-18 minutes each.

• *Three Simple Questions: Knowing the God of Love, Hope, and Purpose.* Six sections, 7-13 minutes each.

• *Three Simple Rules: A Wesleyan Way of Living.* Five sessions, 8-12 minutes each.

### "The Church and People With Disabilities" study

• *Surviving to Thriving: Successfully Including the Child With Special Needs.* Strategies to make any children's ministry environment a meaningful experience for everyone. Equip volunteers; adapt activities; arrange physical space.

• *The Roma of Europe* study

• *The Roma: History, Culture, Faith.* 25 minutes.

### General mission education

• *Through the Corridors of Mission: The Story of Mission Through the Centuries.* 14 minutes.

• *World Peace and Other Fourth-Grade Achievements.* 56 minutes.

# Briefly

## Take our website survey

You are invited to participate in an online survey about the Conference website, [www.okumc.org](http://www.okumc.org).

A link to the questions will appear on that homepage beginning Sept. 1. Your response will help inform the Communications Department about best practices to serve all those who view the site.

## Course of Study complete

Local Pastor Jerry Coldren graduated Aug. 1 from the Course of Study School administered by Saint Paul School of Theology. Rev. Coldren serves South Coffeyville and Lenapah churches; he officially retired in 2010. Graduation was at UM Church of the Resurrection, Greater Kansas City.

Course of Study is a five-year curriculum.



Coldren

## Wellness walk honors laywoman

The inaugural Avery LaDay Walk for Wellness begins at 8 a.m. Sept. 20 at OKC-Quayle UMC. A health fair and free dental screenings also are planned that day.

Walkers will trek from the church, 5001 N. Everest Ave., to Temple Gardens Senior Living Center, where Mrs. LaDay lived her final years. She pioneered wellness walks and health fairs at Quayle UMC, where she was a member for more than 50 years.

The health fair begins at 9 a.m. and will include school sports physicals. Dental screenings will be 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

## Annual retreats focus on pensions

Each year, the Conference Board of Pension & Health Benefits offers financial retreats about pension benefits, to help clergy prepare for their retirement years.

The 2014 retreats are Sept. 25-26 at Canyon Camp, and Oct. 2-3 at Camp Egan.

Separate workshops are offered at each retreat, one for clergy who plan to retire within five years, and one for younger clergy, to boost their understanding of the changing environment of benefits. Spouses also are strongly encouraged to attend.

Personalized retirement pension projections will be available to all participants.

Find more information and sign up at: [http://www.okumcministries.org/Clergy\\_Benefit\\_Retreat.htm](http://www.okumcministries.org/Clergy_Benefit_Retreat.htm)

## Event to assist prison ministry

A catered dinner and auction Oct. 3 at Tulsa-Asbury UMC will benefit Operation Hope Prison Ministry, affiliated with the Conference's Criminal Justice & Mercy Ministries.

The nonprofit operates at Tulsa-St. Luke's Redemption Church.

Reservation deadline is Sept. 19. The fundraiser begins at 6:30 p.m. at Asbury Church, 6767 S. Mingo Rd.

Contact Janet Theis, 918-625-1967.

## SCJ leaders change

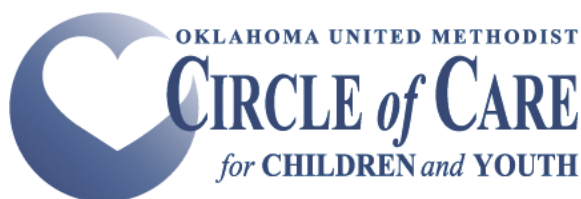
Audrey Phelps of Boonville, Mo., is new director of Volunteers In Mission and coordinator of Disaster Response for the South Central Jurisdiction. She has diverse missional experience, including eight years as associate VIM director for the Missouri Conference. The 2014 SCJ Disaster



**CAMP IS FOR ALL AGES** — Marjory LeMaster helps a boy create a windsock during Growin' in Grace Camp, for students in grades 3 through 5. Assisting in the camp's crafts center is a favorite task for LeMaster, age 97, a member of Stillwater-First UMC. For several years, she has attended summer camp with her daughter, Debby LeMaster, part of the leadership team for Tweens Camp, held concurrently in July at Camp Egan, near Tahlequah.

Response Academy will be held Sept. 7-11 in Oklahoma at Canyon Camp.

Lamar Pettus of Fayetteville, Ark., has been named interim director of Mount Sequoyah Conference & Retreat Center. He also served the center as interim leader in 2011-12. ([www.mountsequoyah.org](http://www.mountsequoyah.org))



## Will You Join the Growing Ranks of the

# 1000

**Project 1000 Asks:**  
**'Can We Do More? Can we support more at-risk children, youth, and families?'**

More than 150 individuals, families, and groups have made the pledge to support Circle of Care \$1,000 per year for the next three years. That puts us more than 15 percent of the way to our goal!

**What Can Project 1000 Do?**  
With your support, Circle of Care can change even more lives through our programs:

- \*United Methodist Children's Home
- \*United Methodist Boys Ranch
- \*Independent Living Program
- \*Pearl's Hope
- \*Child SHARE
- \*Holsinger Home

For only \$19.23 per week, you can invest in the future. You can help a child, a family. You can become one of the 1000. Won't you join us?

- |                          |                             |                           |                              |                                |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Anonymous - 13           | Michael & Janet Crooch      | Jono & Jenny Helmerich    | David & Laura Morrison       | Andrew & Mary Tevington        |
| Kay Adair                | Philip & Lisa Crow          | Jim & Mary Nell Holder    | Ted & Laura Mosteller        | Ken & June Tucker              |
| Bill & Karen Anderson    | Curtis & Pat Crowe          | Mark & Cindy Howard       | Clark & Kay Musser           | Milton & Patricia VanDerwiele  |
| Harvey & Alene Arnold    | Anna Cypert                 | Ross & Jane Hutchinson    | Jim Neel & Jan King          | Jim & Vickie Wagner            |
| Donald & Cheryl Baker    | Bobby & Shirley Darnell     | Robert & Ann Ivester      | Stan Nichols                 | Charles & Ila Watson           |
| Randy & Eddisu Barker    | Marsha Davis                | Mr. & Mrs. Ivan Keatley   | Chuck & DeeAnn Nordean       | Bob & Kathy West               |
| Don & Lynn Batson        | John Dixon                  | Keith Kennedy             | Clark Nutting                | Bob & Karen Williams           |
| David & Janet Battles    | William & Rev. Donna Dodson | Steve & Suzan Knight      | Dee & Barbie Paige           | Charles S. Wise                |
| Enloe & Wanda Baumert    | Robert & Brenda Duran       | Brian & Julie LaPat       | Bob & Peggy Peters           | David & Suzan Wolf             |
| David & Laura Beal       | Gregory & Mary Ann Edwards  | Greg & Anita LaPat        | Lenert & Bobbie Pfeiler      | Bill & Lissa Wright            |
| Mike & Jeannene Blevins  | Barbara Eskridge            | Robert Lee, Jr.           | Rosalie Rahe                 | Donald & Barbara Wright        |
| Don & Karla Bowen        | Don & Wanda Fischer         | Ed & Melba Livermore      | Allan Rau                    | Ernestine Wright               |
| Clara Brown              | Bill & Jo Fowler            | Ralph & Elaine Lockstone  | Donald & Valerie Reeves      | Harold & Carol Wright          |
| Spencer & Mary Brown     | David & Cindy Frieze        | Mr. & Mrs. Hal Long       | Anna Richardson              | Steve & Ann Zenthofer          |
| Cheryl Burnet            | Mike & Elaine Frizzell      | G.W. & Cheryl Lowry       | John & Helen Riley           |                                |
| Lacey & Mary Butler      | Jerry & Jane Gamble         | Joe Lucas & Kay McSpadden | Joe & Judy Robinson          | Boston Ave UMC.,               |
| Ivan Bys                 | Jeannine Gibbens            | Bryan & Vicki Mantering   | Joe & Shirley Rolston        | Wesley Fellowship              |
| Michael & Leanne Chaffin | Robert & Prudy Gorrell      | Emery & Lisa Mason        | Gary & Sharon Roth           | Claremore-First UMC., U.M.W.   |
| Arlene Chriswell         | Jim & Elaine Gragg          | Dwight Maulding           | Richard & Johnece Ryerson    | Grove-First U.M.C., U.M.W.     |
| Ralph & Midge Coffman    | Bud & Jane Griffy           | Irma McCaskill            | Gale and Martha Sadler       | Highland Park UMC.             |
| Randall & Kathryn Coit   | Earl & Marlene Haggard      | Dick & Lavonn McKnight    | Bill & Cynthia Sawatzky      | Lawton Centenary UMC.          |
| Lloyd E. & Melissa Cole  | George & Jo Hall            | Bob & Doris McKown        | Mike Self & Shannon Nakvinda | Nicoma Park UMC., Thrift Store |
| Edgar & Betty Collins    | Marie Hancock               | Burrell & JoAnn McNaught  | Stanley & Sherry Selvidge    | Okmulgee UMC., U.M.M.          |
| Lyle & Shirley Combs     | Rudolph & Madeline Hargrave | Billy & Lora Meade        | Logan & Donna Sharpe         | Okmulgee UMC., U.M.W.          |
| Robert & Debbie Craine   | Ralph & Linda Harker        | Lou & Pat Meadors         | Arden & Rita Smith           | St. Andrews UMC. (OKC)         |
| Elda Cressman            | Edward & Valerie Hatley     | Paul & Ann Milburn        | Bill & Martha Smith          | Wesley UMC Shawnee, UMM        |
| C.C. & Anna Marie Crooch | Bob & Dee Hayes             | Larry & Sandy Mocha       | Robert & Cherie Staples      | Wesley UMC Shawnee, UMW        |
| Estate                   | John & Anne Heaton          | Mary & Kirt E. Moelling   | Craig Stinson & Krista Jones |                                |
| John & Jamie Crooch      | Billy & Ann Hebblethwaite   | Mike & Christy Mordy      | Carolyn J. Taylor            | CoC Staff                      |

To make your pledge today, please call 405-530-2078 or visit our website at:

<http://www.circleofcare.org/1000.html>



## Award presentation at Annual Conference

Sara Nordholm Brown, left, of Tahlequah receives the 2014 Frances Willard Award, presented by Pam Cottrill, who chairs the Commission on the Status & Role of Women. Brown, a retired professor, advocates for justice and travels widely. COSROW also provides scholarships to female ministry students; deadline is Sept. 1 to submit applications to Secretary Jeff Hiller, [jhiller@clergy.okumc.org](mailto:jhiller@clergy.okumc.org). Find the form at [www.okumc.org/awards](http://www.okumc.org/awards).

The Wesley Foundation at Southwestern Oklahoma State University has received a \$12,000 grant through the Young Clergy Initiative approved by the 2012 General Conference.

The ministry in Weatherford is one of 75 projects to receive a total of \$5.5 million.

Campus minister Elizabeth Horton-Ware wrote in the application: "This project provides college students with short-term internships in local congregations for the duration of nine months (school year). The internship includes regular training." (*General Board of Higher Education & Ministry*)

Every year since its founding in 2007, the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum within the World Council of Churches (WCC) has organized a World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel. This year, it will be Sept. 21-27 and will focus on the critical issue of prisoners.

The Forum has prepared resources for that week in worship, education, and advocacy for peace and justice. These will be posted on the Forum's website and Facebook page.

The United Methodist Church is a member of the WCC. (*General Board of Church & Society*)

# The global church

In Virginia, Superintendent Steve Jones is asking the churches in his district to support his 26.2-mile run in the Chicago Marathon in October. He is running to raise \$7,500 for the denomination's Imagine No Malaria campaign. (*United Methodist News Service*)

Nell Noonan writes in the May-June *Interpreter Magazine*: "According to November 2012 statistics from the National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP, I am one of 65.7 million unpaid caregivers for family or friends in the United States ... I was well into the seven and one-half years of my caregiving odyssey with my husband before I stopped saying, 'No, thanks; we're doing just fine.'"

"Truthfully, I was sleep deprived, depressed, sad, stressed, and heartsick ... I also had a torn rotator cuff and bad back from physically assisting my 220-pound husband."

Caregivers often "will not let themselves ask for help ... Caregivers need the assistance of friends, support groups, churches, family, and professionals ... Do not take their 'no's' as the final word to your offers of help."

To read her story and suggestions to help, go to <http://www.interpretermagazine.org/interior.asp?ptid=43&mid=14951>.

After searching for more than 35 years, the Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo in Argentina have found the grandson of one of their founders, Estela de Carlotto.

Ecumenical and church groups have long supported the Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo, who search for children born in secret military detention centers in Argentina. The group received the 1999 World Methodist Peace Award, becoming the first recipients from Latin America.

After her pregnant daughter was abducted, Carlotto has searched as she also has fought for human rights.

On July 5, a musician named Guido in the Argentine city of Olavarria was discovered to be her grandson after he volunteered to undergo a DNA test.

(*World Council of Churches*)

## Appointment

Kevin M. Watson (Extension Ministry, South OKC District) to Candler School of Theology, Emory University, from Seattle Pacific University School of Theology, effective June 1.

# Retirees can get health insurance details in September

Town-hall meetings in late September center on new supplemental health insurance choices for current and future retirees in the Oklahoma Conference Health Benefits Plan.

- Sept. 22, OKC-St. Luke's, 1 p.m.
- Sept. 23, Tulsa-Asbury, 1 p.m.

These educational sessions are part of the overall effort to prepare retirees for changes that become effective Jan. 1. On that date, a program administered by Towers Watson OneExchange will replace the existing Medicare supplemental plan administered by the Conference.

The enrollment period is Oct. 15 through Dec. 31.

The change won 95 percent approval by delegates at the 2014 Annual Conference.

It applies to all Medicare-eligible retirees covered by the Conference health plan: clergy, spouses, surviving spouses, disabled participants, etc.

If you are in this group, you must make a selection and enroll through Towers Watson OneExchange in a new individual health plan by Dec. 31, to prevent a lapse in your health insurance coverage. The company's role is to work with you to identify the Medicare supplemental plan that best fits your lifestyle and to help you through the enrollment process.

1 During the week of Aug. 10, the Oklahoma Conference Board of Pension & Health Benefits mailed a personal letter to each eligible person. The letter introduced Towers Watson OneExchange and announced the town-hall events.

2 The General Board of Pension & Health Benefits mailed materials to each person during the week of Aug. 17.

3 Towers Watson OneExchange will send each person a "getting started" guide in early September. It includes instructions to start the enrollment process.

*Read closely and keep all these materials, advised Oklahoma's Benefits/Personnel Director Stephen Mitchell. Start a folder with them, and begin making lists of your doctors (including specialists), medications, and clinics and hospitals you use.*

4 Learn more by attending one of the town-hall meetings in late September. If you cannot attend one, a recording will be made available upon request.

5 Future communications will come from Towers Watson OneExchange.

You also will contact Towers Watson OneExchange benefit advisers when you have questions. This is a change from contacting the Conference Benefits Office staff. The company's advisers are available to assist you; they do not sell products or work for commissions.

"Individual" is a word to remember, said Mitchell. Each retiree will choose the plan that best meets that person's needs. Thus both members of a retired couple are not required to enroll in the same plan.

"We have to shift our mindset to the word 'individual,'" he explained.

The town-hall meetings are being hosted by the Conference Board of Pension & Health Benefits.

Funding also has been addressed. The Conference will establish and contribute to a Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) on behalf of each eligible retiree, based on years of service.

HRA funds can be used by the retiree to pay the monthly premiums for the supplemental health insurance and/or other out-of-pocket healthcare expenses.

For more information: [www.okumc.org/benefits](http://www.okumc.org/benefits).

— by Holly McCray

## Save the date

Commission on Religion & Race presents:

### "Moving Beyond Prejudice"

Workshop with Paul Saltzman, filmmaker and CEO of the Moving Beyond Prejudice campaign

Oct. 4, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Oklahoma City University  
(The Great Hall, McDaniel student center)  
Registration: \$25, includes lunch

Sign up: [www.okumc.org](http://www.okumc.org) or at the workshop

5-Day Academy for Spiritual Formation:

### "The Way of Compassion"

with Safiyah Fosua and Trevor Hudson

Oct. 19-24, Canyon Camp

Register: [www.okumc.org/SpiritualFormationAcademy](http://www.okumc.org/SpiritualFormationAcademy)

Scholarships available

Office of Mission presents:

### "Equipping the Church for a Changing World"

Mission Conference

Nov. 14-15

OKC-Church of the Servant

Contact Lori Foster for more information, 405-530-2070

### "Living the Lord's Prayer"

Workshops with Trevor Hudson, author and UM pastor in Benoni, South Africa

7 dates and regional locations in October

Registration: \$10

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

Sponsors: Discipleship Ministry Team, Small Membership Church Commission, and Discipleship Ministries for the Small Membership Church

## Newest deaconess advocates for kids

By HOLLY MCCRAY

Jerrie Lindsey read about the ministry of deaconess, a lay-woman's vocation dedicated to love, justice, and service.

She thought, "That's where I belong."

But she merely tucked away her copy of the United Methodist Women *Response* magazine issue that spotlighted deaconesses. It was 2006, and she was dedicated to her family and to volunteering in Holdenville's schools; her local church, Barnard Memorial UMC (McAlester District); and UMW.

Yet the idea persisted. Her three children grew up.

Lindsey was consecrated as a deaconess at the 2014 UMW Assembly in April.

"I think I've felt this my whole life and ... Yes! I'm finally getting to do it!" she exclaimed in July. She was interviewed during *Mission u*; she taught the "How Is It With Your Soul?" spiritual study.

As a teenager, Lindsey said, she sensed God calling her to service, but not as clergy.

She joined UMW at age 19,

while attending college.

She long has served as an advocate, especially for children.

"Life experience really has a lot to do with our calling," Lindsey said. "If I never would have advocated for my children or, through my daughter's illness, advocated for her while she was so sick, I wouldn't be advocating for other children."

She was a band parent, basketball booster, etc. "School volunteering was advocating for all children."

And advocacy is very much a deaconess role.

*The UM Book of Discipline* defines this calling. These lay-women function "through diverse forms of service ... to make Jesus Christ known." They:

- alleviate suffering;
- eradicate causes of injustice and all that robs life of dignity and worth;
- facilitate the development of full human potential; and
- share in building global community through the church universal. (*Paragraph 1314.1*)



Photo by Mike DuBose, UMNS

**Deaconess Jerrie Lindsey of Holdenville is consecrated April 27 by Bishop Cynthia Harvey, left, at the 2014 Assembly of United Methodist Women, held in Louisville, Ky. The 26 new deaconesses on stage impulsively joined hands during prayer. Asked how she experienced the ceremony, Lindsey whispered, "It's just ... amazing," and tears welled. Her husband and a daughter attended the ceremony. Some 150 UMW members from both Oklahoma annual conferences were there, too.**

Lindsey committed to the deaconess path in 2011, after attending a discernment event, which was sponsored by the General Board of Discipleship and the Office of Deaconess and Home Missioner.

She was accepted into the program and completed five graduate-level classes, including theology of mission and UM history. She holds a bachelor's degree in medical technology.

A deaconess must find her own place of service. Unlike clergy, they do not itinerate. These women are professors, pediatricians, nutritionists, social workers, church staff members, and more. They are expected to serve at least 24 hours a week in their ministry.

"The vast majority are serving in a ministry and then decide to be a deaconess," Lindsey said.

But that's not her story.

She remained unsettled even after completing the training in late 2012.

"I feel like I'm swimming in

peanut butter," she told Pastor Chuck Rettig at the Holdenville church.

Then a close friend proposed Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for Children. Two months later, someone else made the same suggestion.

Lindsey identified God directing her through those friends. She walked into the nonprofit's office in Ada in 2013 and learned its 30-hour training series was beginning a new rotation.

Today she is a CASA volunteer and part-time office assistant there.

Lindsey said she's no longer "swimming in peanut butter."

"That's the best way to say it for me."

According to the national CASA website, judges appoint these volunteer advocates to represent the best interests of children who have been removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect. Their role is to watch over and

advocate for those children as they process through legal and social service systems. They visit, report regularly, and make suggestions focused on what's best for a child. Well-known psychologist Dr. Phil McGraw and his wife, Robin, are official spokespersons for CASA.

A volunteer stays with a case until it is closed and the child is placed in a safe, permanent home.

Lindsey has been appointed to two cases. For one of those, she served five siblings in two placements.

"God uses us where we are, builds on that, and helps us grow and do what he needs us to do," she said.

Robbie and Jerrie Lindsey are grandparents. Jerrie also serves as UMW president for McAlester District and is a certified Lay Servant. Robbie, a computer programmer, also is the music director for Barnard Memorial UMC.

[www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/dhm](http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/dhm)



Photo by Holly McCray

**Deaconesses in the Oklahoma Conference are introduced May 26 during the Laity Session of the 2014 Annual Conference, at OKC-St. Luke's Church. From left are: Jerrie Lindsey of Holdenville, Elaine Parrent of Oklahoma City, Shelly Owen of Tulsa, and Pat Hoerth of Turtle Rock Farm.**

## Training will encompass many aspects of evangelism

On two dates, training in areas that range from church hospitality and publicity to niche ministry and "Home for Christmas" will be sponsored by the evangelism committee of the Discipleship Ministry Team.

- Sept. 20 at Tulsa-Boston Avenue Church
- Oct. 18 at OKC-Chapel Hill

The events are planned in support of the *New People, New Places* initiative in the Oklahoma Conference, according to Stephen Hale, evangelism committee chairperson. The goal is to provide local churches with valuable, comprehensive training in many forms of evangelism.

On each date, the event begins

at 9:30 a.m. and concludes at 4:30 p.m. In addition to attending several workshops, participants will hear speakers during general sessions.

Chris Buskirk, pastor of Broken Arrow-Abiding Harvest UMC, will explain the "Home for Christmas" evangelism outreach program.

Rev. Dr. Hale will present

"Niche Ministry: Building Disciples By Drawing on Your Strengths."

Among other topics: "Welcoming All People in All Places," "Speaking With Skeptics," "Matthew 10/Luke 10," "Effective Divorce Ministry," "Good Samaritan Ministry," "Empowering Laity to Ministry," "Presentation on Prayer," "Membership Matters,"

and "Reaching Singles."

Some of the other speakers: Aaron Tiger, Ben Williams, Cindy Robertson, Janelle Brammer, Robert Rose, Temple Diehl, Wade Paschal, and Wanda and Steve Littrell.

Cost, \$25, includes lunch. For more information, contact Bob Pierson, [bpierion@leadership.net](mailto:bpierion@leadership.net), 918-809-7489.

# Summit VBS provides a special touch

By CARLA HINTON

Religion Editor, *The Oklahoman*

A relatively new United Methodist congregation in Edmond recently held a Vacation Bible School created for children with special needs.

The Bible school, held July 28-30, was the summer's third event for children offered by Summit UMC.

Pastor Allen Buck said he founded Summit two years ago, and the congregation meets on Sunday mornings at Cimarron Middle School, 3701 S Bryant.

Rev. Dr. Buck said his wife, Erin, is children's ministry leader at Summit and a special education teacher at Edmond's Sequoyah Middle School. She came up with the VBS idea, with input from church members who have children with special needs.

Erin Buck said she and several members thought the event would be well received because there aren't many similar events and activities being offered locally. She said the Bible school, for children ages 4 to 16, was primarily promoted through Facebook and word-of-mouth, and about 30 children attended each night, which she considered a nice crowd.

The event theme, "I Am a Masterpiece" based on Ephesians 2:10, was considered an appropriate way to capture the spirit of activities that emphasized diversity and inclusion.

"All children were created by God, and all children are amazing. We just wanted to celebrate our differences," she said.

Erin Buck said participants included children with special needs such as those with autism spectrum disorders, as well as their siblings. Autism spectrum disorders can cause significant social, communication, and behavioral challenges.



Photos by Allen Buck Jr.

**In these photos, Bennett snuggles a bunny, Alex offers his hand to a caiman, and Sophia helps a trainer heft a snake on their shoulders during Summit's "I Am a Masterpiece" VBS session in Edmond.**

The event also included youths and their parents simply interested in being part of the faith effort.

Activities included science experiments, an Extreme Animals session, and music.

Erin Buck said a Bible story was told each night, and children who were not able to sit and listen to the story in traditional fashion were encouraged to play in portable sand boxes that included toys related to the story being shared. Also, several rooms were available where parents and volunteers could take children who needed to continue the Bible school activities in a quieter environment.

Daniel Teigen said he and his children — Lucas, 6, Lincoln, 5, and Madison, 2 — enjoyed the event, particularly because it was something designed with his sons in mind. He said Lucas has a form of autism known as Asperger syndrome, and Lincoln has what he described as "classic autism."

"There's just not a place where families like ours have an outlet," Teigen said. "It's nice to be able to get out and have activities that are autism-sensitive."

Julie Ezell of Edmond said her family had attended numerous churches before finding a home with Summit two years ago. She



said she was pleased that her 9-year-old son who has autism had an opportunity to take part in a summertime tradition such as VBS.

"I feel like for the first time he's experiencing God through the music and the message" of VBS, she said.

"Some churches have Sunday activities for special-needs kids, but there are no Vacation Bible Schools for special-needs kids that we know of. My son has missed out on so many things that other kids experience, so we thought this is great."

Rev. Buck said he would like his congregation to be known as "the church that loves people," and the unique VBS is in keeping with that.

"I think this is a prime example of what's emerging here at Summit," he said.

*(Reprinted with permission, The Oklahoman, Aug. 9. Copyright 2014.)*

## Projection:

Continued from page 1

Yoder said worship attendance has increased since the new system was implemented, compared to the previous year.

And desiring to be not only multigenerational but also intergenerational, Rev. Dr. Harrison challenged senior-citizen members to move beyond their comfort levels and show radical hospitality to the younger generations.

Harrison said, "We changed to reach more people, using Scripture and tradition as our foundations."

According to Lovett Weems, director of the acclaimed Lewis Center for Church Leadership, "Institutions must always guard against the temptation to turn inward and become ends in themselves." Rev. Dr. Weems also has been a consultant for the Conference's corporate board.

In his book "Focus," Weems suggests two fundamental questions must be asked in every congregation.



Photo provided by Asbury UMC

**Soaring archways, digitally projected on walls, enfold the orchestra and choir during traditional worship at Tulsa-Asbury UMC.**

- Why are United Methodist clergy less concerned with reaching young adults than are laity?

- Why are laity unwilling to make the changes to worship and budgets required to attract these same young adults?

Don Nations of DNA Coaching has said, "Leaders who want to see their churches grow need to prepare for a new role. They need a new set of skills if they are going to be successful. They need to understand the culture, be fluent in demographics, know how to share their faith, be effective at marketing, know the basics of social media, move beyond worship wars, and understand what is connecting with unchurched people today."

Asbury's leadership wants the feel and experience of worship to be transformative for everyone who attends. They want both members and guests to anticipate going to worship each week and encountering each other and God in unique and meaningful ways.

This church has decided that standing still is not the way forward, no matter how successful the past. This new approach to dynamic worship that fully engages the minds, hearts, and souls of those in attendance will help secure Asbury's future.