

## Sacred moment, sacred place



Photo by Elias Ghareeb

Missionary Kristen Brown baptizes Birevan in the Jordan River, at the purported site of Jesus' baptism. She also anointed the new Christian with oil.

From Oklahoma, Rev. Brown has been serving in the Holy Land since 2010, through the UM General Board of Global Ministries. Birevan asked Brown to baptize her and promised to find a church home when she returned to France, where the young Palestinian woman lives.

She and Brown met together several times in preparation for the ceremony in June.

"God is amazing," Brown said. "Who knew that a French major from Oklahoma City University would become an elder in the Oklahoma Conference, serving in Palestine and Israel, and have the opportunity to baptize someone using French! This was my first baptism here."

## Orders meet Aug. 19 Quadrennial training set for clergy

Clergy, circle dates on your calendars for two events — one in August, one in September.

### Required training Aug. 19

Healthy boundaries training, mandatory for all persons under appointment, will be presented on Aug. 19 at the bi-annual meeting of the Orders of Elders and Deacons and the Fellowship of Local Pastors.

The meeting, at OKC-St. Luke's Church, begins at 10 a.m. and concludes by 3 p.m. Lunch will be provided. You must attend the entire session to receive credit.

Leading this quadrennial training will be Superintendents Tish Malloy and David Burris, of Stillwater and Woodward Districts, respectively.

For any clergy unable to attend that Tuesday, two make-up sessions are set.

- Sept. 20 at Moore-First UMC — Deadline to register is Sept. 8, and meal cost is \$10. Contact [wdoumc@sbgcglobal.net](mailto:wdoumc@sbgcglobal.net).
- Sept. 27 at Tulsa-Living Waters UMC — Deadline to register is Sept. 15, and meal cost is \$10. Contact [stwdsumc@sbgcglobal.net](mailto:stwdsumc@sbgcglobal.net).

Pre-registration is required only for make-up sessions.

### Spiritual formation event

On Sept. 22 and 23, Oklahoma's clergy will gather for a special continuing formation event at the Reed Center in Midwest City. Guest presenters will be Bob Farr and Kay Kotan. More information will be available at the Orders meeting.

# Summer's hottest topic: innovative ministry

By HOLLY McCRAY

Summer daze at your church? Banish that. Now is the time for action.

There are good reasons to do so — 700,000 good reasons.

Deadline is noon on Sept. 15 to apply for *New People, New Places* grants.

A total of \$700,000 has been designated in 2015 as seed money for innovative projects to reach new people for Christ.

Any church of any size and any Conference entity may apply for a grant through NPNP, which is a new Conference initiative. Requested funding is not limited by a maximum or minimum dollar amount.

A grant could help your group launch a



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

**Application deadline:  
Sept. 15**

ministry that currently exists only in dreams. Your vision could attract more Oklahomans and help them grow as world-changing disciples.

But first you must craft a plan from your idea.

And you must submit a grant application for that plan — online and on time.

This opportunity should be summer's hottest topic for your group.

The deadline looms.

"Think about it. If you had an extra \$20,000 to fund a new, diverse ministry, to reach people you've never reached before, what would you do?" asked Donna Heldermon. She is a Claremore-First member and co-chairs the Annual Conference Council (ACC).

She's clearly excited about *New People, New Places*.

"It really validates that we see making

disciples, reaching new people, is best done at the local level," she said. "That's how we build the Church: at the grassroots. If people are involved in ministry, they grow."

NPNP will grow disciples in ways that rival Oklahoma's Volunteers In Mission, "a great example," Heldermon believes.

Craig Stinson said he frequently hears creative ideas from people about ministries he's never imagined.

As director of Connectional Ministries, Rev. Stinson hopes "to have my hands full of applications to read from any-size church or ministry in any place" within the Oklahoma Conference.

See Innovative ministry, page 5



Photo by Holly McCray

**TRAINING NEW CLERGY—**

Local Pastors Licensing School participants gather June 24 on the lower steps of Smith Chapel at Oklahoma City University. Identification is from left to right. Top row: Andre Contino, Donald Baker Jr., Jay Smith, Stephen Romero, Tom Trautman, and Dean Ron Perceful. Second row: Timothy John Boyer, Randal Richards, Timothy Stone, Nicholas Lee, Stephanie Theis, Earl Scott Worley, and Co-Dean Victor McCullough. Third row: Jeremy Jones, Martin "Tino" Herrera, Jarod Paul Conrady, Laura Glover, Kathryn Gibson, Rosemary Keating, and guest presenter Mike Mahaffey. Bottom row: David Robert Petty, Christy Clark, David Guajardo, Paula Tucker, Kris Mayberry, and Co-Dean Nancy Hamilton. During the school's first week, seven additional students, including provisional elders, attended: Jennifer Ahrens-Sims, Joshua Attaway, Jimmy Dorsey, Cali Eck, Shyloe O'Neal, Brad Rogers, and Desi Sharp.



## United Methodist leaders honored with doctorates

Oklahoma City University awarded four honorary degrees and conferred bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees to more than 900 students during two ceremonies May 10 in the Henry J. Freede Wellness and Activity Center.

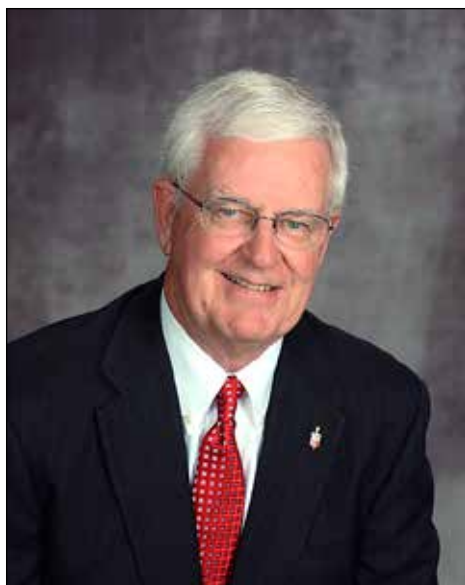
Among the four receiving honorary degrees are former Governor George Nigh, who gave the commencement address during the undergraduate ceremony, and Oklahoma County Commissioner Willa Johnson.

The other two honored are outstanding leaders in The United Methodist Church: Bishop James Dorff and Maggie Ball.

James E. Dorff serves as bishop of the San Antonio Episcopal Area, which consists of the Southwest Texas and Rio Grande Conferences (soon to be the unified Rio Texas Conference). He and the late Ray Owen are the only OCU graduates elected to serve as bishops in the Church.

After graduating from OCU, Dorff received a master's degree in theology from Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University.

Prior to his election as bishop, he served for 36 years as a pastor in the North Texas Conference. He was elected to the episcopacy in July 2008.

**Bishop James Dorff**

Bishop Dorff serves on the boards of SMU, Southwestern University, Huston-Tillotson University, and the Lydia Patterson Institute, and on the executive board of Perkins seminary. He is a member of the Council of Bishops' executive committee.

"I was surprised, pleased, and humbled when informed that the OCU Board of Trustees had voted to confer the degree,"

**Maggie Ball**

Dorff noted. "OCU was a significant part of my formation as a person and pastor. Many great memories come to mind when reflecting on my time there, both in and out of the classroom.

"It was particularly meaningful to realize that my father, Earl N. Dorff, received the Doctor of Divinity degree from OCU in 1950. He was pastor of First UMC,

Oklahoma City, at the time.

"OCU has nurtured and produced many outstanding leaders for the Church over the years. I was humbled to be recognized by the university and particularly touched by the recognition of the ongoing close relationship between OCU and The United Methodist Church."

Rev. Margaret A. Ball retired this year as vice president of OCU University-Church Relations after 10 years of service. Her honorary degree recognizes her contributions to OCU and her 30 years in ministry.

She earned a Bachelor of Arts in biology from OCU in 1967 on a Great Plan Scholarship. She earned a Master of Divinity from Phillips Graduate Seminary in 1986 and was ordained an elder in the Oklahoma Conference in 1988.

Ball came to OCU from Bartlesville, where she served as a district superintendent for the Church. Previously, she served in Oklahoma City as associate director of Skyline Urban Ministry, chaplain at INTEGRIS Baptist Medical Center, and minister of care at OKC-Church of the Servant. Ball has been elected as a clergy delegate to four General and Jurisdictional Conferences of the denomination.





Strength for the journey: Ideas and thoughts from our bishop

# Mountains I am willing to climb

*“Now give me this mountain.”*  
—Joshua 14:12

By BISHOP ROBERT HAYES JR.

Psychologists verify that most of us barely scratch the surface of our talents and abilities when confronted with difficult tasks. We seldom “go all out” for anything, rarely giving our whole selves in great enterprise.

Now and then something does come along that stirs our passions — or backs us into a corner — and only then do we expend ourselves in total commitment.

It’s not only some youths who claim boredom and “check out” because they are not motivated to make hard decisions. Adults as well opt out, choosing paths of least resistance.

But the wide road on a life journey void of tests and trials is greatly over-exaggerated.

That’s why I make a case today for the

matters that try us, push us to use every ounce of our God-given capabilities to deal with challenges.

In the book of Joshua, there is a very interesting story that helps me make my case.

After the children of Israel escaped from the land where the Egyptian pharaoh held them captive, they wandered many years, on an arduous journey in wilderness. Finally they came to the Promised Land.

Among them was 85-year-old Caleb, who was originally chosen by Moses to spy in the land of Canaan (Numbers 13:6). You would think roaming the desert for more than 40 years would have diminished his strength and vitality.

Not so with this man of God.

In a remarkable passage found in Joshua 14:10-12, as the land is being divided among the tribes, Caleb says:

“Now then, just as the Lord promised, he has kept me alive for 45 years since the time he said this to Moses, while Israel moved about in the wilderness. So here I am today, 85 years old! I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I’m just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. Now give me this mountain that the Lord promised me that day!”

Caleb was declaring: I am still strong. I

can overcome the difficulties.

Put simply, Caleb wanted something to challenge him!

We all possess untapped capacity to plunge into new challenges. Like Caleb, we all have the ability to rise and face circumstances if we use the gifts God has given each of us.

And when we expend our energies in full commitment to a cause, God supplies us with even more energy. It’s much like the pull of Earth’s gravity on our bodies. Science proves that the bigger the mass, the greater the pull of gravity.

Another way to state this: The bigger the mountain, the greater the energy given to the climber.

Something about that which is difficult lifts the Calebs of our time to achieve the improbable and seemingly impossible.

Now, having made my case for great challenges, let me explain why I present Caleb’s story to you.

God’s promises are for us to prosper, but to realize those promises, we must be willing to tackle difficult tasks and make hard choices.

At our Annual Conference in late May, we passed several pieces of legislation that will test us both in the near and distant future.

• The complexities of rising health care costs for our retirees had to be addressed.

• The reallocation of our budget to more intentionally focus on *New People, New Places* will change the way we fund other vital ministries and programs in our Conference.

• The processes and procedures for realigning our districts from 12 to eight by next June present a significant challenge.

I see these major issues as mountains that I am willing to climb, and I ask all of you as Oklahoma United Methodists to commit with me to climb and conquer these mountains!

I realize there were some at Annual Conference who did not share the sentiments of the majority. But I ask everyone to put aside your differences and ready yourselves for this assault on the improbable.

Oklahoma Annual Conference, we are strong! We can overcome the difficulties ahead of us! We must prepare the way for generations that follow to inherit a robust and vital church that is transforming the world!

I intend to use every gift God has given me in this pursuit. On behalf of every member and every church in our great Conference, I proclaim, “Give us this mountain!”



Hayes

## DON'T SELL YOUR PROPERTY

until you've considered all your options

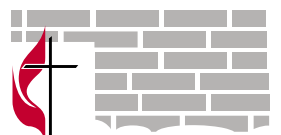


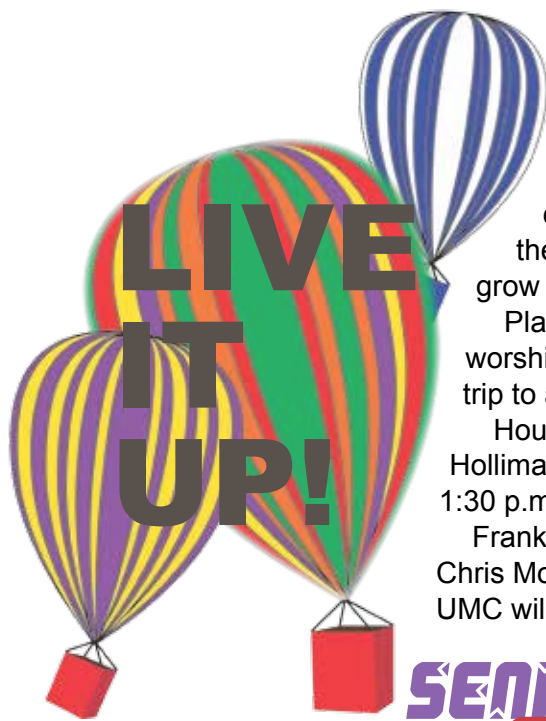
▶ Selling your property is one way to realize the value of your assets, but it may not be the best way to maximize your value.

You can avoid the hassle of selling your property or land by making a charitable gift to the Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation. The benefits of this plan are clear – you will avoid paying capital gains tax and receive an income tax deduction this year. Plus your gift will help support the United Methodist causes you cherish most.

Want more benefits? Transfer your property to a charitable remainder trust or fund a charitable gift annuity and receive payments for life. Contact David Battles, CPA (800-259-6863 or [dbattles@okumf.org](mailto:dbattles@okumf.org)) to learn more about how you could benefit from a gift of your land or property.

Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation  
4201 Classen Blvd • Oklahoma City, OK 73118  
[www.okumf.org](http://www.okumf.org)





**S**enior Adult Summit offers a place for older adults to continue learning in ways that help them celebrate their past, improve their future, and continue to grow spiritually.

Plans include workshops, worship, movie night, and a road trip to a special destination!

Housing will be in senior-friendly Holliman Lodge. Check-in begins at 1:30 p.m. Monday, Sept. 8.

Frankye Johnson will preach, and Chris Moore of OKC-Sunny Lane UMC will lead music.

## SENIOR ADULT SUMMIT

September 8-10  
EGAN

### Workshop choices:

"Leaving a Legacy," by Kristin Van Nort

"Learning New Technology," by Van Nort

"Poverty in Oklahoma," by Fran Harbert

"Medications for Seniors," by Ruth McLean

"Signs & Symptoms/-strokes & Heart Attacks," by Steve McLean

"The Journey of Life," by Nancy Adler and Matt Thompson

<https://okumc-reg.brtapp.com/720214SeniorAdultSummit>

Register by Sept. 1. More info: Janey Wilson, [janeywilson@gmail.com](mailto:janeywilson@gmail.com), 405-651-4191.



LIKE THEIR LIFECARE. *Love being carefree.*



**EPWORTH VILLA**  
An Epworth Living Community

Our friends keep telling us we look so happy and asking what's changed? We tell them we moved to Epworth Villa and our good life has become a great one! The only thing we left behind was worry! **Go online or call to learn more.**

405.752.1200 | 800.579.8776 | [EpworthVilla.org/lifecare](http://EpworthVilla.org/lifecare)  
14901 N. Pennsylvania Ave., Oklahoma City, OK 73134



## Briefly

### District sets prayer training

Prayer is the focus for an Ardmore District seminar on Aug. 16-17.

On Aug. 16 at Sulphur UMC, "Encounter: A Blueprint for the House of Prayer" will be presented by Terry Teykl of Houston. He travels as a prayer evangelist and has authored several books.

An elder in the Texas Conference, Rev. Dr. Teykl graduated from Perkins School of Theology and earned his doctorate at Oral Roberts University.

The Saturday training, from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., will include lunch.

On Sunday morning, Teykl will preach at Ardmore-First UMC. He will repeat the seminar that afternoon, 3-6 p.m.

### Donate hygiene items to TEEM

In Oklahoma City, TEEM (The Education and Employment Ministry) is collecting donations for its summer hygiene drive through Aug. 30. The purpose is to provide everyday necessities to recently released inmates.

To request a donation box or a list of drop sites, contact Lance Evans, 405-235-5671, [levans@teem.org](mailto:levans@teem.org).

### Border school provides interns

Two students from Lydia Patterson Institute are serving as bilingual and bicultural leaders on summer internships in Oklahoma.

Elias Dominguez is working with pastors Keith Cressman and Becky Roman at OKC-St. Mark's UMC.

Bequer Gomez is assisting in The Gallery at OKC-St. John's. That outreach to elementary-age children includes a summer component as well as an after-school program.

In El Paso, Texas, Lydia Patterson Institute is a UM mission agency on the border for the South Central Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church.

### Seminary student awarded

Lory Fahle of Lawton is one of four people recently named by the national GuideOne Foundation to receive \$2,500 scholarships. A student at Phillips Theological Seminary, Rev. Fahle is the new pastor at Aldersgate Redemption UMC, Lawton.

### Appointment

Frank Young, new, to Gene Autry UMC (Ardmore District), effective June 15.

## Passages

**THOMAS** – Patty Ann Stevens Thomas, 77, of Tulsa died July 2, 2014. She was the wife of Rev. David Thomas.

Patty was born Jan. 6, 1937, in Wickliffe, Kentucky; the family moved to Tulsa when she was 5.

During high school, she began attending Tulsa-Sheridan Avenue UMC, where David was a youth director. On Aug. 31, 1956, they were married at the church.

Patty loved to serve and always found her place of ministry wherever David was appointed. In retirement, they have been active in the Senior Adult Ministry at Tulsa-Asbury UMC.

Survivors include two sons, Chuck Thomas and Matthew Thomas; daughter Penny Stockman; and five grandchildren.

Service was July 7 at Asbury UMC. Memorials to: Mission Outreach, Asbury UMC.

**BANKS** – Cowley Carl Banks Jr., 66, of Guymon died July 7, 2014.

He was the husband of Rev. Jacki Banks, pastor of Morning Star UMC in Hough.

Carl was born Aug. 30, 1947, in Elk City, and was baptized as a teenager, in California. He married Beverly Jean Thomas on Sept. 19, 1970. He was a 32nd-degree Master Mason.

His passion was farming. He taught vocational agriculture and had a career in banking.

Carl Banks married Jacki Lewis on Jan. 1, 1994.

He was a member of Morning Star UMC.

Survivors include his wife, Rev. Banks; son Clint Banks; daughter Patti Johnson; stepson Tommy Lewis; and four granddaughters.

Service was July 11 at First Baptist Church in Willow.

## Opportunities

**Music Ministry Director:** Part-time. Blanchard First UMC, 405-584-3579; [mychurch@blanchardfumc.org](mailto:mychurch@blanchardfumc.org).

**Media Coordinator:** Part-time. Opens 9/1/14. Yukon-Church of the Good Shepherd. Contact Jim Poe, 405-324-2557, or Michael Burkett, 405-324-1900.

**Assistant Childcare Director:** Full-time, OKC-St. Luke's United Methodist Church. Apply online: <http://jobs.stlukesokc.org>.

**Facility Tech:** Full-time. OKC-St. Luke's United Methodist Church. Apply online: <http://jobs.stlukesokc.org>.

**Assistant Director of Youth Ministries:** Part-time. Norman-St. Stephen's UMC, Erin Floyd, [ststephensumc@coxinet.net](mailto:ststephensumc@coxinet.net).

**Youth Director:** Part-time. Madill-First

UMC, Brett Thomasson, 580-795-3732.

**Elementary Children's Ministry Director:** Full-time. Norman-McFarlin UMC, Michael Andrew, [mandres@mcfarlinumc.org](mailto:mandres@mcfarlinumc.org).

**Director of Children's Ministries:** Full-time. Enid-Willow View UMC, Lesly Broadbent, [willowviewumc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:willowviewumc@sbcglobal.net).

**Director of Youth and Young Adults:** Full-time. Enid-First UMC, Randy Mitchell, [rmitchell@firstchurchenid.com](mailto:rmitchell@firstchurchenid.com), 580-237-2041.

**Worship Leader/Pianist:** Part-time. Verden UMC, David Gardner, 405-247-3175, [fumcanadarko@gmail.com](mailto:fumcanadarko@gmail.com).

**Pianist and/or Organist:** Part-time. Ponca City-Albright, Scott Spencer, 580-765-6432, [aumcpastor@sbcglobal.net](mailto:aumcpastor@sbcglobal.net).

## New People, New Places

### Questions and Answers

#### Q. Who can apply for a grant?

A. Any church of any size, located anywhere within the Oklahoma Conference, or any Conference ministry may apply.

#### Q. What projects are likely to be approved?

A. Projects that show a specific plan for reaching new, younger, and/or more diverse people and helping them become world-changing disciples of Jesus Christ

#### Q. What will an applicant need to show?

A. Be specific about which new people you are planning to reach.

Show specifically how these new people will become disciples of Jesus Christ.

Show a large percentage of the church or entity is vested in the project.

Show how this project will be financially sustainable after a maximum of three years without ongoing need of NPNP funds.

#### Q. What sorts of projects are likely not to be approved?

A. Projects that are not specific, that cannot show a specific plan for disciple-making, or that primarily strengthen existing members

#### Q. Is there a maximum amount we can request?

A. No. If approved, your project may receive all or part of the requested amount.

Every recipient will provide a timely financial audit to the Conference, plus an annual accounting of how the funds were spent.

#### Q. Can we apply for more than one year's funding?

A. Money will be granted for one year. You will need to indicate if you want funding beyond one year. NPNP grants may be awarded to a project for three years at maximum.

#### Q. How will you know we are reaching the outcome we projected?

A. A team will visit your site during 2016. Also, your church or ministry will provide an annual report, showing specific progress toward the goals you presented.

## Innovative ministry

continued from page 1

He called special attention to the Sept. 15 deadline. It replaces a previously announced date in June.

Some modifications were made in the application process as a result of Annual Conference floor discussion about the overall NPNP timeline, he said.

You also are urged to submit your request by Sept. 1. All applications received by that first day of September will be checked and, if incomplete, the applicant will be notified in time to correct



Photo by Michelle Pitt

Annual Conference delegates vote on an amendment May 29.

## Youth delegation examines issues

Some proposals generated extensive discussion at the 2014 Annual Conference, including the 2015 budget and its NPNP line item. Here is a speech given May 29 by a youth delegate. The Conference's Strategic Plan seeks to engage more young people in church life, and thus *Contact* shares that voice here.

On behalf of the majority of the Annual Conference Youth Delegation, we would like to express our support for the proposed budget including *New People, New Places*.

After the roundtable discussion, most of us were still conflicted about several of the ideas addressed. Because of that, we worked late into the night to take a deeper look and get a better understanding of NPNP.

Looking at these funds and what exactly this would entail, we came to the conclusion that these cuts are not drastic enough to severely erode any ministry that the AC helps support. They still have financial support from sources other than Apportionments. If we are passionate about our current ministries and want to see them continue, our local [churches] can take on the task of finding creative ways to help sustain these programs.

Second, NPNP could provide us the op-

portunity to reach new people that our current ministries do not.

This change is essential to any growth, and as Ecclesiastes 11:6 states: "Sow your seed in the morning, and in the evening let your hands not be idle, for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will be equally well."

NPNP would challenge us to trust that if we sow the seeds, God will water, and we will reap the harvest!

Third is that our current trend in the Church is decline: in worship attendance, in funds, and in membership. This program could create the investment opportunity for churches big and small to reach out in ways that they see fit for their communities to reverse this trend.

And last, we have staff constantly working for the betterment of our Conference. We are saying yes as a vote of confidence in them. But, Conference staff, be aware that we will hold you accountable!

We cannot predict the outcome of this new ministry; however, we can predict that when we give God our very best, He is faithful in the outcome.

— Provided by Katie Shewey, an equalization delegate for Enid District and a lay speaker and youth member of Enid-First UMC (edited for length)

and submit a refined request by Sept. 15.

Stinson's office receives each digital grant application. Within the ACC membership, a designated NPNP team reviews the requests and holds interviews with selected applicants. The team's recommendations go to the full ACC. Projects affirmed by ACC advance to the Council on Finance & Administration and, if endorsed by that group, are voted on at Annual Conference.

Stinson said NPNP funds will become available on June 1, 2015.

*New People, New Places* is a new Conference Apportionment, approved as part of the 2015 budget by delegates in late May.

## Timeline

**Now – Sept. 15** – Submit your group's grant application online. (Submissions by Sept. 1 will be checked for completeness and thus can be modified before the final deadline.)

**Sept. 18** – Letters go out to all applicants. Those invited to follow-up interviews will be directed to a website to select preferred day and time. Those not chosen for interviews also will be notified. The NPNP Team will assign a person to help you learn how to strengthen your next application.

**Oct. 14 and Nov. 18** – Face-to-face interviews take place. One or two laity and one clergy person will be interviewed. Questions are provided in advance. The interview will last about 30 minutes.

**Feb. 21, 2015** – Annual Conference Council acts on grant recommendations from NPNP Team.

**Feb. 23** – Letters go out to approved applicants. Approval does not become official until affirmed by vote of the 2015 Annual Conference. However, those groups affirmed by the ACC will be notified of the amount for the expected grant.

**March** – Council on Finance & Administration acts on NPNP recommendations from ACC.

**Late May** – Annual Conference delegates act on CFA recommendations. The NPNP Team hopes to share your vision and story at the 2015 conference, to encourage others to apply for 2016 funding.

**June 1** – NPNP funds become available for grant winners.

## Save the date

### Young Adult Regional Gathering/Mission Day

July 25-27 | Camp Egan

Contact: Andy Henson,  
andyhenson@gmail.com  
or

Matt Franks, justfranks@gmail.com

### St. Yootz Day

Aug. 9 | Frontier City, OKC

This day of fun benefits  
Youth Service Fund

Includes concert by  
Newsboys and Andy Mineo  
<http://www.okumc.org/ysf>

### 5-Day Academy for Spiritual Formation

"The Way of Compassion"

Oct. 19-24 | Canyon Camp

Leaders: Safiyah Fosua,  
of Wesley Seminary, Indiana;  
and Trevor Hudson, of Benoni, South Africa  
[www.okumc.org/SpiritualFormationAcademy](http://www.okumc.org/SpiritualFormationAcademy)

The Office of Mission presents:

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

Mission Conference

Nov. 14-15 | OKC-Church of the Servant

[www.okumcministries.org/vim/  
equipping\\_the\\_church.htm](http://www.okumcministries.org/vim/equipping_the_church.htm)

Contact: Lori Foster, 405-530-2070

# Motorcycle group makes spiritual connections

By **HOLLY McCRAY**

The standing-room-only crowd roared its support May 16 as Bishop Robert Hayes Jr. received a personalized black leather vest from the United Methodist Motorcycle Association (UMMA).

Every biker has a “road name.” For Hayes, the UMMA leaders chose “The Bish.”

“The Bish” spoke that evening to more than 150 people during *Fire on the Water*, a Christian motorcycle retreat May 16-18 at Fin & Feather Resort, Lake Tenkiller.

This event was launched in 2013 by riders Eddie and Patty Gill, who are members of Tulsa-Christ United Methodist Church.

The Gills are known as the “founding missionaries” of UMMA. Both are certified UM Lay Servants; they travel and witness as Million Miles 4 Christ Ministries.

UMMA chaplain is Stephen Hale, another biker and an associate pastor of OKC-Chapel Hill. In March 2012, the General Board of Global Ministries certified him as the first UM motorcycle chaplain.

He also currently chairs the evangelism task force of the Oklahoma Conference’s Discipleship Ministry Team.

Rev. Hale said one U.S. statistic makes clear the “huge explosion of people interested in motorcycles and riding them.”

The number of motorcycle licenses issued in the United States grew from 9 million in 2009 to 25 million in 2012, he said.

“That’s a multitude of opportunities for evangelism.”

Hale classified bikers in three categories: the “one-percenters,” or outlaws; the party crowd; and the “everyday people,” who enjoy getting outdoors and who view biking just like boating.

“I minister to people who ride motorcycles from any of those groups,” he summed up.

The Gills and Hale met about three years ago, he recalled. Today the UMMA leadership consists of 10-12 riders and is called the



Roundtable, Hale explained.

An exhibit at the Oklahoma Annual Conference in late May offered relevant information. The Gills were there, talking about the beginning of the association and of their journey as a couple.

The subjects intertwine.

Eddie and Patty met during a divorce workshop at Christ UMC.

“Neither one of us had any idea, even remotely, of getting into another relationship. But God had other ideas,” Patty said.

Four years later, UM clergyman Brantley Tillery officiated at their wedding ceremony, aloft in a hot-air balloon.

The Gills began motorcycling to enjoy the outdoors together and accommodate Patty’s special needs. Diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, she uses a wheelchair.

So Eddie drives their trike, with Patti as a rider. A sidecar works for her, too.

At the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally in South

Dakota, they learned about a Christian outreach there. Eddie said, “477 people gave their life to Christ during Sturgis bike week, through a Southern Baptist ministry. That was beautiful.”

The Gills desired to do more to serve God and sought God’s direction. Eddie experienced a call to “go a million miles” for God and to organize a United Methodist biker ministry, like the Baptist effort.

They have traveled tens of thousands of miles, Eddie said.

“We go and give our testimony. We go and share the story that God has given us,” Patty said. “God just keeps opening doors, and we try to walk through all of them.”

*Fire on the Water* included a 120-mile benefit ride, which raised \$1,277 for children with disabilities to attend summer camp. And the bikers enjoyed lunch Saturday at Camp Egan. They were invited to worship Sunday at Cookson UMC with Pastor Rudy Freese.



**Left: Christian bikers bond during worship May 16 at a retreat beside Lake Tenkiller. Guitarist is Matt Thompson of Ponca City-Asbury. Members of the United Methodist Motorcycle Association wear vests with the UM cross-and-flame logo. Above: Bishop Hayes tests a ride during the Tulsa District Re-Ignite Workshop, at Boston Avenue UMC.**

Friday’s evening worship with Bishop Hayes stretched beyond four hours.

Hayes preaches powerfully, but he said that he was deeply moved by other speakers and the music during that program.

Everyone was in tears when one biker, a former inmate, gave his testimony, Hayes said. The man described how people had kept insisting that he “try Jesus.” When he did, his life was transformed.

That man’s story affirms the value of the grassroots motorcycle ministry that is UMMA, the bishop said.

The group “is already doing *New People, New Places* to the max. They felt there was a need to be filled among bikers. They took what they had and made something out of it.”

Anyone is welcome to ride with the UMMA. Most members, but not all, are Oklahomans, but the goal is to reach many more riders. Upcoming events are on the website: [www.unitedmethodistma.com](http://www.unitedmethodistma.com).

## Menu includes storytelling tips in breakfast class

A novel way to meet new people: hand out coins at a laundromat.

That’s one tactic among other “Tools for Increasing Your Church’s Vitality” shared by Caitlin Congdon, teaching on that topic at Annual Conference.

Stop describing The United Methodist Church as “we’re dying,” said the speaker from United Methodist Communications (UMCOM) in Nashville.

“Paint a preferred picture, not doom and gloom,” she told 80 people at the early-morning seminar May 29 in the Oklahoma City University student center.

“When we tell our story today, we have to tell it differently. Create a vision.”

She nailed down five behaviors that identify vital congregations: spiritual pastoral leadership, lay leadership development, transcendent worship, small groups that build relationships, and service and mission both local and global.

Congdon said a pastor should connect with 25-50 people outside the church’s life each week. She suggested an accountability partner can help a pastor “be sure you take care of yourself. Be honest about your current situation.”

And she noted surveys state that 72 percent of pastors read only the Bible when preparing sermons. The book “What Not To Say” is on her list of useful supplemental resources.

Her UMCOM class was based on the book “Vital: Churches Changing Communities and the World,” by Jorge Acevedo.

Yet Congdon cautioned against implementing “a borrowed vision” of worship. The service must be relevant to people.

“Don’t just do what outsiders tell you. Who is your community? Maybe you ARE traditional worship.”

A laywoman, Congdon is a small-group leader at her home church.

“Make it more than a Bible study,” she said.

Establish a covenant among a group’s participants. Set up a Facebook page where they can interact.

Always provide small-group leaders with advance training.

Start varied small groups throughout the year. To build excitement, tell stories to all the congregation about one group’s closeness and spiritual growth.

The breakfast program was hosted by the Oklahoma Conference Department of Communications and sponsored by the Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation.



**UMCOM trainer Caitlin Congdon of Nashville answers a question by Sam Welch, who chairs the Conference Board of Communications.**

Joseph Harris, director of Communications, described the seminar as a pilot project, responding to delegate requests on evaluations for more educational opportunities during each Annual Conference. — *Holly McCray*



Volunteer painters freshen an elderly resident's home in Oklahoma City during "Rebuilding Day."

## Rebuilding Day

*3 homes +  
4 churches =  
renewal*

By ALOISE McCULLOUGH

Four United Methodist churches in greater Oklahoma City partnered April 12 for "Rebuilding Day," to help restore three homes for senior citizens in the capital.

About 150 volunteers from Chapel Hill, St. Andrew's, Quayle, and Edmond-Summit churches combined their efforts at those sites during the annual day of service directed by the nonprofit organization Rebuilding Together OKC.

The four churches had not previously worked together in this way, leaders said. Chapel Hill directed and invited the other churches to participate.

The goal was "to provide a way for people to share the love of Christ through neighborhood ministries," according to a Chapel Hill spokesperson.

In northwest Oklahoma City, the volunteers scraped, primed, and painted the exteriors of two homes. Participants from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints worked beside them at one residence.

One homeowner was unchurched. "It is great to show the love of Christ to this man," said one United Methodist.

At the third site, in the city's northeast, interior alterations needed to be done in the home of a woman who said she was a Baptist. The senior's faith was so vibrant, volunteers said. They felt blessed to be of service to her.

"Programs of this nature will bring some understanding to other types of faiths," said one volunteer. "It is all based upon the fellowship of serving others."

Rebuilding Together OKC seeks to improve homes and lives of low-income, elderly homeowners in the metro area. During the 2013 Oklahoma Annual Conference, one of the hands-on mission projects was with this organization.

# Winners inspire

## Annual Denman Awards recognize personal evangelism

The prestigious Denman Award for evangelism went to layman Marty Anderson and clergyman David L. Daniel at Annual Conference.

Through the national Foundation for Evangelism, this award promotes the cause of evangelism in every annual conference of The United Methodist Church.

### Layman Marty Anderson

For 23 years, Anderson has volunteered in several roles with The Education and Employment Ministry (TEEM), which is a UM-related aid agency in downtown Oklahoma City.

He came to know Christ in his 30s. The businessman is an active member of OKC-First United Methodist Church.

Mark McAdow, senior pastor of First Church, said Anderson is a TEEM luncheon speaker who shares the Gospel every week.

"He has led over 2,900 people to Christ over the years, and follows up with each one for an additional five weeks, providing encouragement and a Bible," wrote Rev. McAdow.

Anderson also preached monthly at the Oklahoma City Correctional Center, for two years.

"He stands in the gap on behalf of the marginalized," wrote Nancy Adler, a lifelong friend.

Anderson is on the Steering Committee for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. He trained 26 counselors for one of Graham's

crusades, and he is working to bring Franklin Graham to Oklahoma City in 2015.

Rev. Adler wrote, "Our denomination is known for having open doors. Marty goes inside the doors to be fed. When he is filled up, he goes outside to reach out in Jesus' name. The open doors go both ways. And he has the key. It's Jesus." (*excerpted*)

### Pastor David Daniel

Rev. Daniel is senior pastor of Ada-First UMC, where he was appointed in 2010.

During his tenure, he has led the congregation in significant growth and in programs such as Park Ministries, the Lambs, and nursing home ministry. A contemporary worship is in its planning stages. Staffing has increased.

He is directing the congregation in the "Readiness 360" venture, which evaluates the vision and mission of Ada-First. This church is one of six in the Ardmore District chosen to participate in the Conference-supported initiative, which focuses on exploring new frontiers of ministry in specific communities.

Daniel also has been active in the city's Ministerial Fellowship and served as its president.

He is enrolled in a doctoral program at Perkins School of Theology. He was ordained in 1997.

Roberto Escamilla, who is min-



From left are Penny and Marty Anderson, above; and David Daniel with Ray Crawford, below.



ister of evangelism at Ada-First, said Daniel's ministry certainly fulfills the criteria for a Denman recipient: high leadership skills; significant membership growth in the local church; innovative programs and projects that enhance the works of evangelism; a demonstrable concern and caring for persons, especially those who are marginalized; effective evangelism preaching and worship; and a real passion for evangelism that attempts to reach the unchurched person for Christ.

District Superintendent Greg Tener said, "We recognize the visionary leadership and dynamic preaching of a truly dedicated servant of God."

## Rural fellowship awards go to 6 churches

Six congregations received special recognition by the Oklahoma United Methodist Rural Fellowship (UMRF) during that group's Annual Conference banquet on May 29.

Town/Rural Church Awards went to: Delaware, Elmore City, and Wetumka, which average worship attendance of 40 or fewer people; and Nowata, Ringling, and Vian, where attendance averages 41 to 100.

"Their innovative programs serve as a wonderful example of how each church can re-ignite the love of Christ, no matter their size," stated the banquet bulletin.

Here are a few highlights for each church.

- Elmore City UMC has changed its culture from "having church" to "being the church." A casual worship service is new; a Wednesday night meal/Bible study launched recently. The church opened the only food bank in this town of about 700. And an Internet video ministry reaches about 300 people weekly.

- Averaging 18 in worship, Delaware UMC has two major outreach programs. Bible Zone is a children's after-school program on Tuesdays. And a quilt ministry has provided about 600 small quilts across four years to people both nearby and as far away as Africa.

- At Wetumka UMC, programming frames this small congregation's love for the Lord. The "Angel Pillow" project

serves children who do not have their own pillows or blankets. New socks are free from the church's Clothes Closet. And the "Home for Christmas" evangelism project included Christmas goodies for all.

- Nowata UMC members take to heart Jesus' charge of "Feed my sheep." They served a bereavement dinner to 50 people in a family unaffiliated with the church. And a weekly meal feeds about 280 people in this town of 3,731. The meal is fully funded by donations.

- The century-old Ringling UMC recently paid in full the debt on its \$1.1 million building addition, which includes a community playground. An active youth group participates at district and Conference levels, too.

- Vian UMC discarded its mindset as an aging, declining congregation and became a church of growth and energy. An outdoor gazebo was built for both church and community events. Vacation Bible School was held for the first time in many years, a youth group launched, and a praise band formed. A Wednesday evening worship service is new, and the church hosts community "Nights of Praise."

UMRF officers are: Claudean Harrison, president; Sheri Lashley, vice president; Marsha Purtell, secretary; and Dave Karges, treasurer.

*Turn the page for more awards!*

# Laity declare 'It Worked for Us'!

The Conference Board of Laity recently saluted 13 churches for outstanding lay-led ministries.

The board typically chooses one church in each district to receive "It Worked for Us" awards annually. The quality entries this year merited additional recognition.

Also during the board's Annual Conference awards luncheon May 27, at OKC-St. Luke's, the Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation presented \$200 to each winning church.

Performing artist Kyle Dillingham entertained. A graduate of Oklahoma City University, he is known as "Oklahoma's Musical Ambassador."

Conference Lay Leader Chuck Stewart of Stilwell reported \$2,500 in donations were collected at the luncheon and will support Water4, an aid project endorsed by Dillingham.

Below are snapshots of some "It Worked for Us" award winners.

## Prayer Blanket Ministry

Women of Seiling UMC, Woodward District, have been sewing small quilts, called prayer blankets, as gifts to people in the community. Most blankets are about 2 feet square.

When the grandson of a church member was diagnosed with a brain tumor, the quilters prayed over one of the blan-



Photo by Holly McCray

**Internationally renowned musician Kyle Dillingham performs during the Board of Laity awards luncheon on May 27.**

advertise, manage, find speakers, and cook.

The event began as a men's fellowship breakfast, initiated by Johnathon Pipkin in 1997. It expanded to include women and children in 1999. The devotional speakers are from varied denominations, clergy and laity, and attendance averages about 50 people from Bokeshe and nearby communities.

kets, and Pastor Paul Hamilton took it to the teen in the hospital.

"It wasn't long before I began taking prayer blankets to others in the congregation who were facing a surgery or dealing with an illness," said Rev. Hamilton.

Now on Sunday mornings, the congregation gathers around a blanket, holding its corners and praying for the person's healing.

These blankets have become an important point of contact for the congregation, Hamilton said.

The members take seriously the injunction to pray for one another. The circle prayers have become an important expression of their faith.

## Community Fellowship Breakfast

Laity of Bokeshe UMC, Muskogee District, have hosted a Community Fellowship Breakfast for 16 years on the first Saturday of each month. Laity

## Winter Hugs Mission

The Winter Hugs program by Gracemont UMC, Lawton District, provides winter clothing to elementary students.

In November and December, the church collects hats, underwear, gloves, and scarves. Some donations come from people not attending Gracemont. The items decorate a Hugs Tree in the sanctuary.

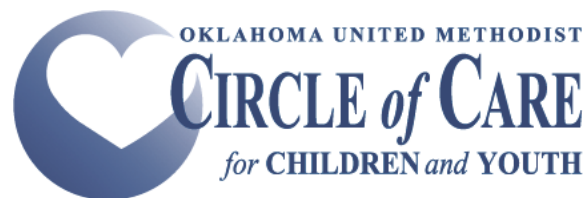
On the first Sunday of Epiphany, the church prays over the clothing and then it is delivered to the school. Principals and counselors distribute as needed.

## Community Meal

On the last Saturday of each month, congregants of Ripley UMC, Stillwater District, cook and serve a free community meal. Residents young and old enjoy the nourishment of both food and fellowship. At the church, 30-50 meals are served, and 30 meals are delivered to those homebound.

## More winning projects:

"Papa's Garden," Elmore City-First, Ardmore District  
 "Stitches With Love," Delaware UMC, Bartlesville District  
 "CenterShot Ministries Archery Program," Cheyenne-First, Clinton District  
 "Second Wednesday Family Fun Night," Salem UMC, Enid District  
 "Friendship Kitchen Ministry," Eufaula-First, McAlester District  
 "Tween Program" and "Senior Citizen Lunch," Piedmont-First, OKC-North District  
 "Fidelis Sunday School Class Outreach to Palo Duro Apartments," OKC-Mayfair Heights, OKC-North District  
 "Sewing Class," Washington UMC, OKC-South District  
 "Set Free To Serve Mission Weekend," St. Stephen's, Tulsa District



## 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 130 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 10 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

Kay Adair  
 Bill & Karen Anderson  
 Harvey & Alene Arnold  
 Donald & Cheryl Baker  
 Randy & Eddisu Barker  
 Don & Lynn Batson  
 David & Janet Battles  
 Enloe & Wanda Baumert  
 David & Laura Beal  
 Mike & Jeannene Blevins  
 Don & Karla Bowen  
 Clara Brown  
 Spencer & Mary Brown  
 Cheryl Burnet  
 Lacey & Mary Butler  
 Ivan Bys  
 Michael & Leanne Chaffin  
 Arlene Chriswell  
 Ralph & Midge Coffman  
 Randall & Kathryn Coit  
 Lloyd E. & Melissa Cole  
 Edgar & Betty Collins  
 Robert & Debbie Craine  
 C.C. & Anna Marie Crooch Estate  
 John & Jamie Crooch  
 Michael & Janet Crooch  
 Philip & Lisa Crow

Curtis & Pat Crowe  
 Anna Cypert  
 Bobby & Shirley Darnell  
 Marsha Davis  
 John Dixon  
 William & Rev. Donna Dodson  
 Robert & Brenda Duran  
 Gregory & Mary Ann Edwards  
 Barbara Eskridge  
 Don & Wanda Fischer  
 Bill & Jo Fowler  
 David & Cindy Frieze  
 Mike & Elaine Frizzell  
 Jerry & Jane Gamble  
 Jeannine Gibbens  
 Robert & Prudy Gorrell  
 Jim & Elaine Gragg  
 Bud & Jane Griffy  
 Earl & Marlene Haggard  
 George & Jo Hall  
 Marie Hancock  
 Rudolph & Madeline Hargrave  
 Ralph & Linda Harker  
 Edward & Valerie Hatley  
 Bob & Dee Hayes  
 John & Anne Heaton  
 Billy & Ann Hebblethwaite  
 Jono & Jenny Helmerich

Jim & Mary Nell Holder  
 Mark & Cindy Howard  
 Ross & Jane Hutchinson  
 Robert & Ann Ivester  
 Mr. & Mrs. Ivan Keatley  
 Keith Kennedy  
 Steve & Suzan Knight  
 Brian & Julie LaPat  
 Greg & Anita LaPat  
 Robert Lee, Jr.  
 Ed & Melba Livermore  
 Ralph & Elaine Lockstone  
 Mr. & Mrs. Hal Long  
 G.W. & Cheryl Lowry  
 Joe Lucas & Kay McSpadden  
 Bryan & Vicki Mannering  
 Emery & Lisa Mason  
 Dwight Maulding  
 Irma McCaskill  
 Dick & Lavonn McKnight  
 Bob & Doris McKown  
 Burrell & JoAnn McNaught  
 Billy & Lora Meade  
 Lou & Pat Meadors  
 Paul & Ann Milburn  
 Larry & Sandy Mocha  
 Mary & Kirt E. Moelling  
 Mike & Christy Mordy  
 David & Laura Morrison

Ted & Laura Mosteller  
 Clark & Kay Musser  
 Jim Neel & Jan King  
 Stan Nichols  
 Chuck & DeeAnn Nordean  
 Clark Nutting  
 Dee & Barbie Paige  
 Bob & Peggy Peters  
 Lenert & Bobbie Pfeiler  
 Rosalie Rahe  
 Allan Rau  
 Donald & Valerie Reeves  
 Anna Richardson  
 John & Helen Riley  
 Joe & Judy Robinson  
 Gary & Sharon Roth  
 Richard & Johnce Ryerson  
 Gale and Martha Sadler  
 Bill & Cynthia Sawatzky  
 Mike Self & Shannon Nakvinda  
 Stanley & Sherry Selvidge  
 Logan & Donna Sharpe  
 Arden & Rita Smith  
 Bill & Martha Smith  
 Robert & Cherie Staples  
 Craig Stinson & Krista Jones  
 Carolyn J. Taylor  
 Andrew & Mary Tevington

Ken & June Tucker  
 Milton & Patricia VanDerwiele  
 Jim & Vickie Wagner  
 Charles & Ila Watson  
 Bob & Kathy West  
 Bob & Karen Williams  
 Charles S. Wise  
 David & Suzan Wolf  
 Bill & Lissa Wright  
 Donald & Barbara Wright  
 Ernestine Wright  
 Steve & Ann Zenthoefler

Boston Ave UMC,  
 Wesley Fellowship  
 Claremore First UMC, UMW  
 Grace UMC (OKC),  
 Pathfinder SS Class  
 Grove First UMC, UMW  
 Highland Park UMC  
 Lawton Centenary UMC  
 Nicoma Park UMC  
 Thrift Store  
 Okmulgee UMC, UMM  
 Okmulgee UMC, UMW  
 St. Andrew's UMC (OKC)  
 Wesley UMC Shawnee, UMM  
 Wesley UMC Shawnee, UMW

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

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