



Photo by Chris Tabberer

DAYSPRING DELIGHT — Bishop Robert Hayes Jr. and 600 Dayspring campers radiate joy in opening worship July 10. The bishop preached to the large group of teens, ranging from ninth-graders to newly graduated seniors, from 29 churches, at Camp WOW, located midway between Ada and McAlester. Ben Freeman and Shelly Paige of Edmond-New

Covenant UMC led worship during Dayspring, July 10-14. Spencer Smith of First UMC, Kearney, Mo., preached in the other worship services. The teens also were treated to poetic messages from Amena Brown and Christian music from Matt “DJ Opdiggy” Owen. Another Dayspring session was held at Camp CrossPoint, beside Lake Texoma. Dayspring started

in 1969 and grew out of the lay-witness movement; students share their stories with one another and explore how they can continue to share what God is doing in their lives when they return home. Oklahoma United Methodist camps for all ages take place throughout the year. Enjoy more summertime camp photos on page 8.



Photo by Holly McCray

ACTS 2 CHURCH OPENS NEW DOORS — On July 27, the Raness family – Ben, Crystal, and their three sons – cut the wide red ribbon to officially open the new sanctuary building for Edmond-Acts 2 UMC, located at Northwest Pennsylvania Avenue and Covell Road. Story, page 4.



TUNING IN AT MISSION U — Fran Harbert of OKC-Sunny Lane UMC tests a device that amplifies sound during a Mission U workshop July 19 at Oklahoma City University. One study topic was “The Church and People With Disabilities.” Story, page 7.



LOCAL-CHURCH GIFTS — After a VIM mission, Prague UMC member Diana Kinzey launched a project that provided banners and paraments to a church in Costa Rica. “Ministry Snapshots,” page 4, summarizes news from several churches.

'Homegrown' training appeals to seminary students

New provisional elders Andy Nelms and Adam Shahan took turns May 28 at Annual Conference telling about their ministry journeys. The two expect to graduate this month from Saint Paul School of Theology at Oklahoma City University.

Their presentation on behalf of the seminary is excerpted here.



Shahan



Nelms

Thank you for your willingness to support the reimagining of theological education in the South Central Jurisdiction by providing your dollars, your members called to set-aside and specialized church ministry, and your prayers for your United Methodist seminary in Oklahoma, Saint Paul School of Theology.

[We] come before you this afternoon with a simple message: "Thank you for the opportunity to be homegrown."

What does homegrown mean? It means:

- two infants could be baptized in their local United Methodist churches, and those infants would grow and develop in their local children's ministries and youth groups;

- these youth would attend Conference camps and hear, respond to, and nurture their calls into ordained ministry;

- those youth would graduate high school and attend the Wimberly School of Religion at Oklahoma City University;

- those students would graduate from OCU and enroll in Saint Paul School of Theology at Oklahoma City University;

- while at Saint Paul School of Theology at Oklahoma City University, they would serve as full-time licensed local pastors in the local church; and

- those students at Saint Paul would be allowed to stand in front of you today, both soon to graduate from seminary and to be

commissioned this evening.

For this opportunity, we say, "Thank you." Thank you for the opportunity to attend seminary in Oklahoma.

Thank you for the opportunity to put our education into practice at Moore-First (Rev. Shahan) and at OKC-Nichols Hills (Rev. Nelms).

Thank you for the opportunity to attend seminary alongside many friends and colleagues, whom we will serve alongside the rest of our lives in the local church.

Simply put, thank you for the opportunity to be homegrown.

As [we] come to the end of our seminary career, we say thank you to the Conference into which we were born, the Conference that nourished us, the Conference that has educated us, and the Conference that we have served and will continue to serve.

Thank you for the gift of your unyielding support of Saint Paul School of Theology.

Thank you for your willingness to engage the connection and nurture homegrown ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

For [all] who are feeling the call into

Saint Paul School of Theology
at Oklahoma City University

Commencement

4 p.m. Friday, Aug. 22
Smith Chapel,

Oklahoma City University

Speaker: Bishop Steven Charleston

ministry or are prayerfully considering higher theological education and training for leadership in the local church, share the availability of theological education in Oklahoma City in the heart of our jurisdiction.

Saint Paul School of Theology is your United Methodist seminary in Oklahoma and the Great Plains, whose graduates are serving country churches, grand houses of worship, [and in] District and Conference administration.

Let us continue to embrace the growth and development of theological education in our area, and continue to cultivate homegrown ministers for the growth of the kingdom of God!



2014 Bishop's Scholars announced

Each year, Oklahoma City University presents the Bishop's Scholar Award to deserving students as a part of its effort to identify and support academically advanced United Methodist youths who are committed to a career in Christian service to the Church. We are very proud to announce the Bishop's Scholars for 2014.

Melaina Riley

A worship service four years ago at Youth Force OKC is one Melaina Riley will never forget. She received a phone call that a longtime friend had died after battling leukemia for a year.

She approached the altar, heartbroken. She soon was surrounded by others in her youth group and then by people she didn't know, all of them praying for her.

Months later, Melaina realized that experience was the beginning of a call to ministry.

She has been very active in OKC-Quail Springs UMC, where she offers her gifts of playing flute, trombone, and handbells; serving as liturgist; and leading the children's time.

Her pastor, David Clewell, wrote, "I believe she has gifts and graces for ministry, and I have encouraged her to continue to listen to her calling to ministry."

That calling brought Melaina to visit OCU, where she met with Professor Sharon Betsworth, director of the School of Religion, and was welcomed by several students who encouraged her to join them.

Melaina said she is ready to answer the call captured in the title of a favorite book, "Here if You Need Me."

Joey Simpson

Joey Simpson likes to be involved in a variety of activities. He attended Boys State, asked probing questions about literature in his English class, and studied engineering at Francis Tuttle Technology Center. He has been very active in the youth ministry of OKC-Church of the Servant.

Within his wide array of interests, however, Joey never really felt a passion for a particular career.

In his church, Joey has served as a Confirmation leader, managed multimedia for the contemporary service, invited friends to be part of the youth group, and, a particular favorite, participated in mission trips.

On a Spring Break mission trip to New Orleans last year, Joey was asked to give a witness of what the trip meant to him. He spoke passionately about how all his trips enabled him to form strong relationships with God and others. Members of the group told him that they were moved by his testimony.

That caused Joey to think he might have found a career calling after all. He talked to clergy on the church's staff. Senior Pastor Robert Gorrell said he already had noted that commitment in the young man.

It seems everyone knew Joey was called before he did, and now he continues that journey at OCU with the support of his congregation.



Riley



Bolton



Simpson

Jackie Bolton

Attending OCU will be like coming home for Jackie Bolton. Her mother graduated from the law school in 2010, and Jackie has been on campus every Monday for four years, participating in the Oklahoma Youth Orchestra.

Her love of music has been expressed during her time at Yukon High School as a member of a vocal ensemble and as a three-year All-State clarinet player. She has also been drum major for the Pride of Yukon marching band for three years.

Her senior pastor, Michael Burkett of Yukon-Good Shepherd UMC, pointed out, "Rarely is a student given that responsibility so early."

Jackie's work as a tutor for at-risk children and an internship in her church youth program led her to sense a calling to youth ministry.

We encourage all clergy and laypersons to identify youths in your congregations who express interest and ability in ministry. Encourage them to apply to become a Bishop's Scholar and for other scholarships to OCU. For details, visit www2.okcu.edu/religiouslife/scholarships.aspx or contact Rita Himes, 405-208-5060, rhimes@okcu.edu.





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

The dog days are upon us

“Brace up your minds, (and) then, keep cool.” — 1 Peter 1:13, Moffatt Translation

By BISHOP ROBERT HAYES JR.

Greeks and Romans first used the phrase “dog days,” referring to the hot, sultry period between July 24 and Aug. 24. They associated the term with that time of year because that’s when Sirius, the “Dog Star,” begins appearing at sunrise. The ancient peoples believed that bright star’s heat combined with the Sun’s to cause the scorching temperatures and scarcity of rain.

You don’t have to ask the Greeks or Romans. If you live in Oklahoma, you can testify to the misery of such days!

“Dog days” were long believed to be an evil time, when “the Sea boiled, the Wine turned sour, Dogs grew mad, and all other creatures became languid; causing to man, among other diseases, burning fevers, hysterics, and frenzy.” (Brady’s *Clavis Calendaria*, 1813)

The “dog days” even are referenced in the 1552 edition of *The Book of Common Prayer*, highlighting the beginning and ending dates.

In the midst of the summer days of 2014, I share a timely verse from James Moffatt’s translation of the Old and New Testaments, published in 1922.

He offers up this refreshing passage that ends with the words “keep cool.”

As the temperature neared 100 degrees



Hayes

on a recent day, those words captured my attention and sent me immediately to commentaries and other books that interpret Peter’s thoughts. I sought a cool oasis for my spirit for that moment, but what I found has lasting value.

Behind this great passage is a well-timed message for the first-century church – with even greater implications for us today.

Peter was warning his sisters and brothers in the faith to hold steady, to remain focused. Instead of the flustered fever of unbelief or bewildered panic in the face of danger, Peter urged the followers of Christ to keep cool heads by fixing their hearts in an unshakable faith!

As in Peter’s day, Christians now are being greatly tested.

- The U.S. Religious Landscape Survey found that 28 percent of adults have left the faith in which they were raised, in favor of another religion or no religion at all.

- It also reports that the number of Americans (16.1 percent) who say they are unaffiliated with any particular faith is more than double the number of those who say they were not affiliated with any particular religion as children.

- Among Americans ages 18-29, *one out of every four* says he/she is not affiliated with any particular religion.

Consider the fluctuating dynamics of U.S. society. You easily may conclude that what people believed in 1813 is true for today: the sea is boiling, the wine turning sour, and the dogs are going mad. Human-kind seems in a frenzy.

It is up to you and me – the modern-day followers of our Lord – to keep “cool” and take to heart Peter’s long-ago advice.

Practicing a secondhand faith is not acceptable for a disciple of Jesus Christ. We must not claim belief merely because our parents and grandparents did.

Each person must develop a personal, unswerving commitment to Jesus Christ – a strong belief that stands up against the doubts and fears of this age. You cannot rely any more on saying “I don’t know” when it comes to explaining your faith.

Those who don’t yet know Jesus expect you as a believer to be clear about the deep issues of life and how you experience God’s touch.

Peter told his followers to brace up their minds as people who knew what they believed and what they were doing! He reminded them that they were not ordinary people. They were – we are – claimed by Christ!

Let us not be shallow or soft Christians, blown about like tumbleweeds by today’s winds of change. The world is watching; disciples are still being tested. We need to know without a doubt who and what we believe.

Daniel Webster Whittle was born in 1840 in Chicopee Falls, Mass. At age 21, he joined the Union Army and was deployed to Company B of the 72nd Illinois Infantry during the Civil War. Before he left home he gave his life to Christ, and his mother presented him with a New Testament to take with him.

Whittle was captured and imprisoned

for a brief time. While a prisoner of war, he was obsessed with the teachings of Christ. Day and night he read the book his mother gave him.

He came to know Jesus in an intimate way, and the rest of his life reflected that relationship.

After escaping his confinement, he marched with General Sherman and was promoted to the rank of major. And influenced by evangelist Dwight Moody, Whittle wrote many songs.

The hymn for which he is best known responds to the question: Do you know Jesus?

Perhaps thinking of his own spiritual searching while imprisoned, Whittle confesses that he still did not know many things, but he certainly knew Jesus. He wrote in 1883:

“I know not why God’s wondrous grace to me He hath made known,

“Nor why, unworthy, Christ in love redeemed me for His own.

“But I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able

“To keep that which I’ve committed unto Him against that day.”

Do you know Jesus? If so, “keep cool” in these dog days!

Opportunities

Director of Children’s Ministries: Full-time. OKC-New Hope UMC. Contact Cali Eck, cali@newhopeokc.org.

Communications Assistant: Part-time. Oklahoma Conference Department of Communications, United Methodist Ministry Center. Contact Nyla Wallin, 405-530-2073, nwallin@okumc.org.

Day-Care Director: OKC-Sunny Lane UMC. Send resume to business1011@cox.net or call 405-677-3347.

Music Director: Part-time. OKC-Lakeside UMC. Contact Randy McGuire, lakesideumc.pastor@coxinet.net, 405-843-5777.

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.

Upright piano, free to church in need.

Tuning provided. Pick-up preferred; delivery possible. Morgan Green, Edmond, 405-203-6757.

Assistant Childcare Director: Full-time. OKC-St. Luke’s UMC. Apply online: <http://jobs.stlukesokc.org>.

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

Music Ministry Director: Part-time. Blanchard First UMC. 405-584-3579, mychurch@blanchardfumc.org.

Hammond Organ, free to church in need. Must pick up in Broken Arrow. Contact Roylin Cole, 405-728-1519, rjc333@sbcglobal.net.

(Submit your church job openings for this list to nwallin@okumc.org. There is no charge.)



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Acts 2 occupies new space

By HOLLY MCCRAY

The people of Edmond-Acts 2 Church are on the move spiritually and literally.

July 27 was Transition Sunday for the congregation that meets at Northwest Pennsylvania and Covell Road.

First they crowded into their original sanctuary, built in 2006, and shared memories. Andrea Aggarwal recalled her grandfather's funeral and her own wedding in that space.

Gary Kizziar spoke of his transformed life; his children swayed him to attend Acts 2 with them. He treasures Disciple Bible Study.

"I see a light leading me somewhere. I think ya'll know where," Kizziar told the standing-room-only audience.

Then the newly baptized Raney family

led a sidewalk processional to the brand-new sanctuary building on the property.

Ben, Crystal, and their three sons cut a wide red ribbon, and all the people flooded into a beautiful space that will seat 500 worshippers. The original sanctuary accommodated about 240.

Senior Pastor Mark Foster carried in a cross-topped carved staff and a walking stick, which he brought home from a personal spiritual retreat years ago.

Surveying the new setting, he spoke warmly of members "who didn't take vacations in order to buy chairs," etc. The Building Committee was recognized. The project cost more than \$3.2 million.

A Bible was placed in the foundation when concrete was poured Nov. 13, 2013. The original sanctuary will become multi-purpose space. The church's parking and



The project at Edmond-Acts 2 is due completion in a month.

educational space has doubled. A covered walkway links the original and new structures. Attractive landscaping is installed.

And a paved driveway extends south, connecting Acts 2 with Frontier Elementary School, on adjoining property.

In the new sanctuary July 27, Associate Pastor Andy Nelms blessed the Communion elements as a big-screen video portrayed Jesus serving his disciples.

Adding to God's blessings that day, Rev. Foster baptized a man.

Ministry Snapshots

SOFT SURROUNDINGS — Diana Kinzey was multitasking. She was worshipping at a Methodist church in Belen, Costa Rica, and also thinking of a way she could add to the aesthetics of that space through her passion for sewing, quilting, and embroidery work. (See photo, page 1.)

She dreamed of making a worship banner for that church, which was hosting the Stillwater District Volunteers In Mission team that included her.

Six banners now hang in the island church.

Kinzey returned to Prague UMC excited about her concept for a banner based on I Corinthians 13. While working on it, she realized she had not seen the UM cross-and-flame symbol in the sanctuary. Thus, banner 2.

She then proceeded to create banners representing Holy Communion, Pentecost, and Easter, and one with a purple "Pax" symbol. All wording is in Spanish.

The church also did not have paraments. Pawnee and Agra churches donated two sets.

All the items were mailed after a dedication service at Prague UMC during Lent.



Volunteers at the 4FX Dinner are, from left, Dolly Sanchez, Jennay Buckmaster, and Bethany Wilson.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT — OKC-St. Matthew Church recently celebrated a milestone: 10,000 home-cooked meals have been served through its 4FX Community Dinner Ministry on Wednesdays.

4FX is an acronym for Free, Food, Fun, Fellowship, eXtreme.

Menus have featured Chicken Spaghetti, Mexican Casserole, Chicken & Noodles, Italian Casserole, Breakfast Casserole, Burgers & Dogs, Jamabalya, and more.

Over three years, more than 70 people from both church and community have volunteered, serving about 85 people per evening. David and Diana Hughes lead this well-oiled ministry.

BIBLES FOR GRADUATES — Each graduating senior received a Bible when Colbert UMC hosted the baccalaureate service May 12 for the Colbert High School Class of 2014. Pastor Paula Tucker said the program's leadership was ecumenical.

"Our church was packed that night with lots of parents who never attend church," she wrote to Diana Northcutt, Conference youth coordinator and director of Discipleship for Small Membership Churches.

During the service, one 18-year-old senior gave his testimony. Sadly, he died June 8 after battling cancer for two years. The Bible he had received from the church was included in the funeral.

"I reminded my congregation that we never know when we touch the lives of someone," wrote Rev. Tucker.

CENTERSHOT — The archers took their places on the green-tape line. Focusing on the center of the target, each took a deep breath and let an arrow fly.

Cheyenne-First UMC hosted its first Archery Tournament on March 30, with 24 competitors from Independence UMC and the home church. The team and individual events drew about 50 parents and friends as spectators.

"When we started, we had no idea that there would be so much interest from students and parents alike," said Yvonne Covey, one of the adult leaders from Independence. "They come from all over the rural community where we live."

Clergyman Greg Keith and Greg Allen started the program three years ago at the Cheyenne church. Independence UMC introduced it three months before the tournament.

Tonya Roark is Cheyenne UMC's children's director and archery adviser. "I like the stress on safety and the Christ-centered focus of the materials. Each session is accompanied with a learning module about discipleship and Christian values," she said.

"The Centershot mission statement is 'Making Christ the target of our lives.'" — Pat VerSteege

FOR THE CHILDREN — On July 6, Nicoma Park UMC surprised Mike Slack, director of development for the United Methodist Circle of Care.

On behalf of the UM agency that serves Oklahoma children and youths, Slack was presenting a plaque honoring Nicoma Park as one of the top five

churches in per capita giving to Circle of Care in 2013.

Then he accepted an unexpected gift of \$500 for Circle of Care, presented by volunteers who serve in the church's thrift store.

These four churches complete the COC top-five list: Cheyenne Valley, Broken Arrow-First, Lucien, and Whitehead.



Artwork produced in a Holy C.O.W. class has been used in Wilburton's church bulletins and more.

WEEKDAY WORKS — Holy C.O.W. (Church on Wednesday) has been the response by rural Wilburton UMC to a drop in Sunday School attendance.

"From this program we have seen an increase in growth in our youth, deepening of both youth and adults' faith, and an effective ministry tool to invite people in our community to share their gifts with the church," stated Pastor April Coates.

About 30 youths and adults participate in the Christian education program. Classes are presented by lay leaders, clergy, and professionals from the community.

A concurrent program is offered for children, and a nursery.

"I am proud of the creativity, gifts, and initiative of our laity to teach and learn from one another, in addition to learning from their pastor," said Rev. Coates.

Life-skills classes and theological or Bible studies are offered on a rotating schedule.

Topics for the skills classes have included: Cooking on a budget, conversational Spanish, restorative justice, parenting, self-defense, financial planning, care of creation, and grief support.

Among the theological topics: Exploring the Psalms, the Lord's Prayer, and art and theology.

Briefly

Time to review statistics and Apportionments

The Conference Treasurer's Office in July began calculating local churches' Apportionments for 2015. That task has spurred Treasurer Brian Bakeman to urge pastors now to review their churches' statistical reports, which were submitted in January.

Rev. Bakeman said a surprising number of church leaders find they incorrectly fill out that annual report.

His office can correct errors made up to three years ago before the 2015 Apportionments are set. For help, contact him at bbakeman@okumc.org or Mary Myers at mmyers@okumc.org.

A church's 2015 Apportionments are based on its expenses for 2011-13.

OIMC holds Annual Conference

A 1-mile fun run/walk was among highlights of the 2014 Annual Conference for the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference (OIMC).

The meeting was June 5-8 at the OIMC Southeast Region Center at Antlers. Theme was "Get out of the boat ... Get into the water!" (Matthew 14:27-29), and Bishop Hayes was conference preacher.

The run/walk raised funds to help youths and young adults participate in mission projects. Among the 36 entrants were 14 pastors and Dee Hayes.

- Delegates approved the 2015 budget of \$1,078,843.

- Two new-church starts were celebrated.

- One new elder was ordained, and four new provisional clergy were recognized.

- For the first time, a sign-language interpreter served at the event.

- Among special guests were Gary Batton and Jack Austin Jr., principal chief and assistant chief respectively, of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

Shepherds' Retreat upcoming

A 24-hour Shepherds' Retreat in September is offered for UM clergy and lay leaders.

The event will be Sept. 8-9 at Turtle Rock Farm. The program includes scheduled prayers, eucharist, time in silence, and small-group discussion.

To register, email Susan Ross, ross-susan@sbcglobal.net, or Pat Hoerth, pathoerth@gmail.com.

Apply now for COSROW funds

Deadline is Sept. 1 to submit scholarship applications for female ministry students to the Conference's Commission on the Status & Role of Women (COSROW).

Download the form at www.okumc.org/awards. Submit to Jeff Hiller, who is COSROW chairperson, by email to jahiller@clergy.okumc.org; or by mail to COSROW, attn. Shirley Franklin, 1728 Sandalwood Drive, Norman, OK 73071.



REPURPOSED FOR GOD — On June 2, Weleetka UMC officially closed, and the building and parsonage were transferred to the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference. McAlester District Superintendent Darrell Cates led the service. Pastor Marsha Salazar, her husband, and one member were present. David Wilson accepted the transfer as OIMC Conference superintendent. Several members from area OIMC churches also attended.

Passages

GERMANY — Rev. Charles Hugh Germany of Maplewood, N.J., died July 13, 2014.

Charles was born in Otis, Colo., on Nov. 14, 1922. He held degrees from Oklahoma City University, Drew Theological Seminary, and Columbia University. While studying at OCU, he pastored at Marshall and Harrah.

He married Julia Lee Hancock in 1946. They were in missionary service in Japan from 1947 to 1963.

In 1965, the couple moved to New Jersey,

and Rev. Dr. Hughes joined the World Division staff of the General Board of Global Ministries. He retired as deputy general secretary in 1989.

Among survivors are his wife, Julia; children Stephen, Susan, and Lisa; seven grandchildren and two-great-grandchildren.

Memorial service will be Aug. 16 at Winchester Gardens in Maplewood. Memorials to: UMCOR or Winchester Gardens Resident Association Scholarship Fund.

Legacy Planning Using Real Estate – Part 1

John and Susan bought a vacant lot with expansive views on Mt. Crested Butte. They had planned to build a second home so that their family could enjoy both the winters and summers there. However, as time passed, John's job kept him on the road and the children grew up before John and Susan had the financial resources to build on the land.

Over the years the lot has increased in value. It is now worth \$400,000. They paid \$40,000 for the lot in 1984. Since the lot has increased in value and the children are out on their own, they began thinking about selling the lot. However, they also wanted to avoid paying so much tax on the gain.

Susan serves as the chair of her church's endowment fund program. Both she and John would like to make a gift to establish an endowment to fund new ministries and enrich current ministries. They were thinking about making a gift of 25% of the property for the endowment.

Their CPA advised them that they could probably give about twice as much with almost the same cost if they gave the property to the church prior to the sale rather than writing a check after the sale. They would get an income tax deduction for the value of the gift plus avoid capital gains tax on the 25% interest given to the church.

The deduction for the gift offset a large portion of the tax on the \$300,000 they received when the property was actually sold. They were pleased with the "double benefit" from giving the property and the church received a very nice gift. See Summary of Benefits, at right.

Contact David Battles, CPA, at 800-259-6863 or 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
Cash to Donor	\$300,000
Tax on Gain	\$50,760*
Taxes Saved	\$33,000*
Net to Donor	\$282,240
Charitable Gift	\$100,000

**Includes only Federal income tax*



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The global church

Christians and Muslims in Sierra Leone have allied in the fight against the Ebola epidemic in that nation.

The Religious Leaders Task Force on Ebola, chaired by United Methodist Bishop John Yambasu, launched July 11.

The UM Health Center in Manjama was quarantined July 4 following the deaths of two infected children.

United Methodists also have scaled down activities countrywide, including cancelling two main annual events: a pastors' retreat and children's camp.

Medical Officer Alhaji Turay said the authority of religious leaders is important in convincing people to take the epidemic seriously. (United Methodist News Service)

United Methodist young people have urged leaders of the denomination to "seek solutions that promote our global unity" and not be divided by issues such as homosexuality. Meeting in the Philippines, the Global Young People's Convocation & Legislative Assembly adopted the unity statement on July 19. (UMNS)

First United Methodist Church of Dallas is playing a lead role in that city's interfaith humanitarian response to the immigration crisis along the U.S.-Mexico border, reported *The Dallas Morning News*.

An associate pastor of the church contacted the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley for a list of needs. Donors were generous. "Amo a los Niños. Love the Children" proclaims a banner.

Amid U.S. news articles about the decline of religious affiliation, people are still joining UM churches.

The growth is clear in data from more than 32,000 UM churches. The percentage of "highly vital" churches more than doubled between 2010 and 2012 — from 14.8 to 33.9 percent.

The report also found 34 percent of churches grew in worship attendance in 2012.

The denomination bases a congregation's vitality on four areas: growth, member involvement in the congregation, engagement in community, and giving. (UMNS)

The website UMCGiving.org has undergone a major redesign, with easier navigation.

One section is specifically for local-church leaders and pastors, with downloadable resources to help inspire giving by members and with ideas to equip leaders to discuss giving.

A section for members focuses on biblical reasons for giving and highlights opportunities such as Special Sundays.

Additionally, feature stories and poignant videos emphasize how United Methodists have positively affected lives through generosity. (UMNS)



At a June 12 reception in Oklahoma City are (from left) OCU President Robert Henry; Gilbert Wembodinga, dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at Africa University; Assistant to the Bishop Joseph Harris, also an AU Advisory Committee member; Susan Barnes, associate professor of OCU School of Nursing; Munashe Furusa, new AU vice chancellor; Bishop Robert Hayes Jr.; and Jeremy Basset, director of the Oklahoma Conference Office of Mission.

Africa University and Oklahoma City University

Common roots, new branches

By **CHERIAN THOMAS**

A healthy relationship is developing between the nursing schools of Africa University and Oklahoma City University.

On June 12 in Oklahoma City, their representatives cemented an agreement for collaboration by these United Methodist-related entities.

A reception that day at the United Methodist Ministry Center celebrated the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. OCU's president and AU's vice chancellor were in attendance, as well as Bishop Robert Hayes Jr.

The Kramer School of Nursing at OCU and the School of Nursing at the Faculty of Health Sciences, AU, have a common heritage and some common goals.

Health is a universal denominator, and ill health has no geographic boundaries. It was soon apparent to Jesus that His ministry had to expand beyond teaching and preaching, to include healing the many who flocked to Him.

The Church continued to provide healing ministry down the ages; for John Wesley, caring for the sick was an integral part of his calling. The United Methodist Church has built hospitals and developed nursing schools around the world.

The United Methodist Church, in response to a call by two bishops from Africa,

committed itself in the 1980s to establish a center for higher learning that would cater to students from all over Africa. AU officially began in 1992 on 1,542 acres of land donated by The United Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. The campus is 10-plus miles from the town of Mutare, Zimbabwe.

The AU Faculty of Health Sciences was started in 2005 and provides graduate-level degrees in nursing, public health, and medical laboratory technology; and an undergraduate degree in health sciences management.

In Africa, nurses are the primary caregivers in many hospitals, and investing in nursing schools is a logical way to improve the health of the community.

In November 2013, three Oklahomans traveled to Mutare: Mary Brenner, OCU director of academic services; Susan Barnes from Kramer School of Nursing; and Jeremy Basset, director of the Oklahoma Conference Office of Mission. They met with officials and staff of both AU and specifically the School of Nursing.

That group's initial agreement to work together led to the fruitful Oklahoma City meeting in June with Dr. Munashe Furusa, new AU vice chancellor, and Dr. Gilbert Wembodinga, dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at AU.

OCU's Kramer School of Nursing will send students to Mutare for experience in

global health, and the AU Faculty of Health Sciences will send one of its lecturers in nursing to Kramer School for a Ph.D. program.

Kudzai Chikwanda has been selected as the first lecturer from AU for this program. She will begin her doctoral studies at OCU in the near future.

After her first semester, she will return to Zimbabwe and continue her studies online. The Oklahoma Conference Office of Mission, General Board of Global Ministries, and OCU Kramer School of Nursing will provide scholarships for her travel, tuition, board, and lodging.

In May 2015, faculty and students from Kramer School of Nursing will head to Mutare to learn about the health issues facing rural communities in Zimbabwe.

During this immersion experience, the group will attend classes at the AU Faculty of Health Sciences, visit community-based health projects, and observe patient care at United Methodist Old Mutare Mission Hospital, which is across the road from that university.

This exchange of faculty and students between the universities is expected to be followed by many more in future years.

(Dr. Cherian Thomas, a global health specialist, is a consultant for the Office of Mission/Kingswood Institute.)

Rocky Mountain delegates make pilgrimage to Sand Creek

By **SAM HODGES**

United Methodist News Service

EADS, Colo. — For Sid Spain, just being here, walking the obscure and arid plain where the Sand Creek Massacre occurred, turned historical abstraction into something he could truly imagine.

"I almost didn't come," Rev. Spain said. "There are so many issues facing the Church, and I thought maybe this was tangential. I was wrong."

The 2014 Rocky Mountain Annual Conference became a teach-in about the massacre.

It was a Methodist clergyman-turned-soldier, Col. John Chivington, who on Nov. 29, 1864, ordered the cavalry charge that slaughtered a village of Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians.

Bishop Elaine Stanovsky's push for a major effort at understanding and heal-

ing climaxed on June 20. That's when 13 buses carried some 650 Rocky Mountain Conference members and guests, including descendants of the massacre's survivors, on a three-hour journey to the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site.

Al Addison, an Arapaho whose great-great-grandfather survived the massacre, has visited more than 60 times, but doing so in a crowd of United Methodists touched him.

"I can tell the Church has compassion," he said.

The Church's recognition of injustice against Native peoples, including by Methodists, is not new. The 2012 General Conference held an *Act of Repentance Toward Healing Relationships with Indigenous People* service and passed a resolution committing the denomination to further action.

Bishop Stanovsky has focused on the

Sand Creek Massacre.

She personally undertook not only to learn the history in detail but also to build relationships with descendants of the survivors. She devoted the second half of her June 19 Episcopal Address to Methodist complicity in the massacre.

"None of us Methodists in this room personally participated in the events of 1864, and yet we are who we are, we are where we are, we have what we have, we live where we live, because of this history," Stanovsky said.

"And we participate in patterns of privilege and poverty that are shaped by this history. And so we are called to repentance."

Perhaps the experience of walking the Sand Creek site led some to think about concrete reconciliation actions they and the Church might take.

Mission U teaches awareness of disabilities

At Mission U 2014, "The Church and People With Disabilities" study turned the bright light of education onto a need overshadowed by other ministries.

The volunteer planning team sought to model inclusivity. Led by Dean Derrek Belase, their effort in that area mirrored their care for all aspects of Mission U, held July 18-21 at Oklahoma City University.

- Plenaries included sign language interpretation. Sharon Capron, one of three interpreters, said she realized "why God wanted me to learn" to sign when officials asked her to facilitate at a state correctional center. She is associate pastor at Prague UMC.

- An Enrichment Class, "On the Path To Become More Welcoming," introduced assistive devices and addressed etiquette. Presenter was expert Shelly Gladden of Oklahoma ABLE Tech.

- Katie Loos of Owasso, who is Ms. Abilities Oklahoma 2013-14, mentored participants as she led by example and advocated for understanding.

- An accessibility audit for



Kathy Caldron snaps a selfie with Mission U worship speaker Judy Benson (behind her) and others.

churches was distributed: www.umdisabilityministries.org/access/audit.html

- The Communion elements included an option of gluten-free bread.

- Participants could ride OCU's campus carts.

- Even a small change in worship liturgy inspired inclusivity. "Stand in body and spirit" replaced

the typical phrase "Stand as you are able."

Mission U, formerly the School of Christian Mission, is sponsored annually by the Conference's Mission & Service Ministry Team and United Methodist Women. Classes are offered for children, youths, and adults

Each year, three studies target spiritual growth, a geographic region, and a justice issue. "How Is It With Your Soul?" and "The Roma of Europe" also were featured this year.

Participants attend from across the state. For example, adults in one class came from as far away as Madill, Woodward, and Miami (Okla.).

Dean Belase urged attendees to apply what they learned in their local settings. A December survey is planned.

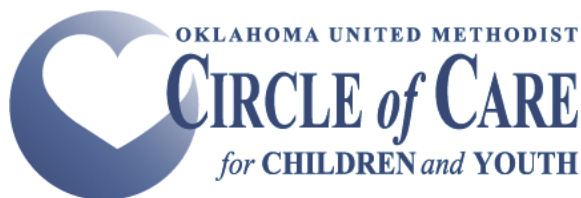
Mission U attendance totaled 180, including seven youths and five children. The offering of \$1,919 supported Oklahoma UM Disaster Relief, and donations filled 32 UMCOR cleaning buckets, with additional supplies.

— Holly McCray



Photos by Annette Morrison

Women measure parking spaces in a class studying "The Church and People With Disabilities" at Mission U.



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!

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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?

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David & Laura Beal
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Don & Karla Bowen
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Cheryl Burnet
Lacey & Mary Butler
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Michael & Leanne Chaffin
Arlene Chriswell
Ralph & Midge Coffman
Randall & Kathryn Coit
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Edgar & Betty Collins
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Robert & Debbie Craine
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Harold & Carol Wright
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Wesley Fellowship
Claremore-First UMC., U.M.W.
Grove-First U.M.C., U.M.W.
Highland Park UMC.
Lawton Centenary UMC.
Nicoma Park UMC., Thrift Store
Okmulgee UMC., U.M.M.
Okmulgee UMC., U.M.W.
St. Andrews UMC. (OKC)
Wesley UMC Shawnee, UMM
Wesley UMC Shawnee, UMM

CoC Staff

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

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



At Cross Point Camp in southern Oklahoma, a pink cat waves to children attending Camp Cavett while two more hot air balloons, below, rise to the occasion.



Photo by Marea Breedlove

Wearing their official Camps shirts, Sunshine Campers bond at Camp Egan, in northeastern Oklahoma.

Seen at summer camp

www.okumc.org/camps



Photo by Donna Magruder

Adult volunteers also learn the steps in a Sunshine Camp activity at Canyon Camp, in western Oklahoma.



Photo by Marea Breedlove

A camper finds a tiny treasure on the water crossing at Camp Egan.



Photo by Donna Magruder

The pockets of cargo shorts can hold lots of mementos for boys at Canyon Camp.

Save the date

**New People, New Places
Grant application
deadline: Sept. 15**

Eligible: any church of any size
and any Conference agency

www.okumc.org/hnpn

**South Central Jurisdiction
Disaster Response Academy**

Sept. 7-10 | Canyon Camp

<http://www.eventbrite.com/e/scj-disaster-response-academy-2014-registration-11072575371>
Early-bird discount ends Aug. 17

**Senior Adult
Summit**

Sept. 8-10 | Camp Egan

Register by Sept. 1
Info: Janey Wilson, 405-651-4191

**One Exchange
town hall meetings**

Topic: 2015 retiree healthcare changes

Sept. 22 | OKC-St. Luke's
Sept. 23 | Tulsa-Asbury UMC

(More detailed information coming soon)