

2015 Annual Conference

May 25-28

Deadline to register: midnight on May 10

- Pre-Conference Workbook and Lay Nominees Book available for download or purchase printed copies
- Worship at OKC-St. Luke's
- Business sessions at OCU Freede Center

www.okumc.org/annual_conference

- Mission opportunities with the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference
- UMCOR needs health and school kits
- Offering supports 8 Oklahoma missionaries (See page 3)



Photos by Shanna Smith

First UMC's screen, 30 feet by 17 feet, retracts into the sanctuary ceiling.

Dream screen

Church changes inside and out to grow in Ardmore

By **JOSEPH HARRIS**
Director of Communications

To reach more people for Christ, Ardmore-First United Methodist Church wasn't satisfied with major renovation of its worship space. The prayers of the congregation also led the large county-seat church into more ministry in the streets of that city.

First UMC wants to have an ongoing effect on lives throughout Ardmore. Some say this vision began with the downtown church's 2006 expansion into the Colvert Ministry Center.

That building, across the street from the main church, became a place that offered modern worship, expanded outreach opportunities to the community, and gave flexibility in programs and ministries that had been limited in the other structure.

Getting crowded

It wasn't long before the Colvert Ministry Center was packed for worship and other activities. Another option was needed.

After a time of prayer, discern-



A large cross seems to float above the choir at First UMC.

ment, and planning, the congregation decided, under the leadership of Senior Pastor Jessica Moffatt Seay, to take on a \$3.1 million renovation of the main sanctuary, bringing all the worship services into one location.

Rev. Seay said, "In order to impact Ardmore, attract more young people, more diverse people, and live into the future now, we had to make this decision."

She cast the vision for this strategic remodel in 2012, which led to a capital campaign in 2013. Fundraising took about a year.

In the beautifully remodeled

sanctuary, First Church now has one of Oklahoma's largest indoor screens that is not a movie-theater screen. Its size is 30 feet by 17 feet. Especially unusual is its one massive screen, rather than overlapped smaller screens.

The lighting and sound systems are believed to be among the most sophisticated in the area, and new seating was installed both on the main floor and in the balcony.

As a result, attendance for worship has increased, Seay said, with a younger and more diverse audience. The church averaged 662 worshippers weekly in 2014.

A traditional service begins at 9 a.m., and the E.P.I.C. (Experiential, Participatory, Image-rich, Connective) worship, which had been in the Colvert Ministry Center, is at 11.

Ministry on the move

The vibrant spirit inside the church also is flowing out the doors.

Members began to pray regularly for their city, after learning

See Screen, page 8

Triumph over tragedy

Love guided church after 1995 bombing

By **HOLLY McCRAY**

On April 19, 1995, a man clutching a paper bag stood at the south entrance to St. Luke's Christian Life Center in Oklahoma City. He had come from downtown, directed to the church by emergency workers after the Murrah Building exploded at 9:01 a.m.

The bomb blast also had torn into the YMCA, where the man had been living. The ceiling in his room fell; first responders allowed him 5 minutes to grab his possessions and get out. St. Luke's was the designated Red Cross shelter.

At the church doors, the man opened his bag. It was empty. He had failed to gather any belongings in those chaotic minutes.

But the church family moved quickly to welcome him to safety and provide for him.

St. Luke's sheltered hundreds of people displaced by the disaster, assisted families desperate to locate loved ones and those grieving deaths, served thousands of meals to survivors and rescue workers, staffed six phone lines around-the-clock, made care packages, even provided a room for news media.

Twenty years later, Senior Pastor Bob Long identifies that loving response as a significant lesson from that terrible time.

"You gave your all, and you saw God bless lives. I am very clear that the grace of God helps us to overcome the evil and meanness of the world to be triumphant survivors," Rev. Dr. Long said.

Tragedy "is never the last word in your life," he said. "You take what life has dealt you and build life upon it. In those kinds of moments, I think God does strengthen you if you ask for God's guidance.

"*Nothing in life or death...* (Romans 8:38-39) You can hear it, read it in your theology books, but when you live it through these kinds of experiences and look back, you know it's true.

"We go forward as people of hope."

Long recalled pausing in the Christian Life Center. He saw about 400 people filling the great hall.



'Across the city, not just St. Luke's, people would see a need and respond' — Bob Long

Some needed a place to stay; some were counselors; and some, volunteers. Some were eating, and a long trough held cold drinks. Above cots in the fellowship hall, clothes hung from a chandelier. Church members sat talking with strangers.

"Everybody was gathered there either to be comforted or to do the comforting," he said. "I thought, 'Wow, the presence of God is being there with one another.' I can see it like it was yesterday."

Shortly after the explosion, pastors were requested downtown, to be present as victims were brought out of the Murrah Building. Long remembers praying as he walked there — and praying constantly as he moved throughout the coming days.

He also speaks of feeling as if time had slowed down. "You

See Tragedy, page 2

Tragedy:

Continued from page 1

were more in the moment; you had greater sensitivity to the people you were seeing.”

At one point, he was puzzled to find people unloading and setting up refrigerators and freezers in one of the church’s hallways. They told him: You’re going to need these. Then food began arriving from restaurants across the city.



Long

“I suddenly sure was glad I had all these refrigerators out in the hall, that I hadn’t asked for, to take care of all the food that I didn’t know I was going to receive, to take care of all the people who were suddenly showing up,” Long said.

“Across the city, not just at St. Luke’s, people would see a need and respond. Nobody was assigned tasks. People just stepped forward. It really was a wonderful response.”

Helping after the bombing came naturally to St. Luke’s people, he explained. For 125 years, they’ve been reaching out to

those in need, in times of disasters, and to the poor. Long referenced Matthew 25:40: *Whatever you do for the least of these...*

The church’s pastors in the 1930s and 1950s gave special emphasis to missions, he said. World Neighbors was founded through St. Luke’s. Ministries have reached into Russia. Some current missions serve disadvantaged children: Studio 222, El Sistema, and a partnership with El Rancho Elementary School.

In the aftermath of the bombing, St. Luke’s efforts “made me so very proud of the spirit of the people,” Long commented.

“You discover, when you serve, there is that intrinsic joy you get to receive within as you’ve been helping to bless life in those difficult moments.”

In worship on April 19, 2015, a stone from the Murrah Building will sit on the altar at St. Luke’s. It was a gift from the government to the church because of St. Luke’s role in the recovery. A candle will be lit, and the anniversary will be noted.

“Where are we 20 years later?” Long asked. “We are God’s people, full of hope, who are looking to the future and living our lives in love, who remember that as part of our history.”



WE REMEMBER 1995 — Singers from at least five United Methodist churches will perform in a 168-member choir on April 19 during a memorial concert in Oklahoma City. The singers, from 28 churches, signify the 168 people who died in the 1995 bombing downtown. Presented by the Oklahoma Alliance for Liturgy & the Arts, the concert will begin at 5 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church. Ginger Howl, music director for OKC-Grace UMC, said singers first learned the music in their individual churches. “We Rise To Bless You Still” is directed by acclaimed choral conductor Anton Armstrong of St. Olaf College. Other UM choristers are from OKC-Village, OKC-Chapel Hill, St. Mark’s in Bethany, and Yukon’s Good Shepherd churches, Howl said. From left, performing from Grace UMC are: Rebekah Ingraham, Bob Boone, Lori Hoegg, Philip Boone, Marsha Sneed, Fred Doak, Annette Harper, and Ryan Hoegg.

Stories of bombing take center stage



Photo by Josh Robinson

These OCU theater students are performing “The 20th Anniversary Oklahoma City Bombing Project” on April 16-19. They are shown at the memorial site.

An emerging form of theater art is revealing untold stories from the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, in recognition of the 20th anniversary of the attack.

On April 16-19, Oklahoma City University is presenting “The 20th Anniversary Oklahoma City Bombing Project” free to the public in OCU’s Burg Theatre, in the Kirkpatrick Fine Arts Center, Northwest 24th Street and Blackwelder Avenue.

Theater students are performing an original play based on personal interviews with more than 45 family members of victims, survivors, local officials, and first responders. OCU commissioned award-winning playwright Steve Gilroy, who is the author of works including “Motherland.”

The interviews were conducted by OCU students, faculty, Gilroy, and OCU Associate Dean of Theatre Brian Parsons.

“We have a unique opportunity and responsibility to respond through art,” Parsons said. “This work is a living memorial and a celebration of the tenacity, recovery, and healing process of Oklahoma City.”

A portion of proceeds from the play’s publication following the event will be donated to the Oklahoma City

National Memorial and Museum.

Gilroy said interviewers usually have to work quite hard to coax stories from people. “For this project, there is this incredible honesty that comes from people.”

New life chapters

He continued, “I think that is something about the people of Oklahoma City. As soon as you start, people will talk about their experience of the bombing, and that’s one thing; but once they start to go beyond that, there are all sorts of different stories that say a lot about peoples’ ability to recover. They find themselves 20 years later where they are no longer defined by what’s happened and they are able to open new chapters in their lives.”

Courtney DiBello, instructor of stage management and faculty adviser at OCU, will direct the production. She pointed out that all the student actors and crew members were not yet born or were babies in 1995.

“For these students who are participating in the production, and to a large extent the students who will be seeing the production, this is an education as well as a theatrical experience,” she said.

Parsons has a vision for the play beyond the April 2015 production. He

wants every high school in Oklahoma to have access to the play by creating an education package that includes scripts, a documentary produced by OCU about the making of the play, and all the materials students need to research, rehearse, and create their own productions.

“The overwhelming message that comes from everybody interviewed for this project is the regeneration of the city as the background,” Gilroy said.

“But I think, in the end, it is going to be about these very powerful individual stories that when woven together are going to create quite a much bigger human story about recovery.”

Play this weekend

Performances are scheduled for 8 p.m. April 16, 17, and 18 and for 2 p.m. April 19. Admission is free. Tickets, limited to four per reservation, can be reserved by calling 405-208-5227 or visit okcu.edu/ticketoffice.

The OCU Smith Chapel observed the bombing anniversary with a special service at 1 p.m. April 16. Joe Meinhart, OCU professor of Sociology and Justice Studies, preached. The service also included a litany of remembrance and of thanksgiving for responders.

The Oklahoma United Methodist
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**Strength for the journey:
A collection of ideas and thoughts from our bishop**

What difference did Easter make?

“It stands to reason, doesn’t it, that if the alive-and-present God who raised Jesus from the dead moves into your life, He’ll do the same thing in you that He did in Jesus, bringing you alive to Himself?”

(Romans 8:11, Peterson’s Translation)

By **BISHOP ROBERT HAYES JR.**

Well, another Easter has come and gone. The lilies have been taken home, and the Easter eggs that once littered the church grounds have all been found — at least we hope so.



Bishop Hayes

Any leftover bulletins have been gathered and thrown away, and the day’s worship services that lifted us to a higher plane are, at best, a memory. Even the overflowing crowds that found their way to churches for Easter morning have slowed to a trickle. It seems things are now back to normal.

So quickly and so completely, things returned to what they were before that high holy day. It begs the question: What difference did Easter make?

To be sure, it brought a temporary lift to a great number of people, but did Easter make any real difference or cause any lasting change in our lives or in the life of the Church? Did the day come and go without leaving any trace of its passing?

My greatest fear is that most people will think it’s all right to return to normality, complacency, and even mediocrity.

If Easter conveys anything at all to us, it insists that we cannot return to what we once were, nor can we go back to where we were before Resurrection Day.

Jesus refused to let his disciples fall back into anonymity then, and the message we need to hear is that we cannot afford to do so now.

Let’s look briefly at “then” and “now.” I want to show you that “back to normal” is a tragic mistake. It is a spiritless vacuum that frustrates the Kingdom of God, and it causes many talents and lives to be wasted.

Going back to normal is dangerous. Even more dangerous is knowing that but not saying anything about it.

That first Easter

When you look for the difference that first Easter made, you probably would first conclude that it made no difference at all.

Pilate was still governor of Judea after Easter. Caiaphas was still high priest. The Scribes and Pharisees still held the reins of religious life, and the road to Jericho was still

unsafe for travelers. The tax collectors still bled the people, and the moneychangers still sat at their tables on the porch of the Temple.

And the people — if they even knew what happened on that fateful Friday and on Resurrection Morning — soon forgot it.

In fact, the disciples were counting on that. They hoped they could hide until the hubbub blew over, and then they could return to their relatively safe job of fishing.

Until Jesus appeared to them!

When Jesus returned in his resurrected form, the impact was everything but normal. Seeing him, talking to him, eating with him, and hearing what he had in store for them made a tremendous difference in the lives of those disciples and everyone else who came in contact with him.

They understood that forgiveness, confidence, trust, and love did not die on the cross. They understood that all Jesus stood for had not been destroyed. Instead, God’s love was now affirmed in final victory!

After seeing that even death could not defeat God, they went out and lived in the strength of the love for which Jesus gave his life, believing that unconquerable love was alive and vital, at the very heart of life.

They knew they could go forward, no matter what the world thought or said, because they knew nothing could separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

We can say this about that first Easter: The resurrection of Jesus did not reform the world. No. Instead, it rallied a few people willing to live the Christian life in spite of anything the world might do to them.

And in God’s economy, only a few were needed.

What about now?

Indeed, as we look around at pews packed with people only a short time ago, we could be discouraged, could conclude that life is simply back to normal. Yes, many have not returned after spending an hour with us.

But... some did come back, and they do so Sunday after Sunday, and it will be in those who return that we experience the difference Easter can make now.

These are the people who keep pushing ahead in spite of what others do or don’t do. They have seen for themselves that Christ is risen. They know the power of his resurrection. Like yeast rising in uncooked bread, these are the ones who will change the world!

If Easter is to make any difference now, it will be because it makes a difference in those who have been raised with Christ to a new and higher level of life, who are able to ally themselves with the things that are known to be right and good.

Let me ask you: Did this Easter make a difference in your life? If it did, then go out and tell somebody!

Special Offering
Oklahoma United Methodist Churches are encouraged to take a special offering and send it with their Annual Conference delegates.

100% of the offering will go to our: **Oklahoma Missionaries**

To see profiles on each one of our Conference supported missionaries visit: www.ummission.org/
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Winfred, Tyler, and NSO staff member Heidi Lobdell prepare punch in the new kitchen for the Carolyn Williams Center open house event in Oklahoma City.

Photo by Jared Dryden



Men cook up skills in new NSO kitchen

Neighborhood Services Organization (NSO) unveiled the Impact Oklahoma Kitchen on March 27 at its Carolyn Williams Center, a transitional housing program for young men in Oklahoma City. More than 200 people attended the celebration.

Construction and furnishing of the new commercial kitchen were funded through Impact Oklahoma's 2013 Education Grant.

This kitchen provides the men, ages 18-23, the opportunity to learn how to cook on their own. It replaced a much smaller kitchen in the 16-bed, dormitory-style complex.

Before living at the center, many of the men aged out of foster care with nowhere to go, or were homeless. This NSO program pro-

vides them a safe, stable home for up to two years as they learn to live independently while working or attending school full-time.

Winfred, a current resident, told his story during the open house event. He has attended culinary arts school in the past and said he looks forward to cooking with the other residents.

"We're so thankful to Impact Oklahoma for the grant for the kitchen and for the widespread support of the Carolyn Williams Center," said Stacey Ninness, NSO president. "This kitchen is a great addition. It is so vital that these young men learn to cook for themselves."

NSO also operates an emergen-

cy shelter program at the Carolyn Williams Center. It allows homeless young men to stay for up to 90 days.

The United Methodist-related agency serves disadvantaged people in Oklahoma City at multiple locations. NSO programs include:

- Transitional housing
- Permanent supportive housing for homeless adults with mental health needs
- Rental assistance programs
- A dental clinic (during April, free oral cancer screenings are offered)
- WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) clinics.

NSO has a 95-year tradition of offering help to those who most need it. (www.NSOokc.org.)

May calls attention to God's call on clergy

Helping people respond to the calling of God on their lives is a priority of Oklahoma Conference's Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM).

Supported by BOM, the Second Annual Ministerial Recruitment Month will be observed during the month of May. Every church is encouraged to participate by finding ways during worship and through special events to emphasize the importance of hearing God's call.

1 Sample worship bulletin inserts will be provided by the BOM Ministerial Recruitment Subcommittee for use during May. These may be copied to distribute on Sunday or in other settings.

2 Pastors are urged to speak about their own calls to ministry, either in worship or as part of another gathering, and to talk individually with people who sense a call in their lives and express interest in lay, licensed, or ordained ministry.



'People came from all over the sanctuary to commit to the great adventure'

— Chuck Nordean

3 Invite people who feel God's invitation in this way to attend the Service of Commissioning and Ordination on May 27 at OKC-St. Luke's UMC, during the 2015 Annual Conference. At the close of worship that evening, Bishop Robert Hayes Jr. will offer an invitation to ministry.

"Last year's response was a holy moment, as people came from all over the sanctuary to kneel, pray, and commit their lives to the great adventure God has in store for them. We believe the same will happen this year," said Chuck Nordean, director of Clergy and Congregational Development.

That response launched a series of events that further engaged

those who responded.

First, each person received an informational packet, including a copy of "Christian as Minister: An Exploration into the Meaning of God's Calling."

Then in September, BOM held a Call to Ministry Rally that was attended by more than 120 participants from 54 churches. During that day, people who wanted to become part of the formal clergy candidacy process were assigned to district mentoring groups.

In February, at the "I Am Laity" Summit, 95 people registered to attend a session led by Rev. Nordean. It was titled "Here I Am, Lord — An Exploration into God's Calling."

Nordean said, "God continues to call people to an incredible work in the life of the Church, and faithful servants are responding in all sorts of ways — as certified Lay Servants, as bi-vocational Local Pastors, full-time Local Pastors, and as candidates for Ordained Ministry."

125 years and counting

Ringling moves ahead with new outreach

Ringling United Methodist Church celebrates its 125th anniversary on April 19 and is moving ahead with two new ministries.

Bishop Robert Hayes will help the church mark this milestone date by preaching that day.

• One of the new ministries loans out dresses and accessories to help girls mitigate the high costs of attending proms and other formal school dances.

• The other, "Ringling in Recovery," is a Bible-based, Christ-centered approach to the Twelve Steps of recovery as used by Alcoholics Anonymous and other anonymous fellowships.

It's the first year for the prom dress ministry, which is supported by donations both of cash and formalwear items.

Members Kelli Smith and Stephanie King have collected gently used formal dresses and accessories. The items are cleaned and stored, ready for girls to try on and borrow much like a lending library.

"We have mountains of lace, taffeta, and sequins, along with a great selection of handbags, shoes, and jewelry," King said.

The church family also has been instrumental in supporting the ecumenical team that has started "Ringling in Recovery."

"We got the idea from Cokesbury UMC in Knoxville, Tenn., where Mark Bebee and a team worship with over 400 people in the community on Thursday evenings," said Susan Marks, one of the leaders.

"In keeping with the mission and style of Recovery@Cokesbury, we serve a light meal, then have praise and worship via On Demand Worship on the Recovery@Cokesbury site," Marks said. "Rev. Bebee has been guiding us through this process."

The idea is to love people to Christ; to welcome them, talk about recovery in a Christ-centered environment, and show those interested how to work the 12 steps toward healing their "hurts, habits, and hang-ups," as one such worship group calls it.

Tex Sample will lecture in OKC

On May 5, theologian Tex Sample's visit in the Oklahoma City area begins when he preaches at the 11 a.m.

chapel service for Saint Paul School of Theology at OCU.

Rev. Dr. Sample then will participate in the seminary's spring curriculum, Models of Ministry.

The day will culminate in a free public lecture, "To Seek Justice: Community Organizing as Discipleship," at 7 p.m. in Norman at McFarlin United Methodist Church.

His lecture will integrate the practices of grassroots organizing into the practices of a theology of justice.

His presentations are made



Sample

possible by contributions from the South Oklahoma City District, Saint Paul seminary, and McFarlin UMC.

Sample is the Rogers Professor Emeritus of Church and Society at Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, where he taught for 32 years.

He also is a freelance lecturer and international speaker. He has published 12 books.

"Tex" is not a nickname. His father named him after Texanna Gillham, an African-American woman who lived near Shelbyville, Texas.

He has been a delegate at four General Conferences and six Jurisdictional Conferences.

On May 5 at the Norman church, a reception in his honor begins at 6:30. Childcare is available. RSVP by April 29 to Jill Perrin at umcl1@coxinet.net or 405-603-8622.

Shawnee rally to spotlight teen sex issues

A youth rally April 18 in Shawnee will feature Pam Stenzel speaking on issues of teen sexuality. Shawnee-Wesley UMC is sponsoring the free event at Fire Lake Arena. Theme is "Purge the Urge to Merge."

Churches' youth groups are especially invited to the rally, from 3 to 7 p.m. at the venue, 18145 Range Line Road, Shawnee.

Wesley UMC leaders said Stenzel's personal story is a powerful one. "Nobody told me" is what she often hears in counseling sessions with young women, Stenzel states.

She travels internationally and has spoken to more than 500,000 young people on issues of sexuality and abstinence. She has made TV appearances, written curriculum for public schools, and produced videos including "Take a Look in the Mirror" and "The High Cost of Free Love."



BEDLAM

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Now there's an app for that

Restore Hope offers Tulsa families food choices

A byte of new technology is helping manage the food needs of families assisted by Restore Hope Ministries in Tulsa.

A new application lets caseworkers enter food selections on a computer tablet, then electronically submit the selections to the agency's food pantry. The program adjusts the order for family size, formats an order sheet for warehouse staff and volunteers, and updates the inventory.

"Each client meets privately with a caseworker to look over the menu of options and make their selections. By offering a choice, we not only give good food, we also offer dignity and hope," said Jeff Jaynes, executive director.

The app was developed with the help of Chris Ruddell, associate pastor of Edmond-Connect UMC.

Restore Hope started using the app in October. Rev. Jaynes has noticed a reduction in paper usage, and orders are filled faster.

The program also allows Restore Hope's food manager to quickly update supply data as new donations arrive or when stock is depleted. If a donation of milk comes in, it's easily added to the list of choices. Once that supply is gone, it drops off the list.

In 2013, after 34 years of distributing groceries to families in financial crisis, Restore Hope transitioned from a basic food pantry to a pantry of choice.

"Giving food is a great thing, but when you don't offer choice, you may give food to families that they may not know how to make or may not eat for other reasons," Jaynes said.

With the app, "we've been able to refine the kinds of food we stock to meet the needs of our client families. We have also been able to focus on the health and wellness of



Photos by Michelle Reagor

Above: Ben Jaynes, case manager Amanda Faith, and chapel intern Tracey Ivy fill carts with food chosen moments earlier using a computer app at Restore Hope in Tulsa. Left: Volunteer Winnie Mansfield uses the app to submit a family's choices.



those families, by offering more fruits and vegetables and removing items with high sugar or sodium content."

This focus on clients is why Restore Hope moved to offer choice in the first place. The families who visit Restore Hope appreciate it.

"You treated me with respect and professionalism instead of as a 'less-than' needy person, which honestly is what I was expecting," wrote Donna, whose family received assistance when her husband lost his job. "You showed me dignity and God's love, and for that I will be eternally grateful."

DISASTER RESPONSE

— Trish Harris, left, pastor of Noble UMC, helps a Moore homeowner fill out paperwork requesting volunteer aid after tornadoes in the state on March 25. Most home damage occurred in Moore and in two Sand Springs mobile home parks. United Methodists are taking a primary role in the long-term recovery committee for Sand Springs, said Richard Norman, Conference disaster response coordinator. In Moore, volunteer teams working through the existing UM disaster response office, at First UMC, are placing roof tarps and doing demolition work, Kevin Walker said. Some Moore families whose homes were hit in 2013 are again facing the need to rebuild, Rev. Norman said.



Photo by Chris Schutz

Passages

BENSON – Rev. Travis Theo "Doc" Benson, 85, of Midwest City died March 21, 2014.

His ministry, 1954-1999, included directing Skyline Urban Ministry and TEEM (The Education and Employment Ministry) in Oklahoma City. He pastored at Highland, Cement, Indianola, Fittstown/Pontotoc, OKC-Lakeside, Marietta, Waurika/Hastings, Mangum, Carter, Shawnee-Wesley, and OKC-Douglas Boulevard.

Survivors include his wife, MarEllen; sons Brooks and Bryant Benson; and daughter Tammy Harley.

Service was March 27 at OKC-St. Luke's. Memorial gifts to: The Theo "Doc" & MarEllen Benson Scholarship Fund at Oklahoma City University.

TOLLE – Rev. Leonard T. Tolle, 91, of Aline died March 24, 2015.

His ministry, 1966-1990, included Hammon/Butler, Hitchcock/Homestead, Tipton/Manitou, Edgewood/Dow, Nardin/Deer Creek, Eufaula/Canadian, and Turpin/Baker.

He was instrumental in building the United Methodist church at Aline.

Survivors include sons, Rev. Dr. Greg Tolle, who is pastor of Duncan-First UMC, Stan Tolle, Steven Tolle, and Gary McCray; daughters Pam McEachern, Phyllis Culliver, Paula Appleton, and Peggy Revercomb. He was predeceased by wives Pauline and Joan.

Service was March 30 at Aline UMC. Memorial gifts to: Oklahoma United Methodist Circle of Care.

WEY – Bernice Kamp Wey, 89, of Oklahoma City died March 27, 2015. She was the widow of Rev. Norton Eugene Wey. They were married for 50 years.

Survivors include three daughters: Annamarie Cooper, Alyson Bailey, and Karen Smola.

Service was March 31 at OKC-Wesley UMC, where she was a member. Memorial gifts to that church or Oklahoma Library for the Blind.

Owen Bennett of Oklahoma City died April 1, 2015. He was the father of Rev. Linda Brinkworth, who serves at OKC-St. Luke's (Honorable Location).

Attend Franklin Graham Festival classes at OKC-First in May

On three May evenings, OKC-First United Methodist Church will host a course to prepare people to assist as counselors during The Good News Festival with Franklin Graham. The festival is set for late summer at Chesapeake Arena.

"Christian Life & Witness Classes" will meet 7-9 p.m. on May 6, 13, and 20 (Wednesdays) at the downtown church, announced Pastor Mark McA Dow.

The course is free and open to people ages 13 and older. No registration is required. Leaders will be from the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

"Christian Life & Witness Classes" also will be offered in May at 13 other Christian churches in greater Oklahoma City. See that schedule at www.okcgoodnews.org.

Employment

Youth and Family Coordinator: Stroud UMC. 30 hours per week. Call 918-968-2732 or send cover letter and resume to stroudumc@gmail.com.

Summer Student Ministry Intern: OKC-Chapel Hill UMC. Part-time. Contact Jon Cunningham at Jon@mychapelhill.org or 405-751-0755.

Front-Office Assistant: OKC-Chapel Hill UMC. 30-35 hours per week, including Sundays. Email resume to Cynthia Watley at cynthia@mychapelhill.org.

Administrative Assistant: Broken Arrow-St. Stephen's. Part-time. Send resume to SSUMC, 400 W. New Orleans St., Broken Arrow, OK 74011; or ssumcaa@ssumcoba.org.

Dentist: Neighborhood Services Organization, Oklahoma City. Part-time. On-call to assist dental team. Contact Lisa Kelley, Lkelley@nsookc.org, 405-236-0452 ext. 303.

Head Chef: Full-time. Mount Sequoyah Center, Fayetteville, Ark. Email resume to emily.gentry@mountsequoyah.org

Accompanist: Midwest City-St. Matthew UMC. Email resume to smumcsprc@gmail.com or call Barbara at 550-0852.

Director of Children's and Family Ministries: Verdigris UMC. Full-time. DHS-licensed after-school and summer daycare program, and new family ministry program. Send resume to Mark Whitley at pastor@verdigrisumc.org or call 918-266-4161.

Choral Accompanist: Tulsa-First. To arrange an interview, call Joseph Bias, Dick Taylor, or Lory Ferrin at 918-587-9481.

Treasurer/Membership Coordinator: Bartlesville-East Cross UMC. Full-time. Bookkeeping and assisting ministry teams. Email jeffb@eastcross.org or call 918-333-0810.

Architect made home in OSU Wesley basement

By MICHELLE CRATER

The Wesley Foundation at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, is about to see some major changes. The United Methodist campus ministry is in the middle of a \$6 million capital campaign for a new, state-of-the-art facility.

Gary Sparks is lead architect for the project to update a building he already knows well.

He lived in the basement as a student in 1962.

Sparks lacked the finances to cover his housing expenses when he was a student. An OSU staff person encouraged him to contact the Wesley Foundation about living in the basement.

In exchange for housing, Sparks took care of the facilities.

“I was able to live there that year,” Sparks said. Although he didn’t participate in activities, “it did introduce me to a Christian environment, which I really needed, and it was my first introduction to The Methodist Church.”

Today, Sparks is recognized for his work with OSU Athletics, including the renovation of T. Boone Pickens Stadium and the Cowboy and Cowgirl Basketball facilities. The OSU alumnus is co-founder of Sparks Reed Architecture and Interiors in Tulsa.

Feeling connected

However, his work on the future Wesley Foundation holds personal significance.

“I said I would be happy to look and see



Photo by Michelle Crater

From left are: Kerry Alexander, founder and chairman of the Remember the Ten Run; architect Gary Sparks; Bishop Robert Hayes; and Janina Graves, student ministry coordinator at the OSU Wesley.

(what we could create),” Sparks said. “I feel like I owe the Wesley Foundation something for letting me stay there when I was a student.”

In preparation for the upcoming construction, the Wesley Foundation is hosting “Imagine Our Future” at 6 p.m. April 30 at Tulsa’s Boston Avenue United Methodist Church, to promote the capital campaign.

The free event will allow guests to glimpse the life-changing moments that hap-

pen daily in students’ lives because of this campus ministry. The program will highlight how the plans for the new building embody the Wesley Foundation mission: “Making disciples, creating leaders, transforming lives.”

OSU faculty and United Methodist clergy have endorsed the capital campaign, including OSU President V. Burns Hargis and David Wiggs, senior pastor of Boston Avenue.

“As president of Oklahoma State Univer-

sity, I am aware of the importance and significance and effectiveness of the programs of the Wesley Foundation,” Hargis said. “We look forward to the completion of this new facility and all it will offer our students and community.”

Rev. Wiggs also is a member of the board of directors for the Wesley Foundation.

“The campus at OSU is the largest mission field in the Stillwater District,” Wiggs said. “Therefore, being successful there will be our opportunity for the biggest impact in this part of Oklahoma. Not only that, but because they are developing young adult leaders, this is also the place we can have the greatest impact for The United Methodist Church in the future!”

Program in Tulsa

Sparks and Wiggs will be keynote speakers at “Imagine Our Future” in Tulsa, as well as Michael R. Bartley, campus minister at the Wesley Foundation.

The Wesley Foundation invites anyone who has a passion for college ministry to attend. “Imagine Our Future” is free to attend and includes dinner and live music from Tulsa jazz and blues musician Rebecca Ungerman. Dress is business casual.

For more information, visit the website, www.wesleyosu.com, or the Facebook page Wesley Foundation at OSU. Contact Janina Graves at imaginewesleyosu@gmail.com to RSVP for the event.

you’re invited
the WESLEY FOUNDATION at OSU

what

● An update from the Wesley Foundation at Oklahoma State University on planning for a new campus facility

where

● Boston Avenue UMC
1301 South Boston Avenue
Tulsa, OK 73119

when

● Thursday April 30, 2015
6 p.m. until 8 p.m.

who

● Rebecca Ungerman,
Dinner Entertainment

● Rev. David Wiggs,
Senior Pastor, Boston Avenue UMC

● Rev. Michael Bartley,
Executive Director,
OSU Wesley Foundation

● Mr. Gary Sparks,
Architect, Wesley Planning
Committee



RSVP to ImagineOSUWesley@gmail.com

If you’d like to host an Imagine event in your city or church, contact Michael Bartley, 405-880-7194.

Creating your family legacy with a donor advised fund



A few of the advantages are as follows:

SIMPLIFIES CHARITABLE GIFTING

Many philanthropic families consider establishing a private foundation. A private foundation offers control and name recognition. However, there are very strict private foundation rules in the Internal Revenue Code, which can be quite burdensome and expensive. The DAF is more cost effective and far less cumbersome than setting up and maintaining a private foundation. It offers greater privacy and the favorable tax consequences and efficient administration of the public charity. Additionally, the family can be involved on a long term basis in the grant-making process of their family fund.

FAVORABLE TAX CONSEQUENCES

Families can make donations to their DAF and receive very favorable tax consequences. The donations may be made at any time during the year without having to decide at the same time which United Methodist causes or other charitable organization will receive funds from the DAF. This is especially beneficial if the family donates highly appreciated stock or real estate. The stock or real es-

tate can be donated to the DAF at fair market value and the donor will receive an immediate tax benefit and avoid capital gains tax. Grants from the DAF can be made at a later time.

A LEGACY PLANNING TOOL

For families who wish to receive income for life, avoid estate taxes, and pass on a legacy of family values, the DAF can be named as the ultimate beneficiary of a charitable remainder trust or a charitable gift annuity. The DAF can also be named as the beneficiary of a bequest. In both cases the heirs can advise the fund, thus maintaining control and maximizing the influence of the family's legacy.

MAKES THE GIVING PROCESS EASIER

The family DAF can support multiple United Methodist causes and other charities. For example, the family fund can make distributions to the church's capital campaign, annual budget and special offerings

throughout the year, which simplifies the giving process. The family receives quarterly statements from the Foundation itemizing grants made from the family fund.

EASY TO ESTABLISH

The family DAF is very easy to establish. (1) Call the Foundation and request a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding. (2) Select the name of the fund. Examples of fund names might be The _____ Family Charitable Fund, The _____ Philanthropic Fund, The _____ Family Foundation, etc. (3) Make an initial contribution of cash, stock or real estate of \$10,000 or more.

The Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation's Donor Advised Fund helps your family accomplish your philanthropic goals through a very flexible and convenient vehicle. **Please contact David Battles at 800-259-6863 or dbattles@okumf.org with any questions or for more information.**

How would you like to make a gift today that would enable you and your loved ones to continue to make charitable gifts in the future?

Establishing a Donor Advised Fund (DAF) with The Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation accomplishes this and more for both the donor AND the charitable organization.

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Screen:

Continued from page 1

Ardmore ranked at the top of a "most dangerous city" study that referenced FBI statistics across the state.

Associate Pastor Brad Dery said they decided to pray The Lord's Prayer daily at noon, no matter where they were.

This prayer led them, Rev. Dery said, "onto the front lines of the battle to reclaim Ardmore for Christ."

They began reaching out to apartment residents in complexes long known as locations of criminal activities, Dery said. The church decided to regularly provide school clothes for children in those complexes, as well as food gifts and on-site prayers. Gifts vary: bags of fresh fruit, boxes of cookies, bags of potato chips, microwave popcorn, and other snacks.

Their overall goal: to start home discipleship groups with residents, for the purpose of transforming not only families, but also neighborhoods.

In a short time, First Church members were personally discipling five families on a weekly basis and building relationships with other residents through their weekly visits to the properties.

In October about 30 volunteers held a Fall Festival among the apartments, and about 100 residents joined them for hot dogs, music, and games.

Visiting apartments

Now members of the congregation are visiting 184 apartments at three complexes. The same team visits residents on a weekly basis, enabling them to build relationships and to be a faithful manifestation of God's grace in their lives.

Also, they invite residents to join them at the Colvert Ministry Center for a free community dinner that includes worship and a short sermon, followed by small-group discipleship.

"We serve dinner at 5:30 every Sunday night so that we can invite them back to dinner during our visits," Dery explained.

Some residents do accept that invitation. For the meal and worship,



Photo by Shanna Smith

Sanctuary renovations at Ardmore-First include the balcony seating. What a great view for worshippers!

they sit with the team members who have been visiting their apartment, then the team becomes their small group for discipleship discussions.

Dery remarked, "We have many exciting examples of how God is using Ardmore-First to draw people to Jesus.

"One recent example perfectly shows what we are aiming for. On our second week out, a team at Pecan Creek Apartments met a man named Tim, who decided to join us for dinner. On the ride to our church, Tim realized where we were heading and informed us that he was the boyfriend of Amber — the young woman our church recently blessed with furniture and other home furnishings.

"Tim felt welcomed and cared for, and so he brought Amber back with him the next week!"

Baptism by bishop

Dery continued, "The following Sunday, Tim and Amber went with us into the community to pass out gifts. And Bishop Hayes got the opportunity to baptize Amber's baby when he was here! We are seeing many stories like this. Our new friends are joining us because they feel welcome, loved, and cared for."

Earth Walk will begin at UM Ministry Center

Earth Walk will begin in the United Methodist Ministry Center parking lot in Oklahoma City on Earth Day, April 22.

Live music will welcome people at 6 p.m. The walking route, just over 1 mile, will go around and through the campus of UM-related Oklahoma City University.

Among sponsors is the Environmental Coalition of the Oklahoma Conference's Board of Church & Society.

Co-chairperson Pat Hoerth said, "We're walking for recognition of the beauty of our planet and concern for our home here." Supporting the event "seemed natural. Our coalition is very active." The group holds its meetings at the Ministry Center.

Joe Meinhart of OCU, who directs the OIKOS (World House) Scholars program, said students will be among those walking.

"We teach our students that living in harmony with nature is critical to humanity's future," he said. "There is no Planet B we can move to if we mess this one up."

After remarks by the Sierra Club state director and students from three universities, walkers will step out.

All are welcome, said Nathaniel Batchelder of the Peace House. "We are expecting grandparents and baby strollers." Signs and banners are welcome, too.

Among sponsors are the Oklahoma Conference of Churches, Citizens Climate Lobby of Norman, and various churches.