

Contact, an edition of The United Methodist Reporter

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THE OKLAHOMA UNITED METHODIST
Contact
www.okumc.org

■ More SCJ news, 3-5A

Bishop Hayes returning for 3rd term

By HOLLY McCRAY

A tradition was upended at the South Central Jurisdictional (SCJ) Conference, meeting in Oklahoma City on July 18-21. Since 1980, every bishop assigned to the Oklahoma Area served here a total of eight years (two terms).

Until now.

Late on July 20, the jurisdiction extended for a third term the assignment of Bishop Robert E. Hayes Jr. Thus his leadership will span 12 years in the Oklahoma and Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conferences (OIMC). The term begins Sept. 1.

Oklahomans rose, cheering and clapping, when the announcement was made about 11:30 p.m. Beaming, the bishop and Dee Hayes, his wife, flashed thumbs-up from the plenary stage in Cox Convention Center. A short time later, the flock gathered around their shepherd family, laying hands on them and praying.

Frankye Johnson, dean of the Cabinet, spoke at the Area Breakfast. "Bob and Dee, you are indeed family. We are so glad we are able to move on with you by our side."

The bishop said, "I believe we can keep on working and make Oklahoma the model of ministry in the whole denomination. We have the right people, the resources, the opportunity, and the audacity."

Other milestones marked the convention, attended by about 650 people from eight states and 15 UM annual conferences.

For the first time in the denomination's history, a Native American was an endorsed episcopal nominee.

David Wilson, Choctaw, who is the OIMC superintendent, earned third place in the opening round



Bishop Hayes rejoices late July 20.



Applauding the news of Bishop Hayes' return to Oklahoma are from right: Aly Shahan, Trey Witzel, Tom Harrison, Guy Ames, and John Hiller. Back row, from right: Debra Davis, D.A. Bennett, and Cara Nicklas.



SCJ Executive Director David Severe wears the gift of a Native American blanket from OIMC. At right is Josephine Deere.

of voting. He later withdrew his candidacy as the election process continued and his numbers slipped. In a gracious, brief statement, he included a prayer sent to him by young people of the OIMC.

Balloting required 23 rounds for delegates to fill three episcopal openings. Elected as bishops were Cynthia Harvey, Gary Mueller, and Mike McKee, all from annual conferences in Texas.

Action affecting another episcopal leader, Bishop Earl Bledsoe, appears unprecedented in the Church's history. The jurisdictional conference assigned him to involuntary retirement. Intense discussions preceded the vote, and some delegates cried openly. The bishop

has appealed to the denomination's Judicial Council. Follow news updates at www.umc.org or www.UnitedMethodistReporter.com.

Delegates' somber attention to that matter harshly differed from the jubilation of Oklahomans over the return of their bishop. This jurisdictional conference seemed to roil with extremes. Both business and worship were streamed live online; viewers Friday night saw the audience literally dancing to party music during one break.

About 200 people signed up for a hands-on mission. In one afternoon at OKC-Church of the Servant, they assembled and packed 50,000 meals for the poor.

Also, several Oklahoma Con-

ference delegates were elected to service on General Church boards: Briana Tobey, General Board of Church & Society; Sam Aguirre, General Board of Global Ministries; Bill Junk, General Board of Pension & Health Benefits; and Joe Harris, General Commission on Religion & Race.

Oklahoma City had not hosted the quadrennial SCJ conference for 44 years—since 1968. Theme was "Woven Together for Transformation."

Led by Revs. Harris and Wilson, a "home team" of volunteers from both annual conferences worked on local arrangements across more than three years. A combined choir performed in opening worship at



Judy Benson dances with a young band member from Lydia Patterson Institute. Benson is outgoing SCJ lay leader.

OKC-St. Luke's. The history of Methodism in Oklahoma was lifted in video and a magazine. And Area Night served up Oklahoma flavors in both food and entertainment.

Calling all clergy:

■ Orders Meeting

Aug. 21, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., OKC-St. Luke's
Elections, district meetings, worship
(Who should attend:
all elders, deacons, and Local Pastors
under appointment)

■ 2012 Bishop's Gathering (especially for clergy)

Sept. 24-25, The Reed Center, Midwest City
Focus on worship and preaching with Marcia McFee, worship leader at the 2012 General Conference, and Jim Jackson, senior pastor at Houston's Chapelwood UMC
<http://bishops.register110.com>
Early-bird cost: \$89. After Aug. 27: \$99.

Grand new events:

Grandparents, grandkids will make memories

Grand Camp, for grandparents and elementary-age grandchildren, makes its debut Sept. 7-9 at Canyon Camp.

"You will not want to miss this weekend camp if you are a grandparent or grandkid!" declared Dean Jodi Combs. "Experience a special time away together for fun and spiritual renewal at camp!"

Theme is "Embracing This Time; Capturing the Moment."

Scheduled for Friday through Sunday, Grand Camp will offer intergenerational activities. Among them: worship, storytelling, and traditional camp activities such as fellowshiping around the campfire, singing songs, and eating s'mores.

The programming team is excited about the opportunities this camp brings to help connect generations of families in a unique way. It is specifically designed for grandparents and their grandchildren who are kindergartners through sixth graders.

A similar church camp is held on St. Simons Island, Ga. It was "just the right place" for Faye

Lacey and her youngest grandchild, wrote Missy Buchanan in her March 16 "Aging Well" column in the *United Methodist Reporter*.

The child was too young to take part in youth programming and mission trips with her siblings. But at the Georgia specialty camp, her grandmother found for the two of them "a meaningful intergenerational experience in a faith-filled environment," reported Buchanan.

"More than a fun-filled vacation, Grand Camp is designed to nurture both the emotional and spiritual bond between grandparent and grandchild."

If you have specific questions about the camp, or need to make special lodging accommodations, contact the dean at jodi.combs@gmail.com.

Register online at www.okumc.org/camps/grand, or call the camps office at 405-530-2017. Cost: \$75 for adults and \$53 for ages 12 and younger.

Summit at Egan for senior adults

Oklahoma folklore and flavors beckon all older adults to take part in a program designed especially for them on Sept. 10-12 at Camp Egan.

The Senior Adult Summit offers other tempting topics, too. Among the workshops: "Study History? Why Bother?" and "Planning With Our Kids," about long-term care and legal needs. Physical health will be the focus in sessions on yoga/personal fitness and balance/fall prevention.

Presenters include Bill Gaddis, an attorney and avid historian; certified genealogist Barbara Meehan; and physical therapist Holly

Thompson. Worship leader is Marti Lowery, of Tulsa-Will Rogers UMC, with Bishop Hayes and Camps Director Randy McGuire preaching.

As participants take in education and fellowship, they also will give to a younger generation through a mission project. They are invited to bring donations of new, twin-size bedding for the teens who live at Boys Ranch and Children's Home, part of the UM Circle of Care.

Participants will stay in Holliman Lodge; all programming will be in the lodge or camp dining hall. The event begins Monday afternoon and concludes by 2 p.m. Wednesday.

Deadline to register is Sept. 3. Contact Dean Janey Wilson, Janey@okwesley.org, 405-321-6266; or sign up online at <http://www.okumc.org/registrations/register/177>.



Embracing the UNITED METHODIST tradition of scholarship and service

Two add talents to University-Church Relations team

The University-Church Relations Department welcomes two new members, Rita Himes and Janet Boone, to our team at Oklahoma City University. Both have long-standing ties to OCU and to the Oklahoma Conference.

Rita Himes is administrative assistant to Department Vice-President Margaret Ball. Rita succeeds Teresa Holman, who moved to New Mexico.

In 1983, Rita graduated from OCU with a degree in Elementary Education. Son Andrew is a 2010 OCU graduate, with a B.A. in Mass Communications/Broadcasting, and daughter Sarah is an OCU senior, studying English.

Many in the Oklahoma Conference will know Rita's parents. The late Joe Carson served as a clergyperson, and Louise Carson is active at OKC-St. Luke's.

For the past six years, Rita worked in the OCU Registrar's Office. "Working in the University-Church Relations Office will give me the opportunity to branch out and meet many new people

and see many old friends," Rita said. "Working with Maggie Ball is one of the many wonderful perks of the position."

You may contact Rita at rhimes@okcu.edu or 405-208-5060.

Janet Boone is the new chapel administrator, replacing Sarah Krivy, who moved to a post at OKC-Church of the Servant, her home congregation.

Janet has been in ministry roles since 1987, as a children/youth director, director of music, and director of care at churches in Oklahoma and Texas. For the Oklahoma Conference, she chaired the Discipleship Ministry Team, 2000-'04, and has served on the Board of Church & Society and the Bolivia/Oklahoma Partnership Committee. Janet also has been a leader in children's camping ministries, serving 17 years as a camp dean.

Janet is married to Bob Boone. Her adult children are Renée, married to Mike Slack, and Philip, whose wife is named Courtney. She said her favorite

pastime is family game night.

Janet feels a special calling to work with college students and the university community. Her familiarity with many aspects of The United Methodist Church enables her to work easily with the varied groups that come to the campus.

"All my education and ministry experiences in my life have led me to be in ministry with the students and colleagues at OCU," Boone said.

This summer on campus, she already has hosted the School of Christian Mission, Summer School of Chemical Dependency, and Local Pastors Licensing School. For questions concerning the use of the chapel or its ministries, you may reach Janet at jdboone@okcu.edu or 405-208-5020.

"We are blessed to have Rita and Janet on our ministry team," said Rev. Maggie Ball. "We know they will enhance the work of our department and serve our students and United Methodists from across the state."



Rita Himes and Janet Boone

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Sign up for *Contact Digest*, a free electronic newsletter, at www.okumc.org.
Send news to editor@okumc.org. Next publication date: Aug. 31.



Oklahoma United
Methodist Communications



Strength for the journey: Ideas and thoughts from our bishop

Some things you never forget

“Precious memories, unseen angels, sent from somewhere to my soul; how they linger, ever near me, and the sacred past unfold.

Precious memories, how they linger, how they ever flood my soul; in the stillness of the midnight, precious, sacred scenes unfold.” (Music and lyrics by J.B.F. Wright, 1925)

Contact July 23, 2004

Bishop Hayes assigned to Oklahoma Area

By BISHOP ROBERT HAYES JR.

Even now I can close my eyes and again hear my mother, Dorothy, singing this hymn as tears of joy roll down her cheeks. It’s that kind of a song. Eight years of memories as your bishop recently have flooded my soul and, just like my mother, I am moved to tears as I recall the journey that has brought me to today.

In the July 23, 2004, *Contact*, published right after my election to the episcopacy, the front-page headline boldly proclaimed: “Bishop Hayes assigned to Oklahoma Area.” In the next issue, the top headline announced, “State-wide gathering welcomes Bishop Hayes.” And in a November edition that year, the front page reported my enthusiastic proclamation that being in Oklahoma “feels like home.”

I vividly recall the joy Dee and I experienced as we visited churches and met the people called United Methodists throughout this great state during those first weeks and months. Every night before bed, I praised God for the blessing of being assigned to a place I have loved from the moment I arrived.

Fast-forward with me to July 20, 2012. That night in Oklahoma City also will be forever etched in my memory. At the South Central Jurisdictional Conference, an official called out my assignment for 2013-2016: “Robert Hayes, the Oklahoma Area!” Suddenly I realized I had been blessed yet again. Moments later, the words I shared with the Oklahoma delegations were, “My joy has been fulfilled!”

That announcement ensures I will complete my ministry career here with you in Oklahoma. It is so reassuring to know those four years of my episcopacy service will be spent among people who have shown me and my wife extraordinary kindness and genuine Christian love.

Inever will forget the celebration at the 2012 Oklahoma Annual Conference in late May and the overwhelming support demonstrated going into the July jurisdictional conference. The amazing extent of your thoughtfulness makes me determined that this third term will be the best in my 12-year episcopacy.

I resolve to continue giving you all I have to offer, for I have discovered that in the giving I receive so much from all of you.

In my sermon given at my Investiture Service on Oct. 17, 2004, I said, “I come to you today in the spirit of cooperation, hoping to build bridges, to open some doors, to establish new relationships, to mend some fences... to heal and restore anyone who may be wounded or hurt. I want this episcopacy to build up the body of Christ; to bind together those disciples who support and serve the church through their prayers, their presence, their gifts, and their service.

“And lastly, I want you to identify me as a child of God who can proudly look you in the face and say to each and every one of you: I love you, and there is nothing

you can do about it!”

Moving forward into this next chapter that God is writing through us, I know there are many people whose path I have yet to cross, who need to hear a healing word from our Lord, and who are seeking to be made whole. Again, I thank God for allowing me to be here! I still have many churches to visit, many sermons to preach, more bridges to build, doors to open, relationships to establish, and fences to mend...

I am aware there are churches of all sizes concerned about their futures while treasuring the memories and guiding principles given to us by those who came before us.

Today I say to all of you: Don’t give up! Don’t give in to the forces that seek to undo what has been accomplished by those who introduced us to a meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ, by those faithful followers who also sacrificed for us.

There is so much to do, plenty to accomplish! My sleeves are rolled up for God’s work! I invite each of you to join me in our ongoing crusade of discovery, seeking the paths God lays out for us and following with

enthusiasm, excitement, obedience, and joy. Oklahoma, it’s good to be back!

I repeat what I said in 2004: “I love you!” And this time I add that the last eight years have proven you have chosen to love me in return. Thank you, and may God bless you all!



Contact October 22, 2004
Statewide gathering welcomes Bishop Hayes
Diana Cox Crawford and Bob Long watch Bishop Hayes receive a crosier from Fernando Padilla Jr.



Contact November 5, 2004
“It feels like home,” says Oklahoma’s bishop
Bishop Hayes with his wife, Dee, friend Vivian Oliver, and sons Ryan and Robert III.

Saint Paul School at OCU

Seminary’s 2nd class graduates Aug. 24

Saint Paul School of Theology at Oklahoma City University invites all to celebrate the seminary’s second graduating class at its Commencement Convocation, 4 p.m. Aug. 24 at OKC-Church of the Servant.

Six graduates will receive their Master of Divinity degrees. Preacher will be David Wilson, Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference superintendent, and a reception will follow in the fellowship hall.

“Together through our collaborative efforts, we are forging a future with hope. We invite you to join us in celebrating the gift of these vital leaders for the church,” said Saint Paul President Myron McCoy.

Also to be recognized will be 12 laypeople who completed the first year of Seminary Lite courses, offered by Saint Paul at OCU. Each will receive a Certificate in Lay Theological Education. Their names and hometowns are: Tom Boren of Aline; Ken Brown of Alva; Greg Ray of Blanchard; Jack W. Donathan of Broken Arrow; Guy Heldermon of Duncan; Randall K. Stoner and Susan Kerlin, both of Edmond; Terry Wayne Jordan of Elk City; Lynn Rudd of Elmer; Evelyn B. Phyffer and Rebecca Smith, both of Oklahoma City; and Marcina Overman of Ponca City. (Seminary Lite info: <http://www.spst.edu/783>)

Ministry helps family find housing

Join Neighborhood Services Organization “Housing + Healthcare = Hope” Campaign

The Robbins family moved from Texas to Oklahoma City to begin a new job and make a fresh start. The family made that trip with just enough money to rent a place to live until the first paycheck arrived. Unfortunately, their car broke down, and their meager funds went toward repair costs, leaving them homeless and without reliable transportation.

The Robbinses reached out for help from Neighborhood Services Organization (NSO) and found hope as well when they were approved for the “First Month’s Rent” program. They found a house to rent and, with the money they received from the program, moved into their new home.

NSO impacts the lives of families like the Robbinses every day through the United Methodist-related agency’s mission of addressing housing access and healthcare for low-income and at-risk individuals and families in the



The Robbins family

Oklahoma City area.

Now NSO is in need of a new home for its dental clinic and administrative offices. The “Housing + Healthcare = Hope” capital campaign will provide much-needed funds for this.

Oklahoma United Methodists can take part in the campaign through a challenge grant offered by Paul and Ann Milburn of Shawnee. Through Dec. 31, the Milburns will match contributions to the campaign, up to \$100,000.

For information on how to donate, contact Stacey Ninness at 405-236-0452 or visit www.nsookc.org.

Briefly

Addiction Ministries offers training

Training for the Faith Partners program, for local-church leaders and teams, has been scheduled by the Conference's Addiction Ministries.

■ On Aug. 24 in Oklahoma City, Leadership Training will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the United Methodist Ministry Center, 1501 N.W. 24th St.

■ On Nov. 16-17, Team Training will be offered in Holliman Lodge at Camp Egan, near Tahlequah. Reservations are required for this location.

Using the Faith Partners model, congregations reach out through compassionate, lay-led teams to minister to individuals and families dealing with addictions. Teams are trained in prevention, early intervention, referral assistance, and recovery support and advocacy.

Faith Partners helps a congregation develop a customized addiction ministry and create a safe, hospitable, and healing environment.

For more information and online registration: www.addictionministries.org. Or call: 405-530-2010.

COSROW to award book scholarships

Deadline is Sept. 15 for female ministry students to apply for book scholarships that will be awarded by the Oklahoma Conference Commission on the Status & Role of Women (COSROW).

Those who apply also must be from the Oklahoma Conference.

The online application is available on the Awards and Scholarships page at: <http://www.okumc.org/pages/detail/733>.

The completed form can be emailed to Jeff Hiller, who chairs COSROW, at jahiller@clergy.okumc.org. Or mail it to Rev. Hiller at Healdton-First UMC, where he is pastor.

Save the date

■ Dr. Billy Abraham,

Professor of Wesley Studies,
Perkins School of Theology, SMU

Preaching in worship services & speaking

to Ardmore District pastors

Sept. 23-24
Ada-First UMC

■ 30 Days of Prayer for College Students

Aug. 20-Sept. 18
www.wesleyosu.com

■ Seminary Lite

(Theological education for laity)

Sept. 15, Smith Chapel, OCU
2 courses: "Preaching the Gospel" and
"Introduction to the Old Testament"
www.spst.edu/783

■ The Upper Room 5-Day Academy for Spiritual Formation

Nov. 5-10, Canyon Camp
www.okumc.org/events/detail/2044

Bishop Smith's Message

This is my last OKLAHOMA MESSAGE. I want to let you know personally. I could not find a way to express our deep friendship through four years. To me you had a share in what I send our love and card, letter, call, and we can only say, from the depth of our friendship that the best of all is the which you as Ministers of the Churches have accepted as a challenge to sacrifice and to live. Only God and Eternity know the truth of all you have created an equal. All honor and glory to each of us, small or large, for the larger appointment we must have division but I fully believe we are all equal in the Ministry whatever our status, we are beyond our right to a Methodist Preacher or can come to say, "God called me."

If I attempted neither time nor space to complete the list we owe a debt that never repays. Thus Bless and Keep You more.

I do not know where in Oklahoma to do know he will be dedicated to his cause. I furnish great leadership forward in a man only ask that you wife the same affection have so generously. Me. For him I am fortunate in getting lead the finest group men and Churches in

A closing person the Skirvin Tower to spend all the afternoon preaching and holding called me to Preach long as health will permit I, send me'.

July 24-28, 1968

Oklahoma City Will Host The Jurisdictional Conference

Almost 400 delegates from United former Methodist Church, and four annual conferences of the former Evangelical United Brethren Church will meet in Oklahoma City, Okla. to elect a new bishop. Such action would give the jurisdiction its full authority.

Book traces 40 years of SCJ history

By SHARI GOODWIN

"I received a call from Ted Agnew's son, Peter, in 2007," recalled David Severe of Oklahoma City, executive director of the denomination's South Central Jurisdiction (SCJ). "Going through Ted's things after his death, they came across stacks of his writings. Most went to the jurisdictional archives, but one son remembered his dad saying, 'Get this manuscript to David Severe and Bishop Hardt.'"

Agnew, a layman from Stillwater, was an Oklahoma delegate to the SCJ conferences across many years. A retired history professor, he had begun compiling his notes into a book.

After confirming Bishop John Wesley Hardt's willingness to help, Rev. Dr. Severe agreed to take the job of completing the story of the South Central Jurisdiction, established in 1968. Soon, the unfinished manuscript arrived.

For several quadrennia, Agnew and Severe took turns acting as secretary for Oklahoma's delegation. "I watched him take notes that completely filled the yellow notebook pages with his small handwriting," Severe said. "Ted wrote everything down meticulously, and as he transformed those notes into a manuscript, he had a historian's eye for what to include and what to leave out. He had published an earlier history, so I tried to follow his outline and approach."

Delegates at the 2012 SCJ Conference received copies of the new book, titled "40: The History of the South Central Jurisdiction, 1968-2008."

"Ted had written extensively through 1988, but in 1992 there were just a few notes. After that, there was nothing. I hadn't made any notes either," Severe said. "It was a big job. I'm so pleased we were able to get it done."

The first meeting of the jurisdiction was right after the 1968 merger of denominations established The United Methodist Church, and the book retells how the Methodists, Evangelical United Brethren, and Central Conferences were to be combined.

In addition to Agnew's notes, Severe utilized the archives in Bridwell Library at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University.

"My wife Paula helped, and now every piece that was public information is recorded. Early on, women were listed just by their husbands' names, like 'Mrs. John Doe,' so we searched for the wives' first names and included those, too, where we could.

"Bishop Hardt has a wonderful memory, and that was a great help," Severe said. "Each time I finished a chapter, I would send it to him to critique. In one instance, I had written about Bishop Angie Smith's wife and used her name, Bess Smith. He

as. of tral Ju- ilhouse in the as they ul V. Arkan- Pope. Worth ve, To- Bishop s, La., ene M. Missouri Cope- Area: antonio, st Tex- st and center portant a. One e elec- vers to ictional United n are: ssions, vangel- ncerns. Health Method- f, Com- sched- service orning, hurch; diveder orning, Nolan senting f Bish- morn- South to be v. Dr. Boston a, and Okla- ference e Cong- ng Ed- ference mporal interde- an So- ling, of copacy. t 9:00 with a First Bishop ce will 25, led nce is lahoma Oklaho- e Rev. ive di- method-

Notes from 1968

In 1968, Oklahoma City hosted the first South Central Jurisdictional Conference of The United Methodist Church, drawing delegates from 25 annual conferences and 10 episcopal areas.

Most sessions were held at the Skirvin Hotel, with opening worship at First Church downtown and the consecration service at St. Luke's Church.

Among Oklahoma delegates were laymen Ron Gilbert of Miami, Tal Oden of Altus, and L.T. Hicks of Bixby; and clergymen Wayne Coffin, Bill Henry, Cliff Sprouls, and Tom and Bill Oden.

On the 13th ballot, Alsie Carleton was elected bishop and appointed to the Northwest Texas-New Mexico Area. Two retiring bishops were honored: Angie Smith of the Oklahoma-New Mexico Area and Paul Martin of the Houston Area.

(Source: *The Oklahoma Methodist*, July 1968)

called to tell me that Bishops Angie Smith and A. Frank Smith both had wives named Bess. I went back and added clarification. I wouldn't have known to do that without Bishop Hardt's input."

Severe's favorite story in the new book is from the 1968 conference. "Finis Crutchfield and Alsie Carleton, (who was married to Finis' sister, Artha Crutchfield), were vying for the episcopacy. After Finis lost votes twice in a row, he withdrew his name in favor of Carleton. Just before he did that, however, he summoned a page to take a note and hand it to Rev. Carleton as soon as Finis sat down. The note simply said, 'Blessed is he who standeth not in the way of sinners.' Carleton was elected at that conference, and Finis was elected four years later."

Severe also pointed out the book's insight on electing bishops.

"You'll discover, almost without exception, that first ballot will tell you how the election will turn out. Only once or twice has someone come riding over the hill, so to speak. Almost always, people will be elected in the order of that first nominating ballot," he said.

"The quote I used at the conclusion of the book came from Jurisdictional Archivist Jean Traster: 'Much blessed are the people of the Church with records of their past, for they have guidance for the way in which they will walk.'

"What a perfect quote for a written history!"



SCJ SNAPSHOTS—Above: Retired Bishop John Wesley Hardt (Oklahoma, 1980-88) serves Communion; delegate Herschel Beard of Madill packs meals for the hungry. Below: The presiding bishop introduces Oklahoman Wayne Coffin, a former member of the Judicial Council; Bob Long of OKC reins the delegation after a meeting of the SCJ Episcopacy Committee; Reneé Hoover of Enid weaves Cherokee basket during opening worship. (Photos by Kristin Van Nort, Shari Goodwin, Holly McCray)



Coordinator Jennifer Long, in green, poses with pages Sarah Thornhill, Reese Player, Keith Bethell, Fernie Rivera, Sean Crews, Jalisa Ross, Jamie Moss, and Caroline Patterson.

Young people write page in SCJ story

By SHARI GOODWIN and HOLLY McCRAY

Nine young adults stood quietly on the perimeter of seated delegates in the big ballroom. For hours, they were on their feet as the business of the South Central Jurisdictional Conference rolled on July 19-20 in the Cox Convention Center.

They hustled to act if a delegate, bishop, or official beckoned. The nine were pages, volunteers who delivered smiles along with messages on the convention floor.

The Host Planning Committee had embraced the idea to intentionally invite young people from both Oklahoma conferences to serve as attendants. Jennifer J. Long and Chebon Kernell coordinated them.

“The opportunity will have a profound impact on them for years to come,” said Rev. Kernell.

Jalisa Ross said, “I didn’t realize how dramatic our conferences are. God works through the conference, but some of the people are very ambitious. People in the local churches don’t see that.”

Added Reece Player, “It’s encouraging to

know that the UMC is a large, united church even though we do have differences.”

“I’ve been involved in my own church and at the annual conference,” said Sean Crews, “but it’s really cool to see the UMC working at the next level up.”

Newlywed Sarah Thornhill said, “I never realized how a bishop becomes a bishop, and how the church operates on a grander scale.”

She continued, “It’s neat to see how God can move through rigid rules and methodical ways, like how we decided to keep our commitment to the mission project and then the last bishop was elected so quickly. That was encouraging.

“I would certainly do it again, as long as I have comfy shoes.”

Jami Moss commended the delegates for lifting up one another and the planning committee for creating an affirming environment.

“I was surprised by the reception I’ve gotten from people,” she said. “It shows the love of Christ. It’s Wesleyan theology embodied in the people called Methodists.”

A collection to help offset the pages’ expenses totaled more than \$3,400.

SCJ volunteers work to stop hunger through mission project

By KRISTIN E. VAN NORT

After hours of voting and ministry reports July 20, South Central Jurisdiction delegates and guests traveled across Oklahoma City to UM Church of the Servant to participate in hands-on mission service.

More than 200 had registered to work in “Stop Hunger Now,” UM Advance Project No. 982795. They assembled and packaged 50,000 nutritious dehydrated meals to be distributed globally.

“As we concluded the afternoon business session, Bishop Hayes said, ‘We do enough for ourselves. Let’s do something for other people.’ This is exactly why we are here,” said D.A. Bennett, an Oklahoma Conference delegate and the senior pastor of OKC-St. Andrew’s. Rev. Bennett hopes to implement Stop Hunger Now in his church.

“This mission project impacts so many individuals and families. We are providing meals they may not otherwise have. This is one of the things God calls us to do—provide for the hungry,” said Herschel Beard, also an Oklahoma delegate and a member of Madill-First.

Scott Smith, director of discipleship at Church of the Servant, helped organize the jurisdictional mission. He became familiar with Stop Hunger Now three years ago, when

that congregation first participated in the project and he coordinated the effort.

“Stop Hunger Now gives us the opportunity to bring our entire congregation together for one cause. With so many ways to serve during the project, we’ve taken out the barriers of age, ability, and cost that often limit participation. Everyone can participate,” said Smith.

Volunteers prepared the meals by serving in several capacities including: filling food bags, weighing and sealing the bags, and packing the meals into boxes for shipment.

As volunteers each did their parts to achieve the goal, they also had opportunities to fellowship.

“I think it is incredible to see the teamwork in putting together food for so many others. People are visiting, laughing, and singing hymns as we work. It’s truly a joyous atmosphere,” said Elizabeth “Wink” Mueller, a member of Plano (Texas) First UMC.

Oklahoma delegate Joe Harris, coordinator of the mission project as well as co-chairman of the jurisdictional conference’s host committee, encourages those who participated to take the idea back to their annual conferences and local churches. He hopes future jurisdictional conferences also will include mission service.

Sept 1	Sept 29	Oct 27	Nov 17
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**FALL FOOTBALL
Tailgate Parties**

Join the Staff and the Students
Of
**Oklahoma State
University
Wesley Foundation**

at the corner of University Avenue
and Washington Street in Stillwater

Tailgate Parties are open to all and will include Free Hotdogs, Hamburgers, Chips and Drinks
(Donations for our ministry, facility and programming will be accepted)

**All Tailgate Parties will begin
Four Hours prior to kick-off and include opportunities to learn about our ministry, our future and meet other United Methodist Cowboy Fans.**

For more information, call 405-880-7194.

Passages

■ Rev. Glenda Kay Buchanan, 67, of Oklahoma City died July 21, 2012.

Kay was born Aug. 10, 1944, in Olney, Texas. She married Robert Neil Buchanan.

Her first career was in the field of nursing, including home healthcare and hospital administration. Then she answered God's call to minister and graduated in 2004 from Perkins School of Theology. She was ordained an elder in 2007.

She pastored at Wilson, Hugo-First, Ardmore-Asbury, and Pond Creek, retiring this year. As a member of the Board of Ordained Ministry, she was co-dean of Local Pastors Licensing School. She also was active in the Emmaus community as both a layperson and clergywoman.

Survivors include son Andrew Lee Buchanan, daughter Michelle Marie Daniels, and three grandchildren.

Service was July 28 at Madill-First UMC, with burial at Woodberry Forest Cemetery, Madill.

■ Rev. Joe Lawrence Hock, 79, of Edmond died July 8, 2012. He had retired in 1997 after 40 years of ministry.

Joe was born Oct. 14, 1932, in Oklahoma City. He graduated from Oklahoma City University and Perkins.

He pastored at Luther, Wheatland, Deer Creek, Ringling, Davis, Hi Way, Spencer, and Coalgate; in Oklahoma City, at Lakeside, St. Mark's, and Epworth; and in Terrell, Texas. He worked at West Side Counseling Center for 18 years.

Survivors include his wife, Elroes "Poppy" Hock; daughters Pam Dickinson, Jayna Hock, and Judy Conrady; six grandsons and four great-grandchildren.

Memorial service was July 12 at OKC-Church of the Servant.

■ Joyce Adams Curtis, 61, of Weatherford died July 25, 2012. She was the wife of Rev. John Torrey Curtis, who retired in 2007.

She was a member of the music faculty at Southwestern Oklahoma State University at the time of her death.

Joyce was born Aug. 30, 1950, in Mooreland. A gifted pianist and singer and admired choral director, she had a long career centered in music. She earned a degree in organ and music education from OCU and, while a graduate student at Southern Methodist University, met Torrey when touring with the SMU Choir.

Survivors include her husband and two children, Christopher Curtis and Laurin Townsend.

Memorial service was July 31 in the OCU Smith Chapel, with burial at the cemetery in Sharon.

■ Dorothy Ann Ging, 90, of Sapulpa, died July 19, 2012. She was the widow of Rev. Herman Carl Ging Jr., who died in 1998.

Dorothy was born Oct. 14, 1921, at Gibbon. She married Herman on June 21, 1942.

She held major roles in church leadership development, including presenting the Human Sexuality Training in the Oklahoma Conference, volunteering for many years at youth camps, and singing in choir.

She had recently been honored by the hospital in Sapulpa for 12,436 volunteer hours.

Service was July 23 at Sapulpa UMC.

■ Robert Lee Hays of Skiatook died June 17, 2012. He was the father of Rev. Marcia Martin, pastor at Vian.



From left: Guy Ames III, outgoing Ardmore District superintendent; Dan and Patty Wells of Caddo; Carol Reich and Claudean Harrison, UMRF officers.

Rural fellowship applauds 7 churches

Seven churches gained recognition for innovative ministry when they were honored May 30 by the Oklahoma United Methodist Rural Fellowship at its Annual Conference luncheon.

President Claudean Harrison said their efforts "serve as a wonderful example of how each church, no matter the size, can reignite the love of Christ." Honors were given in categories based on worship attendance.

■ 40 or fewer in worship: Capron UMC and the Caddo campus of Durant-First UMC.

■ 41 to 100 in worship: Foyil, Lindsay, and Lamont churches.

■ 101 to 150 in worship: Mangum-First and Norman-BridgeView.

Harrison said the Caddo church began to grow when its members chose to align with Durant-First. "Their out-of-the-box thinking and partnership changed their rural-church environment to one of growth and excitement," she said.

Lamont UMC, in Enid District, has intentionally worked to involve the entire membership in worship and mission, she reported. Now they build ramps for people with disabilities, clean and paint homes, host meals for senior citizens, and deliver meals to people recovering from illness. They spruced up the city park and partnered with other churches to offer a community-wide Vacation Bible School.

Appointments

Lin Stern, chaplain, Mercy Memorial Health Center (Ardmore District), to another denomination, effective July 1.

Sharen Hale, from OKC-St. Luke's UMC (South OKC) to discontinued, effective July 1.

Jeremy Smith, from Checotah UMC associate to Oregon-Idaho Conference, effective July 1.

Charlotte Teel, from Choctaw UMC associate (North OKC) to Yukon-Good Shepherd associate, effective July 1.

Opportunities

Youth Minister: Part-time. Del City-Sunny Lane United Methodist Church. Larry Bauman, larrylb58@gmail.com.

Day Care Teachers & Cook: Full- and part-time. Sunny Lane UMC. Carol Scott, cscott@sunnylanumc.com.

Youth Director: Perry UMC, Michael Strange, 580-336-2776, perryumc@sbcglobal.net.

Church Administrator: Midwest City-Wickline UMC, trustees@coxinet.net.

Children's & Family Ministry Director: Full-time. First United Methodist Church, SPRC, 500 S. Johnstone, Bartlesville, OK 74003, Kevin.tully@fumcville.org.

Children's Ministry Assistant: Part-time. Tulsa-Christ UMC, bfeist@cumctulsa.com.

Pianist: Part-time. Stroud UMC, Ashley Green-Young, ashleyjgy@gmail.com, 918-968-2732.

Music Minister: Part-time. **Youth Director:** Part-time. El Reno Wesley UMC, Barry Bennett, 101 S. Barker, El Reno, OK 73036, wesleyelreno@sbcglobal.net.

Music Director: Part-time. Cleora UMC, jeannem@junct.com.

Director of Preaching Ministries: General Board of Discipleship, hrstaff@gbod.org, 615-340-7565.

Director of Children's Ministries: Full-time. Choctaw UMC, Andy James, 1200 N. Choctaw Rd., Choctaw, OK 73020, 405-390-8151, pastor@choctawumc.com.

Administrative Assistant: St. Stephen's UMC, 400 W. New Orleans, Broken Arrow, OK 74011, 918-251-7321.

Contemporary Worship Leader: Part-time. **Organist:** Part-time. Chris Tabberer, Tulsa-Faith UMC, ctaberer@faithtulsa.org.

Birth

William "Liam" Weldon Hughes-Ruddell was born June 29, 2012. He is the son of Revs. Crystal Hughes, pastor at Morris, and Christopher Ruddell, associate pastor at Bixby-First.

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It Worked for Us

The Oklahoma Conference Board of Laity annually recognizes one church in each district for an outstanding lay-led ministry. The 2012 honorees were named May 29 at an Annual Conference luncheon.

- Kid's Club, Ringling UMC (Ardmore District)**
- Wednesday Community Monitoring Program, Foyil UMC (Bartlesville)**
- Bring Wednesday Back, Mangum-First (Clinton)**
- Thrift Sale, Tonkawa-First (Enid)**
- Western Jamboree, Anadarko-First (Lawton)**
- Giving Thanks Dinner—Matthew 25, Henryetta-First (McAlester)**
- Share the Warmth, Stilwell-First (Muskogee)**
- ACTS (Acknowledging Christ Thru Service), OKC-Chapel Hill (North OKC)**
- It Gets Better, Norman-St. Stephen's (South OKC)**
- Peace, Bread, and Joy (a.k.a. PB&J), Cushing-First (Stillwater)**
- Church Partners in Mission, Sand Springs UMC (Tulsa)**
- Feeding the Firefighters, Quinlan UMC (Woodward)**

Video series confronts bullying St. Stephen's teams with OU students

St. Stephen's UMC in Norman partnered with OU journalism students to produce an online video series, "It Gets Better," that seeks to combat bullying and promote the church's mission as a community of faith that welcomes all.

The series earned the 2012 "It Worked for Us" Award in the South OKC District. In late June, video views totaled more than 1,800.

The 10 videos can be viewed on YouTube and on the church's website, www.ststephensnorman.org.

The series was produced by St. Stephen's Reconciling Ministries Committee and a team of OU students, as part of their senior capstone project, said Pastor Amy Venable.

Launched in 2010, the worldwide It Gets Better Project began with one YouTube video created in response to the suicides of young people who were bullied—particularly lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youths. Since then, thousands of videos have been created, with millions of views.

At St. Stephen's, Jason Martin, who is a member of the church's Reconciling Ministries Committee, came up with the idea of creating the video series. He was excommunicated from his childhood church and rejected by his family for being gay. He said he found love and acceptance at St. Stephen's.

"Initially our mission was to connect with one person, one teenager, or one LGBT person, one young family—and let them know there are families of faith out there that welcome all people," Martin said. "For so many people in the LGBT community, because they have been beat down most of their lives and told they are not worthy, *church* and *religion* are dirty words.

"To be told by your family you are not good enough is hard," Martin continued. "To feel like God is telling you you're not good enough is a totally different rejection. St. Stephen's is there to help



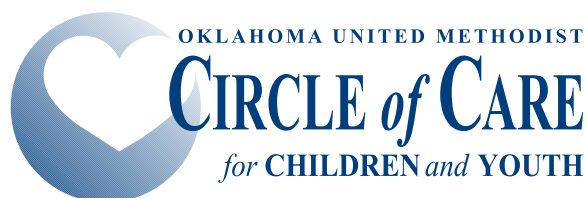
Pastor Amy Venable, center, presents the "It Worked for Us" plaque to Jason Martin and Marilyn Nicely, members of St. Stephen's Reconciling Ministries Committee, in recognition of the "It Gets Better" videos.

heal the hurt that so many have faced on many levels."

The video series not only tackles bullying, but also spotlights the church's commitment to service and mission work, its programs for youth and families, and its long history of working for social justice. Church staff as well as individual members and families are featured.

"We wanted to send the message that not only does 'It Get Better,' but at St. Stephen's we are working to make it better," Martin said.

For more information, call the church, 405-321-4988, or visit the website <http://www.ststephensnorman.org>.



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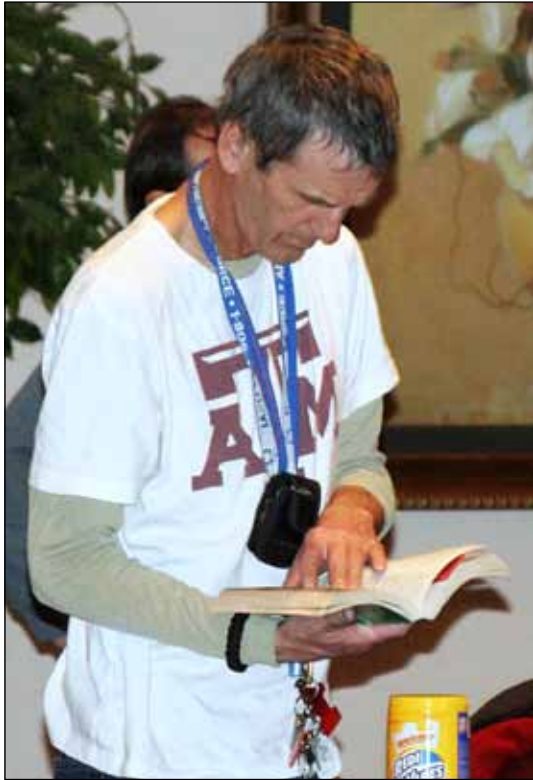
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|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Anonymous (x13) | Philip & Lisa Crow | Highland Park UMC | Mary Moelling | Stanley & Sherry Selvidge |
| Kay Adair | Anna Cypert | Jim & Mary Nell Holder | Mike & Christy Mordy | Logan & Donna Sharpe |
| Bill & Karen Anderson | Bobby & Shirley Darnell | Ross & Jane Hutchinson | David & Laura Morrison | UMM - Wesley UMC Shawnee |
| Donald & Cheryl Baker | Marsha Davis | Robert & Ann Ivester | Ted & Laura Mosteller | UMW - Wesley UMC Shawnee |
| Randy & Eddisu Barker | John Dixon | Mr. & Mrs. Ivan Keatley | Jim Neel & Jan King | Arden & Rita Ruth Smith |
| Don and Lynn Batson | William & Donna Dodson | Keith Kennedy | Stan Nichols | Bill & Martha Smith |
| David & Janet Battles | Robert & Brenda Duran | Steve & Suzan Knight | Thrift Store-Nicoma Park UMC | Craig Stinson & Krista Jones |
| Enloe & Wanda Baumert | Gregory & Mary Ann Edwards | Brian & Julie LaPat | Chuck & DeeAnn Nordean | Carolyn Taylor |
| David & Laura Beal | Barbara Eskridge | Greg & Anita LaPat | Clark Nutting | Andrew Tevington |
| Wesley Fellowship - | Don & Wanda Fischer | Centenary UMC Lawton | Pathfinder SS Class - | Ken & June Tucker |
| Boston Ave. UMC Tulsa | Jo Fowler | Robert Lee | Grace UMC (OKC) | J.M. & Patricia Vanderwiele Jr. |
| Clara Brown | David & Cindy Frieze | Ed & Melba Livermore | St. Andrew's UMC (OKC) | Jim & Vickie Wagner |
| Spencer & Mary Brown Jr. | Mike & Elaine Frizzell | Ralph & Elaine Lockstone | UMW - Okmulgee UMC | Bob & Kathleen West |
| Trav & Kara Brown | Jerry & Jane Gamble | Mr. & Mrs. Hal Long | UMM - Okmulgee UMC | David & Suzan Wolf |
| Mary Butler | Robert & Prudy Gorrell | Joe Lucas & Kay McSpadden | Dee & Barbie Paige | Bill & Lissa Wright |
| Ivan Bys | Jim and Elaine Gragg | Bryan & Vicki Mannering | Bob & Peggy Peters | Donald & Barbara Wright |
| Michael & Leanne Chaffin | Bud & Jane Griffy | Emery & Lisa Mason | Lenert & Bobbie Pfeiler | Earnestine Wright |
| UMW - Claremore FUMC | UMW - Grove FUMC | Dwight Maulding | Allan Rau | Steve & Ann Zenthoefler |
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| Edgar & Betty Collins | Ralph & Linda Harker | Burrell & JoAnn McNaught | Margaret Ritter | *UM Boys Ranch |
| Mike & Mary Collins | Valerie Hatley | Billy & Lora Meade | Joe & Judy Robinson | *UM Children's Home |
| Robert & Debbie Craine | Bob & Dee Hayes Jr. | Lou & Pat Meadors | Joe & Shirley Rolston | *Independent Living |
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Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation insights

Downtown church ministers to homeless community



A man reads his Bible during a Friday Night Alive worship service at OKC-First UMC.

By KRISTIN E. VAN NORT
The Oklahoma
United Methodist Foundation

A few blocks in any direction from downtown, a homeless community can be found in Oklahoma City. During the day, there are services and meal programs for those impoverished.

OKC-First United Methodist Church saw an opportunity to minister during a different time period to those in need.

The downtown church offers "Friday Night Alive," an evening program especially for its homeless neighbors. The weekly service includes worship, prayer, food, and fellowship.

"We provide a safe, comfortable environment; a respite from the dangers of the street life; encouragement, friendship, worship, and prayer," said Mary Walbert, coordinator.

Walbert recognizes many in the homeless community do not feel comfortable in churches on a Sunday morning due to their



clothing and appearance.

Friday Night Alive began as an idea more than two years ago, when First Church hosted City Care, a local organization that used the church's facilities to provide a daily hot breakfast to the downtown homeless community.

Walbert volunteered at the breakfast on a few days each week and had the opportunity to give the devotion. In those volunteer moments, she heard God's call to begin a First UMC ministry for the homeless.

"God opened doors for us to begin the Friday evening service," said Walbert. "However, this ministry would not be possible without our pastor Mark McAdow's heart and support and the support of our church.

"Isaiah 61 is our mission statement, and we are working to live out the Scripture through action and love."

To begin Friday Night Alive, First Church received a Petree Grant from the Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation,

and a family in the church matched the grant, providing more funds.

Grant funds helped purchase coats, sleeping bags, socks, gloves, hats, and personal items to be distributed as needed. The money also provides for a healthy evening meal.

As volunteers and people in need have connected during Friday Night Alive, Walbert said, some individuals have been helped to find jobs and housing.

"When it happens to one, it trickles down to others. When they see he or she can do it, it gives hope," said Walbert.

"This ministry is like forming a family—an extended family—just like most of us experience on Sunday mornings at our churches."

Since 1996, the Petree Endowment Fund has awarded more than \$1 million in grants to Oklahoma United Methodist ministries and churches.

The grant deadline is Sept. 15. Applications are now available on the Foundation's website, www.okumf.org. For more information, contact Barbara Gayle at the Foundation, 800-259-6863.

The Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation Inc., 4201 Classen Blvd., Oklahoma City 73118; www.okumf.org; 800-259-6863

School of Mission: learning hands-on

Service went hand-in-hand with study July 27-30 at the annual School of Mission, held on the OCU campus.

About 200 people attended, reported Dean Jane Bond. They studied poverty, Haiti, and "Immigration and the Bible." They contributed to the offering, benefiting Skyline Urban Ministry in Oklahoma City and UM Advance work in Haiti.

And they took part in Alive in Christ Saturday Night worship at Skyline, serving those in need a meal provided by Stillwater-Highland Park Church; toured Neighborhood Services Organization sites; and packed personal hygiene kits for Skyline and for Restore Hope Ministries in Tulsa.

Bond described the sense of unified purpose among participants. "People are gathered with others of like mind. You get inspired to work for peace and justice," she said.

Supplementing the studies were classes by presenters from Oklahomans Against the Trafficking of Humans and the Oklahoma Policy Institute, and also "A Theology of Shopping."

New in the Media Library

Nine videos related to the studies are available for free check-out through the Conference Media Library. Contact Amelia Ballew, 405-530-2075, aballew@okumc.org.

■ **Poverty** — "Standing in Need: Systemic Poverty in Our Midst"; "America's Working Poor," from ABC News *Nightline*



(22 minutes); "The Global Banquet: Politics of Food" (2 segments, each 28 minutes); "Always ... Therefore: The Church's Challenge of Global Poverty" (28 minutes).

■ **Immigration and the Bible** — "Jas-

mine's Story" (11 minutes); "Gospel Without Borders" (2 segments, 31 and 53 minutes).

■ **Haiti** — Two 12-minute segments from CBS' *60 Minutes*: "Haiti" and "The Lost Children of Haiti"; and also "Haiti:



Plenary speaker Nancy McCullough discusses her life journey. She is associate pastor at OKC-Chapel Hill.



Far left, presiding at Communion is Pastor Valerie Steele of Okemah, center. At left, Mardi Crutchfield of Avant adds washcloths to personal hygiene kits packed at the School of Mission.

Photos by Nannette Morrison of Tahlequah

Perspectives on a Living History."

The Oklahoma Cooperative School of Christian Mission is jointly presented by the Mission & Service Ministry Team and United Methodist Women.