

**ANNUAL CONFERENCE COUNCIL BUDGET 2006**

**Program Area**

ACC Operations Budget . . . . .	\$655,382
Discipleship MT . . . . .	\$163,700
Leadership MT . . . . .	\$33,830
Mission & Service MT . . . . .	\$120,826
<b>Total . . . . .</b>	<b>\$973,738</b>

**Designated Apportionment Items**

**Mission and Service Ministries**

Chemical Dependency Services. . . . .	\$69,750
Circle of Care . . . . .	\$687,750
Cookson Hills . . . . .	\$43,500
Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministries . . . . .	\$325,500
(Prison Ministry)	
Neighborhood Services Organization . . . . .	\$19,500
Nursing Homes . . . . .	\$30,000
Oklahoma Conference of Churches. . . . .	\$42,500
Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference . . . . .	\$120,000
Rio Grande Missionary Conference . . . . .	\$9,700
United Methodist Manor. . . . .	\$60,000
Urban Ministries . . . . .	\$135,000
Volunteers In Mission . . . . .	\$220,500
<b>Total . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,763,700</b>

**Discipleship Ministries**

Camps and Retreat Ministries. . . . .	\$212,000
Oklahoma City University . . . . .	\$975,000
Campus Ministry. . . . .	\$723,610
<b>Total. . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,910,610</b>

**Leadership Development Ministries**

Board of Ordained Ministry . . . . .	\$45,715
Ministerial Recruitment . . . . .	\$36,000
<b>Total . . . . .</b>	<b>\$81,715</b>

**Congregational Development**

Congregational Development . . . . .	\$229,500
Hispanic Ministries . . . . .	\$129,600
Racial Ethnic Coordinating Committee. . . . .	\$141,750
<b>Total . . . . .</b>	<b>\$500,850</b>

**Department of Communications**

Total Communications . . . . .	\$233,463
Project Teams* . . . . .	\$20,000

**GRAND TOTAL . . . . . \$5,484,076**

## DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY TEAM

### PROPOSAL FOR 2006

#### *“MAKING DISCIPLES, MAKING A DIFFERENCE”*

The Discipleship Ministry Team has decided to develop our quadrennial goal for Discipleship with a focus on changing the decline in attendance at Sunday school, decline in attendance in worship, and decline in numbers of professions of faith. We approved the theme for the quadrennium as “Making Disciples, Making a Difference.”

Our focus will be upon: Worship, Christian education, and leading persons to make commitments to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. All the work areas of the Discipleship Ministry Team will seek to support the accomplishment of this. Our practical goal is to increase attendance in church school, worship, and membership by 5% each year.

Our means of doing this will be to:

- (1) Research the needs of the community and local churches, and research effective methods in accomplishing the above mission;
- (2) Vision-cast to develop a clear mission statement, to set specific measurable goals to accomplish our mission;
- (3) Ongoing training for leaders of local churches to accomplish our goals;
- (4) Develop continuing strategic plans and programs for accomplishing the goals; and
- (5) Celebrate the victories that God will give us.

### **I. RESEARCH**

In order to accomplish the first or Research phase of this plan, we need to know information about the needs of persons in our communities, demographics on the State of Oklahoma, data on the strengths and weakness of our churches, and methodologies and programs that work.

1. We will work with staff from Percept to use their database information concerning demographics, social trends and cultural changes to see that our programs are on target with the needs of our communities.

2. We will joint venture with the staff of Discipleship Ministries of the General Board of Discipleship, led by Vance Ross. We will make arrangements with Ross to bring members of his team to Oklahoma to help us in partnering with the general church and using resources that they know are available for the development of “Making Disciples, Making a Difference.”

3. We will work with Harriett Olson and the staff of The United Methodist Publishing House to partner with them in developing the “Sunday School Is for Life” program in Oklahoma Conference churches.

4. We will work with John Southwick of the General Board of Global Ministries Research Department to use resources from that department to provide information, particularly about our local churches and trends within Methodism.

5. We will hire Dr. Robert Whitesel, general consultant and author, to assist in implementing our goal of “Making Disciples, Making a Difference.”

### **II. TRAINING**

Training in the areas of emphases for “Making Disciples, Making a Difference” will be held in January and August, and other times as appropriate.

1. The training will provide help in building worship attendance, Sunday school attendance, and reaching new people for Christ. It will incorporate resources from Igniting Ministries, Sunday School Is for Life, and the Next Step Training for Church Growth. We will

work with the Next Step Program and district and Conference training events to accomplish the training.

2. During 2005 and 2006, we will bring in a series of local church pastors and leaders who have successfully achieved the goals which we desire to accomplish, asking them to share what they did and how they did it. Recommended as possible consultants are: Janet Forbes, Ron Watts, Tyrone Gordon, Jim Harnish, Don Cummings, Brian Bauknight and others.

3. We will provide training on the “Natural Church Development” model as possible strategy for Discipleship Ministry. Worldwide research found that healthy, growing churches seem to share eight quality characteristics. These characteristics are: Empowering leadership, gift-oriented ministry, passionate spirituality, functional structures, inspiring worship services, holistic small groups, need-oriented evangelism, and loving relationships. We will be working with leaders of other conferences who are using this material (particularly the Florida Conference) and the “Natural Church Development” consultants.

4. All the work areas of the Discipleship Ministry Team will continue their needed programs, and each will be a part of the “Making Disciples, Making A Difference” emphasis.

### III. STRATEGIC PLANS AND PROGRAM

The Team’s multiple local church program committees (Evangelism, Adult Education, Children, Youth, Worship, Singles and Seniors) will develop particular programs to accomplish our goal of “Making Disciples, Making a Difference.”

1. The strategy for building Sunday school attendance, worship attendance and church growth will be particularly emphasized from Sept. 1 through Dec. 24 and from Jan. 1 through Mothers’ Day each year. This will include a coordinated emphasis on four Fall Festival days that will provide opportunities for attendance and growth emphases. Those four days will be: Back to School, Worldwide Communion, All Saints Day and Thanksgiving Sunday. The attendance emphasis will include a Home for Christmas emphasis, with a focus on Christmas Eve Communion. The emphasis during January through Mothers’ Day will include Christmas followup, Lent, and Easter followup.

2. The emphases in church school, worship, and growth will include the following:

- a. Each church should consider starting at least one or more new Sunday school classes this year.
- b. Each church should consider establishing an additional worship service, seeking to meet the needs of the community in terms of style and time.
- c. Each church will provide training for its worship leaders.
- d. Each church will provide training for all church school teachers.
- e. Each church will provide training in evangelism for the entire congregation.
- f. Each church will provide training in needs-based evangelism.
- g. Each church will set goals for attendance gain in Sunday school, worship, and for acquiring new members.

3. Attendance Emphasis Materials have been developed by The Crouch Group and are now available. These materials, initially developed by the North Texas Conference of The United Methodist Church, can be ordered by each local church.

### IV. CONTINUATION AND CELEBRATION

This program will be revised, developed and celebrated during the quadrennium by the appropriate groups, by the Executive Committees of the Discipleship Ministry Team and, most of all, by the local churches of the Conference.

*BOB PIERSON*, chairperson

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## ADULT MINISTRIES

The Discipleship Ministry Team is a body made up of many parts of which Christ is the head. Adult Education seeks to play a key role in helping us make disciples who make a difference. Facing declining numbers in Sunday school enrollment, we will seek to turn the tide and march toward the goal of each church increasing Sunday school participation by 5%. Plans are being made to partner with The United Methodist Publishing House for developing the "Sunday School Is for Life" program in Oklahoma. This will include training for teachers, new emphasis on Disciple Bible Study, and training for launching new Sunday school classes.

We are looking at ways to help churches create disciple-making systems beyond Sunday school. We have a rich heritage that helps provide a model for watching over one another in love. Training in the nuts and bolts of disciple-making systems would help each church create its own blueprint for vital adult learning with methods that are "taught and caught." There is also a vision for developing a prayer and Bible conference.

*D.A. BENNETT*, chairperson

## COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

This past year has been an exciting time for members of this commission. After the annual conference last June, work intensified on the expansion of the area devoted to the Archives, on the fifth floor of the Dulaney-Browne Library at Oklahoma City University.

Our Oklahoma United Methodist collection is cared for by Christina Wolf, archivist and special collections librarian. She devotes a great deal of her time to United Methodist individuals and church groups.

Since the grand opening of the new Archives Reading Room on Nov. 16, 2004, it has been gratifying to have this wonderful space in which researchers can work. Oklahoma Annual Conference is fortunate to have an excellent working relationship with OCU in sharing the facilities and the archivist.

The Archives Reading Room is open from 9 o'clock to noon on Monday through Friday, except for national holidays. It is hoped that many delegates to this annual conference will take advantage of the opportunity to visit the enlarged Archives rooms during the conference lunch or break times.

In July, our archivist and some members of the commission traveled to Fort Worth, Texas, to attend the South Central Jurisdictional Convocation of Archivists. These types of workshops are held every two years.

On Dec. 5, 2004, the consecration service for The United Methodist Historic Site Plaque was held. This service recognized the Epworth United Methodist Church as being the site of the 1903 Epworth University, which ultimately became Oklahoma City University. The preacher for the morning was Bishop Robert E. Hayes Jr. Others who participated in the dedication were the pastor, Rev. David Rose; Tom McDaniel, the president of OCU; Cindi Williams, Epworth Church Council chairperson; John R. Calhoun, Epworth trustees representative and historian; Rev. Maggie Ball, vice president of university/church relations; and the Commission on Archives and History chairperson.

On Jan. 27-30, 2005, this chairperson had the privilege of attending four workshops on archives and history at the Quadrennial Training Workshop in Houston, Texas.

*JOY ANSELY*, chairperson

**CAMP AND RETREAT MINISTRY**

We are pleased to announce that 23,797 campers attended camp events in 2004. That is the most campers ever in Oklahoma United Methodist Camps history. However, our camper days were down from last year, which means we had more campers, but their events were shorter than in years past. This is a direct product of a sagging economy. However, it is obvious that our campers, parents and leaders realized the need for contact with this important ministry for sharing God’s love even when funds were less available.

Camp events that had significant growth this year include Sonshine Camps (first- and second-graders), JEM Camp (Junior High Leadership Camp), and Family Gathering (family camp that filled Cross Point Camp for a weekend in August). We take pride in offering these and all events that provide Christian education, evangelism and leadership training ministry for the Conference.

Our camps rely on a wonderful crew of volunteers to provide leadership and resources. As we grow, we need more persons who are compassionate, accepting, disciplined and biblically knowledgeable or willing to learn. This is a great opportunity to help campers experience the wonders of God’s Word and world, and to teach stewardship of God’s creation to our future generations. We are also committed to the safety of our campers and camp leaders. Application information forms and background checks are required for all camp leaders. Our policy committee meets several times a year to review and update all written policies.

The budget request for camps will support the cost of staff, board of trustee meetings, promotion, program and facilities for Conference, district and local church events at our three campsites. The total budget for camps in 2005 is \$1,706,100. Of this, the Conference apportionment will provide \$203,764, or 11.9%, if paid at 100%. The rest of the budget is raised through fees charged to guests at Canyon Camp, Camp Egan and Cross Point Camp, and through donations. We are aware that our insurance, utility and food costs have and will continue to rise significantly. The board of trustees is also looking into the need to significantly raise the salaries of our professional staff in order to maintain consistency and superior leadership. In 1995, the budgeted apportionment for camps, plus fair share goals, was \$199,500 plus \$5,000 from the Children’s Department for children’s camp programming, or a total of \$204,500. So, in the last 10 years, the budgeted camps apportionment has decreased \$736, and the camps operational budget has increased \$600,000. The needs are important and should not all be passed on to our campers. Therefore, we are requesting a \$10,236 increase for 2006. You can also help us by encouraging more summer campers and groups to participate in our programs and to use our facilities.

2005 AMOUNT . . . . .	\$203,764
2006 REQUESTED INCREASE . . . . .	\$10,236
2006 TOTAL REQUEST . . . . .	\$214,000

Following our Master Plan, the Conference Camp Board of Trustees has set a priority on the improvement of our camp facilities and programs to meet the current and future needs of the Conference. Our Campaign Committee has hired the consulting firm of RSI to conduct a planning study in advance of a major fund-raising campaign already approved by the Annual Conference. This study seeks to gain factual information to determine if our proposed campaign can attract the necessary volunteer leadership, if and from whom the needed funds might be available, whether the timing is appropriate, and whether the overall reaction of our constituency is favorable. This study report was to be presented to the Camp

Board of Trustees in mid-May 2005. Funds from the campaign would provide new lodges at Camp Egan and at Cross Point Camp, and a new meeting/office/dining facility near Hardt Lodge at Canyon Camp. This is specifically designed to meet the needs of our fastest-growing user groups, adults and families, and to open up space and additional opportunities for our largest age groups, children and youth.

To conclude, we thank God for the wonderful staff and volunteers who serve the campers of Oklahoma. Consistency in staff is a goal that has been achieved. The following staff members have been together for several years: Jan Shaffer, Kim Van Gundy, Dave Perrin, Susan Wolfenbarger, Ken Long, Kelley Browning, Sandie Weldon, Alicia Galyon and Chad Detwiler. They are always ready to share God's love and have become a wonderful team dedicated to Christian Camping. We also wish to thank the Children and Youth Ministries staff and the entire staff of the Conference office for the wonderful work they do on behalf of camps and the Oklahoma Annual Conference. May God bless us all as we serve in ministry together.

*ED COY-LIGHT*, chairperson, Camps Board of Trustees  
*RANDY MCGUIRE*, director of Camp and Retreat Ministries

## CAMPUS MINISTRY

### THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON CAMPUS MINISTRY

The Standing Committee on Campus Ministry leads, empowers, nurtures and advocates for healthy United Methodist-related campus ministry. A primary focus this year is the development of a strategic plan for the current and future of campus ministry in the Oklahoma Annual Conference. In this plan is a vision statement that we hope will catch the hearts and hopes across the entire Annual Conference.

“An increasing number of students and graduates of Oklahoma colleges and universities are active, growing Christian disciples and leaders in the life and ministry of The United Methodist Church, its congregations and beyond.” (Standing Committee Vision Statement, January 2005)

This strategic plan leads this committee and, we hope, represents our Oklahoma Annual Conference. Though it appears here as a finished document, we understand this to be in process and subject to the changing scene on our campuses, our world and in our church.

Our 16 campus ministries are locations where students are challenged to commit boldly to Jesus Christ within our United Methodist Church and are characterized by intellectual excellence, moral and spiritual courage, and holiness of heart and life.

A growing United Methodist Student Movement is building within our Annual Conference and nationally. Oklahoma college students are prominent leaders nationally and across the state.

Student intern peer ministers are reaching out to engage and include students at many of our campuses. Campus ministers are offering worship, Bible studies, mission opportunities, and Christian identity formation at each Oklahoma United Methodist Campus Ministry site. Aging campus ministry buildings and furnishings, competitive salaries and support services, and reaching out to campuses not served by our campus ministries are among the current concerns and challenges for our committee. At the same time, we celebrate the devotion and generosity of clergy, laity, student, faculty, alumni, family and friends who keep the doors open and vital to each new generation of students.

*SIGRID KRAUSE AND ROCKFORD JOHNSON*, SCCM co-chairpersons

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## A STRATEGIC PLAN TO GUIDE THE WORK OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON CAMPUS MINISTRY (SCCM)

### MISSION STATEMENT:

The Standing Committee on Campus Ministry leads, empowers, nurtures and advocates for healthy United Methodist-related campus ministry.

### VISION STATEMENT:

An increasing number of students and graduates of Oklahoma colleges and universities are active, growing Christian disciples and leaders in the life and ministry of The United Methodist Church, its congregations and beyond.

### Strategy One (S1):

The SCCM facilitates the equipping and training of local campus ministry boards and campus ministers.

- S1 Goal One: The SCCM facilitates the equipping and training of campus ministers to ensure both effectiveness and a balanced and comprehensive ministry plan.
- S1 Goal Two: The SCCM equips and trains local campus ministry boards for effective support and for leadership of campus ministry.

### Strategy Two (S2):

The SCCM will foster a clear communication and advocacy plan among all Conference entities – churches, Conference leadership, campus ministries, camps, annual conference, etc.

### Strategy Three (S3):

The SCCM advocates, creates and maintains adequate and adventurous funding for campus ministry.

- S3 Goal One: The SCCM seeks to increase the Bishop's Endowment for campus ministry.
- S3 Goal Two: The SCCM prepares the annual SCCM budget and apportionment request for campus ministry.
- S3 Goal Three: The SCCM performs a comprehensive analysis and recommendations of facility needs, both existing and new, and shares needs and recommendations with appropriate parties.
- S3 Goal Four: The SCCM empowers local boards for fund-raising.
- S3 Goal Five: SCCM explores the establishment of an Annual Conference office of development for raising funds for several programs, including campus ministry.

### Strategy Four (S4):

The SCCM develops and implements a fair and faithful system of mutual accountability of local boards and their ministry settings.

- S4 Goal One: Gather detailed information and insights from local campus ministries.
- S4 Goal Two: Process the information from the visitation teams.
- S4 Goal Three: Publish and celebrate the information from the visitation teams.
- S4 Goal Four: Invite campus ministers to inform the SCCM of needs, ministry plans and evidences of effective ministry.
- S4 Goal Five: The SCCM provides for evaluation and improvement of its own work.

**Strategy Five (S5):**

The SCCM helps to shape the outcomes and expectations that characterize healthy UM-related campus ministry.

- S5 Goal One: The SCCM explores and identifies characteristics of healthy campus ministry and also partners with campus ministries to help them develop the capacity to define what “healthy campus ministry” means in their settings.  
Marks of Healthy Campus Ministry:
  1. Healthy UM campus ministries “Make Disciples, Change Lives, Create Leaders.”
  2. Healthy UM campus ministries promote understanding of UM heritage and identity.
  3. Healthy UM campus ministries foster loyal, faithful UM congregants.
  4. Healthy UM campus ministries teach, give access to, and promote awareness of the Social Principles of the UMC.
  5. Healthy UM campus ministries develop and operate with a strategic plan. (Train boards and campus ministers on strategic planning with boards and in campus ministry settings.)
  6. Healthy UM campus ministries celebrate and promote the relevance, identity and voice of the UMC for campus communities and beyond.
  7. Healthy UM campus ministries help students explore faith-based options to life issues.
  8. Healthy UM campus ministries increase the number of students, faculty/staff and graduates who are and who become active, growing disciples and leaders in the life and ministry of the UMC, its congregations and beyond.
  9. Healthy UM campus ministries receive students (freshmen and others) at their faith level and intentionally provide ways or programs that can lead them to a more mature faith.
  10. Help students connect with local churches both during their college years and after leaving campus.
- S5 Goal Two: Communicate the Marks of Healthy Campus Ministry and all related entities and leaders.
- S5 Goal Three: Facilitate self-assessment by each campus ministry concerning these Marks of Healthy Campus Ministry.

**Strategy Six (S6):**

The SCCM extends the reach of campus ministry to all students and campuses.

- S6 Goal One: The SCCM recruits, trains and equips local churches to engage in ministry on/to campuses that have no United Methodist campus ministry.
- S6 Goal Two: Seek adequate funding for new ministries. (See funding Strategy Three.)
- S6 Goal Three: Make recommendations to the Conference concerning the establishment of new Wesley Foundations (*2004 Discipline*).
- S6 Goal Four: Establish branch or satellite campus ministry from existing ministry.
- S6 Goal Five: Move to multiple staff as needed.
- S6 Goal Six: Develop the United Methodist Student Movement, UMSM in Oklahoma, relating students not now served to UMSM.
- S6 Goal Seven: Review viability of existing ministries.

**Strategy Seven (S7):**

The SCCM advocates to the bishop and cabinet for the best possible appointments according to the *Book of Discipline*, with due consideration of gifts and calling.

- S7 Goal One: Promote open search within and outside the Conference for best possible appointments.
- S7 Goal Two: Increase compensation level to facilitate best appointments.

## CAMPUS MINISTRY REPORTS

### *CAMERON CAMPUS MINISTRY AT LAWTON*

Greetings from the students and staff of Cameron Campus Ministry in Lawton. 2004 marked our 36th year of ministry to the students, staff and faculty of Cameron University, and what a busy year it has been. Our motto is “Nurture the Spirit and Challenge the Mind.” Our dedication to that philosophy remains strong as we strive to find new ways to reach out to the students, faculty and staff of Cameron University. Every day, through both group activities and individual relationship, our staff and students find new ways to both comfort others, while at the same time challenge themselves and others as they grow in their relationships to Christ.

It has been a busy year as CCM finds new ways to reach out to the campus, the community and the world. Much of our program from the past remains, but we have also created some new programs, all designed to help us grow in our relationship to one another and God.

In our attempts to “Nurture the Spirit...,” we continue our Tuesday Night Worship, featuring a monthly Taize Worship Service, a service of prayer and music. CCM has provided a new Bible study course, “Issues in Faith.” The lives of students are inundated with responsibilities and commitments, and in order to rejuvenate the spirit, CCM has created a new lunch on Thursdays called “Loaves and Fishes,” designed for students to gather for fellowship and to learn about who we are and what we do, plus grab a free meal.

“Challenging the Mind...” is also a fundamental part of CCM. In our attempts to open minds to new ideas and new understandings of faith, Wednesday Mid-Week Live luncheon is a free meal to students, faculty and staff, also offering fellowship and sometimes enlightenment as individuals hear lectures from a wide range of speakers and subjects. CCM’s Theological Discussion Group assists students to learn about theologians and faith and, from that, to begin to formulate their own understandings.

Service to others is also a big part of what we do at CCM. Monthly, students serve a meal at St. John’s Soup Kitchen, and they participate in Redemption Church by providing a meal and leading the service. The spring mission trip to Denver last year opened our hearts to new understandings and new perceptions about the world, as we learned about the causes and effects of homelessness.

Lastly, our relationship with Cameron University remains very strong as we continue to work side by side with university leaders on a number of events, including our Alcohol Awareness Day and the 20th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration, which included a panel discussion and a banquet.

In closing, I want to say the future of the church lies with those who now are in campus ministry, and our attempts to minister to them and to nurture their relationships with God is made possible by your faithful ministry to us. Your support of campus ministry here in Oklahoma is but one of the many ways in which you as individuals and as churches spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ, so I thank you for your support and offer our prayers that God will keep you strong in the faith and ever following the Light of Hope.

*REV. PATRICK D. MCPHERSON, campus minister/director*

**WESLEY FOUNDATION AT CONNOR STATE UNIVERSITY**

Another year under my belt, and I feel better about this ministry. It was easier getting started this time. I have discovered my ministry is really about being available to people. Some students and teachers just want to have a laugh at a joke or story, and others want to share deep feelings about things going on in their lives. All of these are important in the life of college ministry. I am glad that I can be a part of the many lives I see on a weekly basis. I want to thank everyone in the Conference for the payment of apportionment dollars. Thanks to all the churches that also contribute time and money. Without you, where would we be?

REV. GERALD ROWLEY, campus minister/director

**WESLEY FOUNDATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA**

The year of 2004 was a year of growth at the UCO Wesley. Each week, we offered study, worship and fellowship with the UCO community. Seeing that Thursday lunches, “Loaves & Fishes,” were so important to the students during the 2002-03 school year, we experimented with a Monday lunch with devotional during the 2003 Lenten season. The attendance was great, feeding as many students by the end of Lent as we did at our Thursday lunches during the spring semester. The students loved the extra lunch each week and appreciated a time of devotion during their busy day. The Monday lunch with devotion was so well received that we continued it in the autumn, leaving Thursday lunch as solely a fellowship time, as some students find it a place to enter Wesley for the first time.

In addition to adding the Monday lunch, “Soul Food,” we are adding Bible studies for men and women: “Adam & Eve” on Monday nights. The men study *On this Rock: A Study of Peter*, and the women learn about *Bad Girls of the Bible*, breaking for joint devotion and volleyball on the fourth Monday of the month. We also started “F-5: Friday Faith, Film, Food & Fun” – yes, I was serving in Del City during the 1998 tornadoes – once a month. We watch a film chosen by the students and discuss its theological implications. We have been very excited about not only the fellowship on these Friday nights but also the depth of theology the students experience in the choice of films.

There has been new insight this semester about what ministries meet the student needs and what do not. Our “Freshmen Connection,” designed to acclimate freshmen and transfer students to campus, did not make last fall. Neither did attempts at two “On a Mission” Saturday events designed to be in mission with campus and North Oklahoma City District United Methodist groups. To help students who are interested in mission be involved with opportunities to help others, we are asking other Wesley Foundations to allow us to be a part of their scheduled mission trips. We hope that, as the ministry continues to grow, so will students’ interest and commitment to serving others.

A very exciting adventure for all 17 Wesley Foundations across the Conference is “The Big Fun Thing,” regional youth rallies we are jointly planning and leading, which is receiving financial support from the Conference Council on Youth Ministries. We have planned five rallies across the Conference: in Oklahoma City, Lawton, Woodward, Tulsa and Ada. The leaders of the 17 campus ministries plan the events, with the ministers, students and campus ministry praise bands leading the rallies. “The Big Fun Thing” is designed to share with 6- to 12th-grade youth what United Methodist ministries await them in college. Our Wesley Foundation has taken eight of our UCO students to the two rallies that have taken place in Oklahoma City and Lawton. We will continue to work with the rallies in the remaining cities this spring semester. The rallies have provided a great time to not only spread the word about campus ministry to our youth and youth workers, but also a time to develop the leadership skills of our college students, to allow time for them to build friendships within their own Wesleys while taking road trips, and to build relationships with other college students across the Conference.

Our number of weekly lunches doubled, and so did our number of healthy appetites. Thus, we sought to increase our level of support from the great cooks around the district. Our district churches have met the demand with enthusiasm, also gaining a way to see what is going on in their campus ministry at UCO and, of course, to spoil hungry college students. Our level of support for our lunches from our district churches has grown over the last two years and now well represents most of the congregations of our district.

Numbers never accurately tell the story of growth. Yet, for the statisticians of our denomination: We ended the Fall 2003 semester seeing 30 students each week, and in the Spring 2004 semester seeing 25. In the middle of the Fall 2004 semester, we saw an average of 45 each week. Some of these students go to several activities at the Wesley each week; some make it once a week, as their busy schedules allow.

Thank you for all you do to support your campus ministry at UCO.

*REV. GLENDA L. SKINNER-NOBLE, campus minister/director*

#### ***UNITED CAMPUS MINISTRY AT EASTERN OKLAHOMA STATE COLLEGE***

Greetings from the Eastern Oklahoma State College in Wilburton. United Campus Ministry is one of the ecumenical campus ministries in Oklahoma supported by the United Methodist Church. We are very grateful for the support given to us throughout the year.

Beginning in Fall 2004, we started offering a Wednesday noon meal, to give students the opportunity to come together, eat good food and have fellowship, and be refreshed with a midweek devotion. Students and staff have been treated to Indian tacos served by women of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference on every third Wednesday of the month.

The united ministry also supports the FCA and International Student Association on campus. One of our goals this year is to make an effort to start more Bible studies for the increased number of international students we now have enrolling at EOSC.

God has also blessed me and another United Methodist pastor by giving us the responsibility of teaching up to six hours of accredited religious courses each semester at EOSC. The courses allow us to teach others about the Bible. It also gives us chances to form deeper friendships with the students.

We are prayerful that God will continue to reach the students of EOSC in 2005 through the United Campus Ministry by providing helpful Bible Studies, fellowship and mission opportunities.

*REV. BARRY COLLINS, campus minister/director*

#### ***WESLEY FOUNDATION AT LANGSTON UNIVERSITY***

This is an exciting year for the Wesley Foundation at Langston. We plan to have a new building within a year. Our board of directors, students and supporters are now praying and moving forward with plans for the facility.

Over the years, we have struggled without a building in which to do ministry, just as any missionary organization. We have loaded trucks with tables during warm weather and have held Bible studies on the property where we plan to build. We have marched around the property and laid crosses representing the cross that we have borne over the years. Now we look forward to our Year of Jubilee through the support of the Conference and friends.

We thank all of you who have donated over the period that we have talked about this vision. Knowing that we shared our vision with others helped us keep the faith as we continued ministry to the students and community at Langston.

*REV. CECELIA BROOKS, campus minister/director*

***WESLEY FOUNDATION AT OKLAHOMA CITY UNIVERSITY***

Campus ministries encourage their students to envision themselves as vital parts of church leadership, rather than as kids being told what to do. Exploring, investigating, experimenting and creating worship is central to focusing that vision.

This year, the OCU Wesley Foundation took several steps forward in anchoring the ministry programs to worship in the same way local churches anchor their own work to Sunday morning services. Over the summer, we purchased a number of worship area supplies, such as candles, room dividers and altar equipment, to improve our central meeting room's effectiveness as a worship space. In January 2005, combined help from foundations, university development officers and the OCU Student Senate allowed us to purchase sound equipment that significantly multiplied our capabilities. Our instruments can now mix sounds to achieve a better balance, and our vocalists are better able to lead congregational singing.

These changes and purchases are more than cosmetic. Worship that involves the prayers and praises of the people and rests on Communion and the proclaimed word fuels our ministry to serve the people of our campus and community as the body of Christ. Our worship attendance – and, more significantly, the number of students taking leadership roles – has risen substantially over last year. Our students are active in their own individual groups as those groups help community agencies and neighborhood associations in their own outreach.

We were fortunate to have a remodeled lounge wired for cable when the rest of the campus was also hooked up, and are finding ways to use and promote that space as a place of fellowship and community. Our equipment has helped us stage a successful media-based Bible study that draws a number of students not active in other ministry areas.

Future plans include incorporating a number of student-requested features into worship, such as kneeling rails, and seeking input on shaping our new community spaces to make their use in fellowship-related activities more effective.

*REV. BRETT THOMASSON, campus minister/director*

***WESLEY FOUNDATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA***

I am completing my 16th year in ministry at the University of Oklahoma. It has been a pleasure to serve the church in this capacity, and I look forward to continuing to serve our Lord and Saviour and The United Methodist Church in this place.

This past year, we have worked at defining our core values. Core values are those things that should drive our ministry.

Our core values are:

1) Discipleship – This means being a disciple as well as making disciples. We continue to emphasize the Christian life as existing in the balance of “word and deed.”

2) No One Alone – It is a horrible feeling when we walk into a church or fellowship and feel as if we are alone in the midst of a crowd. We commit ourselves to making sure that no one is alone unless that person chooses to be alone. There are also those who are alone in our community. We make a commitment to reach out to those who are searching.

3) Invitation – We commit ourselves to inviting all to become a part of our ministry. We realize that many will say no, but we believe in extending the invitation in a winsome way. When someone chooses not to be a part, we at least want them to feel like they were invited and wanted as a part of this ministry.

4) I Was in Ministry There – We want all students to walk away from the Wesley Foundation feeling that they were challenged and successfully participated in ministry. We believe that all have gifts given to them by our God, and it is our task to challenge them to use them. If a person was in ministry here, we believe he or she will search for a place to continue that ministry after leaving. We believe it will be such a positive experience that the student will then go into the world and want to continue to serve our Lord through the ministry of the church.

5) Have Fun – So often, we get caught up in the business of the church that we forget life is fun. It is fun to serve and share. It is fun to be in fellowship.

We find that these core values drive us in our ministry. The results have been excellent. We retain many who come and visit us. Our ministry continues to grow, and we continue to place people in the local church as workers and ministers. We continue to serve through thousands of mission hours, from tutoring to serving Meals on Wheels. We have an active nursing home ministry as well as a prison ministry. We have had 41 discipleship, worship, prayer and study groups over the past year. We have had several students experience calls into the ministry. We have had several students work in Project Transformation.

It is our desire that we continue to do the best we can in this place for the church. We covet your prayers and deeply appreciate your support.

*REV. BRAD HUMPHREY, campus minister/director*

### ***WESLEY FOUNDATION AT OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY***

Greetings in the name of Christ and from this holy mission community. What a joy it is to serve in campus ministry in the Oklahoma Annual Conference and, in particular, to serve at Oklahoma State University. I certainly have been blessed by God with a grace far beyond what I deserve, but, then again, when we say grace, it is never connected to what one deserves, has earned or even accepted. Grace is completely and totally the work of God that I can neither reject nor accept but simply live in response.

Being graced, however, does not mean that I do not live with some tensions and joys. During these past 10 years, the ministry at Oklahoma State University has grown rapidly. In many ways, we have outgrown the traditional models of campus ministry. The Conference historically has been the primary support for this ministry, but it is now the third largest supporter. We have been working very hard to develop funding not tied to the apportionments. Apportionments continue to be an important factor to us, and you each need to be congratulated for supporting all these ministries. We continue to do the serious business of developing concrete opportunities for service and growth.

First and foremost, let me say that the Wesley Foundation at Oklahoma State University is primarily a center for the teaching of the baptismal covenant. To create disciples of Jesus Christ and leaders for the church, we must offer transformative life experiences that place students in ministry with others in our society and world. If we hope to truly create disciples of Jesus Christ, we are going to have to teach college students what it means to say baptism is their first ordination to ministry. We are attempting to teach students to develop faithful communities of Christ-likeness. Baptized believers of all ages empowered by the support of the body are called to ministry.

We need a radical remaking of the church so that young and old alike understand their faith as more than Sunday-centered practices and instead as truly life-centered practices. We at the Wesley Foundation at OSU believe we are in the ministry of creating disciples who understand themselves as followers of Christ in all that they do. By giving students the opportunity to serve others under the leadership of the Wesley Foundation staff, we are finding students who come to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. These students believe that Jesus truly transforms the world, not just the private places of hidden hearts.

What I, as an ordained clergy at Oklahoma State University Wesley Foundation, have attempted to do is offer the sacraments, proclaim the gospel in teaching and preaching, and empower the students to develop ministries of transformation. I am proud of these students and believe the church should be equally proud. For six years now, they have run “The Store House.” For five years, they have been running an after-school program for at-risk third- through seventh-graders.

For two years, we have been involved in the recovery effort at a small, local church which many thought was going to close. Facing budget constraints and economic pressures,

they have stepped out in faith and continue to do the ministry of Jesus Christ. Because of this faith, students are making fundamental transformations in the lives of their community. Through these transformations, they are learning how to follow their baptismal calling and finding themselves transformed by God's good grace. Thanks be to God.

*REV. MICHAEL BARTLEY, campus minister/director*

***WESLEY FOUNDATION AT NORTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY***

The students and I would like to thank all the groups and individuals who have made this past year a great one. It is through the outpouring of love from each of you that we are able to have this wonderful ministry. We have been helped through meals, paper goods/supplies showers and donations.

Feed them, and they will come. Food plays a big part in our campus ministry. During our Monday evening gathering, which we call "Faith, Food and Fellowship," students prepare the meal, including shopping on a budget, and our evening activity is a faith-related game. There are many creative and fun ways to test one's Bible knowledge.

This past fall, we started a worship service on Sunday evening. One of the unique aspects of this time is sharing "God-sightings." They share any time they see God in a situation. After the first Sunday, this has become one of the most important parts of the service. It really makes them stop and appreciate each of the times God truly works in our lives.

Missions on the home front play a large part in our ministry. We collect food for the community food pantry, pick up trash along the highway, help the high school youth group unload and sell pumpkins, and go Christmas caroling. We have added shopping as part of our mission projects. We go Christmas shopping for a family less fortunate than ourselves, and we purchase clothing for a prisoner upon his release so that he doesn't re-enter society in prison clothing. This is all accomplished from the students' financial donations. We helped one of the churches that has been especially generous to us by serving and cleaning at its annual Thanksgiving dinner.

Through each of these projects, the students are learning that serving others is an important part of the Christian growth process.

*DEB CORR, director*

***WESLEY FOUNDATION AT SOUTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY***

The Weatherford Wesley Foundation Student Center, located next to Southwestern Oklahoma State University, is a place where students from across Oklahoma, the country and the world gather and witness the love of God, are challenged in their faith, and support each other. We lunch together, we worship together, we have Bible study together, and we reach out to others in various types of mission opportunities – locally, nationally and globally. Through Wesley, students have opportunities to be in Christian leadership, and to discover and develop abilities/spiritual gifts which may be hiding, as they journey in their spirit/faith development during their university years. Students are encouraged to reach out to others. We have experienced growth this year because the students are more involved, and they are willing to be a light of God on campus. The students have great concern for the world and want to make positive impacts through their actions.

Thank you for the continued support of campus ministry. Thanks to your generosity, students experience the church when they are away from home through meals, worship, Bible study, friends, mission and caring people. We learn about the many arms (outreaches) of the church. This year, we will participate in the Clinton District Mission to the Children's Home in Tahlequah, where we will paint the gym, which has not been painted since it was built.

*REV. KRISTEN BROWN, campus minister/director*

*WESLEY FOUNDATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TULSA*

A foundation whose cornerstone is Jesus! Thanks be to Jesus for all we have been given and for all that is to come. With God's guidance and your support, 2004 was abundant.

The Lord has blessed Wesley with: New students on campus to reach an ever-growing international student ministry; student leaders who continue to make Wesley a fun and functional organization; another year of dedication and support from Oklahoma United Methodist churches, UMWs, Sunday school classes; a successful golf tournament; alumni; and all of you who give your time, talents, prayers and resources to Wesley. We have seen the Holy Spirit working in and through the students and staff. God has blessed us with student leaders who have shown a great love for Jesus and their fellow students on campus. A warm thanks to the Wesley Leadership Council: Kay, Grace, Tabitha, Mike, Tchoia, Megan G., Ryan, Tim, Adam, Thomas, Kat, Jen, Megan R., Amanda, Jenni, Laura, Julie, Matt, Wiz, Rachel, Ikpeme, Sarah. These Spirit-led, enthusiastic sisters and brothers pull off programs including:

- Friday Noon Lunch - We're averaging 60-70 students a week from around the world, eating yummy food provided by UMWs and Sunday schools, while hearing great speakers and musicians share how Jesus is real in their lives.
- Worship – Student-led, Wednesdays, 9:30 p.m., after council meeting.
- Sonlight – Christian rock with Charlie. On KMOD, 97.5 FM, midnight to 2 a.m.
- C.S. Lewis Reading Group – Thursdays, 5:30 p.m., “The Four Loves” and “God in the Dock.”
- CARE Groups – Council Accountable Relational Experience and Prayer Partners.
- Peter, Pong and Merry – Play Pong and study the Bible.
- Late Night Bible Study – Thursday, 10:30 p.m., tough questions with Biblical answers.
- International Bible Study – Jerry Lout opens the Bible with students around the world.
- Weekend Fun – Video scavenger hunts/alcohol-free parties/potluck meals/fix-up/retreats/Pong/dinner and a movie discussion/intramural sports/mission trips/community service projects, etc.
- Golf Tournament – Oct. 14, 2004, Whitehawk Golf Club. Sponsor a hole or play in the next tournament? Oct. 13, 2005. (918) 592-5778.

Thank you so much for all of your prayers, love and support over the years. Pray that Jesus and His light will continue to shine at the University of Tulsa through the Wesley Foundation.

*REV. CHARLIE SPEARS, campus minister/director*

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

### “CAN DO! Children's Action Network:

#### **Dream Organizers! – Making Disciples: Making A Difference for Children”**

The newly re-formed Conference Children's Ministry Team is looking forward to the opportunities ahead to be in ministry with children and workers with children. The team's enthusiasm is evident in its new slogan: “CAN DO! Children's Action Network: Dream Organizers! Making Disciples: Making A Difference for Children.”

This year, a large number of people from around the Conference attended the “CPR: Creative and Practical Resources in Children's Ministries” training event in February. This was an event full of ideas, resources and in-depth ministry models to reach children and tweens.

This summer, another excellent training event is being offered in Nashville, Tenn.: “Focus ’05 – Hand in Hand: Building Community with Children.” A large group from Oklahoma will be attending. A bus is being chartered and partially subsidized by the Children’s budget. It’s not too late to sign up for this event. Call Mary Lue Eastmond, 405.530.2007, or Kristi Swink, 405.354.8858, for information.

Plans are also under way for: 1) “Can-Do” Awards that will salute people who are advocates with children; 2) Quad Gatherings in the four corners of the state for resourcing, networking and training for workers with children; and 3) A Web site and other ways of keeping people networked and informed about Children’s Ministries.

If you would like to be a part of the team, call Swink or Eastmond. Together, we can be Dream Organizers in Children’s Ministries.

*KRISTI SWINK*, chairperson

*MARY LUE EASTMOND*, director of Christian education

## OKLAHOMA CITY UNIVERSITY

Oklahoma City University is proud to be your United Methodist University. We are delighted to partner with the Oklahoma Annual Conference as we live out our mission statement, which is: “Oklahoma City University embraces the United Methodist tradition of scholarship and service and welcomes all faiths in a culturally rich community that is dedicated to student welfare and success. Men and women pursue academic excellence through a rigorous curriculum that focuses on students’ intellectual, moral and spiritual development to prepare them to become effective leaders in service to their communities. We are committed to offering a university experience to our students that is reflective of our United Methodist foundation.”

We are grateful for the wonderful support that we receive from the United Methodist churches of Oklahoma through apportionment giving. The growing support of OCU throughout our Conference is reflected in increased giving. We are delighted to report that OCU received more than \$906,000 in apportionments for 2004 – an increase of \$10,000 over 2003. The wonderful news is that these dollars translate directly into our ability to assist our United Methodist students as they pursue education at this institution. More than \$3 three million in scholarships and tuition discounts are offered to our United Methodist students each year. Your generosity makes that possible. We are also grateful to the many donors who give on an individual basis to provide scholarships and other types of assistance to students and the university. This giving is truly making a difference in the lives of our students, who would not otherwise be able to take advantage of the wonderful opportunities that can be offered by a private university. Our goal is to ensure that every young United Methodist in Oklahoma who wants to be a student at OCU can do so.

This is the Centennial year for OCU, and we have had many significant events that captured the spirit of this milestone. In September, a weekend-long “Celebration of the Century” was held. The celebration included the dedication of the Centennial Plaza at the corner of 23rd and Blackwelder, the unveiling of a statue of OCU’s three Miss Americas, and a wonderful Broadway-quality production that featured both current and former OCU performers. The weekend was capped off with a chapel service that enabled us to give thanks to God for the past century and to look forward to the next century with great hope and expectation. OCU was blessed by having Bishop Hayes deliver the sermon at this service. We were delighted to get to introduce OCU to him in this very special way.

OCU’s Rowing Team was privileged to host a Centennial event the week after the “Celebration of the Century,” as the team sponsored the first annual regatta on the Oklahoma River. This event was a success and was attended by more than 10,000 people. A particularly

meaningful Centennial event saw our participation in recognizing Epworth United Methodist Church as a United Methodist Historic Site, because it was the original site of what is now Oklahoma City University. Once again, Bishop Hayes was the preacher of the day, and several people from OCU attended and participated in the presentation of the plaque. As was reported last year, part of the goal of the Centennial year was to raise \$100 million during the year—\$60 million for capital improvements and \$40 million for OCU's endowment. We are well on our way to achieving that goal. Thanks for helping us reach that goal as we live out the theme of our Centennial: "Lighting the World – One Star at a Time." Finally, one of the highlights of the Centennial will be our hosting of annual conference once again. We look forward to this very special event in the life of the church.

When you are here for annual conference, you will see many changes in the campus since you were here in 2003. The beautiful Meinders School of Business is now completed and is proving to be a wonderful place for educating students to do business in the 21st Century. The Wanda L. Bass Music Center is taking shape and is due to be completed early in 2006. Work has begun on the Edith Kinney Gaylord Center, which will be the new home of the Ann Lacy School of American Dance and Arts Management. OCU is continuing to grow and thrive in so many ways.

Oklahoma City University is particularly proud of the Wimberly School of Religion. Enrollment of students who are majoring in Religion continues to grow as young people (predominantly United Methodists) answer God's call to full-time Christian ministry. As always, OCU's Owen Wimberly Center for Continuing Education has offered a wide variety of workshops, lectureships and seminars that benefit clergy and laity alike. In our commitment to producing servant leaders, every student is expected to be engaged in service learning as a requirement for graduation. The Vivian Wimberly Center for Ethics and Community Service oversees the variety of service learning opportunities that are available to our students.

Oklahoma City University is thriving under the leadership of President Tom McDaniel, who is a deeply committed and faithful lay member of The United Methodist Church. We're grateful to the churches of the Oklahoma Annual Conference as you partner with us for this journey into the next 100 years.

*MARGARET A. BALL, vice-president, University-Church Relations*

## **THE CONFERENCE COUNCIL ON YOUTH MINISTRIES**

The Conference Council on Youth Ministries (CCYM) continues to provide the youth of the Oklahoma Annual Conference opportunities for spiritual growth, service in both the church and the world, and leadership development in local churches, districts, the Annual Conference and beyond.

This year has been one of new beginnings and an exciting time for the youth department. A pilot program has begun for local churches that are invested in developing a framework for congregational youth ministries. It is exciting to report that more than 15 churches in our Conference have already signed up this first year. We began a "New Youth Start" initiative for churches that have not had active, organized youth ministries. Our new Web page is up and running, and we have produced three newsletters for youth, youth directors and pastors.

Leadership development among youth is one of the priorities of the council. CYME (Conference Youth Ministries Event) is a leadership camp for senior high youth. This year's theme is "Who We Be in the UMC." JEM (Junior High Ministries) is a leadership camp for rising sixth- through eighth-graders, and its theme this year is "Amazing Grace: United Methodists are Full of It."

St. Yootz Day, held each August, is the major “fun” raiser for the Youth Service Fund (YSF).

Youth in missions are found in our Youth Force opportunities. This year, we will sponsor five sites for Youth Force – one being for college-aged young adults.

Camp Curriculum’s theme is “Back in the Day: Right Here Right Now.” The week will cover the stories of Jesus, set in the context of the liturgical year.

Some of the other youth programming that the youth department is responsible for are: Day Spring, Wilderness Camp, treks, and Human Sexuality ministries.

The other side of Conference youth ministries is CCAWY (Conference Council of Adult Workers with Youth). The board reconvened this past year and elected as its officers for the quadrennium; Rev. Elizabeth “Liz” Tate, chairperson; Rev. Sara Bodenstein, vice chairperson; and Randy McCurdy, secretary.

With the new division of Young Adult Ministries and the birth of a new national youth workers organization, many exciting adventures are on the horizon for youth and adult workers with youth for our Conference.

*DIANA NORTHCUTT*, director, Youth Ministries  
*SARAH NICHOLS*, CCYM Youth co-chairperson  
*SHERRY COLLIER*, CCYM Adult co-chairperson  
*BRENDA ULRICH*, CCYM Adult co-chairperson  
*LIZ TATE*, CCAWY chairperson

## DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY TEAM BUDGET

### **Adult Ministries .....Amount requested: \$15,000**

Funds will develop training and programs to help local churches develop clear ministries in making disciples; will provide training and resources for local church school teachers; will train churches in starting new Sunday school or weekday classes; and will promote continuing use and development of the Disciple Bible Study program, Christian Believer, and other training for discipleship.

### **Campus Ministries .....Amount requested: \$44,900**

Funds will provide support for: the Campus Ministers Network, meeting three or four times a year; national training events for campus ministers; student interns to do peer ministry; the United Methodist Student Movement; publicity for the general campus ministry program; organizing regional youth events for promotion of campus ministry; consultation and affirmation for local campus ministries; and the annual FCCM scholarship.

### **Children’s Ministries .....Amount requested: \$8,000**

Funds will provide particular training events for Children’s Ministries, to develop a series of gatherings in various parts of the state for resourcing and sharing of information between children’s leaders, to offer “Can-Do” awards for children’s ministries, to provide help to attend national training events developed by the general church, and to provide a source of resources for local churches’ children’s ministries.

**Evangelism and Hospitality .....Amount requested: \$5,000**  
 Funds will assist in the continuation of the Denman Award, for the development of a network of leaders who can provide evangelistic emphasis for local churches and the Conference, for the natural church development program for use throughout the Conference, for encouraging a special outreach emphasis at Christmas, Easter, and in the autumn; and for specialized training and promotion of needs-based evangelism in order to accomplish the goal of at least a 5% gain in membership throughout the year.

**Local Church Resourcing/Training.....Amount Requested: \$9,000**  
 Funds will assist in providing training for local churches across the Conference by continuing development of the Next Step training program to be held at various locations and times during the year, to hold specialized training in areas of spiritual formation, church growth, marriage and natural church development, and to work with the district and regional Local Church Leadership Training events each January. This will be a part of the ongoing program development of the Discipleship Ministries Team, with the singular purpose of assisting local churches. Each church would provide training for its worship leaders and church school teachers, and regular training in evangelism for all the congregation.

**Making Disciples, Making a Difference ..... Amount requested: \$11,000**  
 These funds are for the development of the Annual Conference program for increasing attendance in church school by 5%, worship by 5%, and membership by 5% each year. Funds will provide for: Materials, publicity, specialized training, work with the United Methodist Publishing House, “Sunday School Is for Life,” General Board of Discipleship, Discipleship Ministries and other programs to continue this emphasis throughout the quadrennium; for information and materials throughout the year; and will focus on building Sunday school and worship attendance and encouraging churches to hold at least five major “Bring-a-Friend” events. Resources and materials will be provided that present techniques for building attendance in worship and church school.

**Marriage and Family Ministries.....Amount requested: \$2,500**  
 Funds support the development of programs to enhance marriage and families in local churches and to help local churches develop ministries to their children and families.

**Senior Adult Ministries.....Amount requested: \$4,600**  
 Funds are used for developing a new Conference Council on Older Adult Ministries, mandated by the General Conference. The new council’s task will be to develop ministry with the older population in our local congregations.

**Single Adult Ministries .....Amount requested: \$2,500**  
 Funds are used to hold a singles retreat and conference, and to develop ministries for churches across the Conference through Divorce Adjustment Workshops, Widow and Widower Workshops, and a General Singles Relationship Workshop.

**Worship and Music .....Amount requested: \$12,000**  
 Funds will develop workshops, training and programs to provide mentoring and peer-learning in churches across the Conference, to educate on the how-tos and whys of worship, to develop training in the technology of worship, and to hold a series of major workshops in cooperation with the Next Step program and Local Church Leaders Training. We also will develop and distribute worship materials and resources for local churches.

**Youth Ministries** .....**Amount requested: \$31,000**  
 Funds will pay for the administrative costs of the work of CCAWY and CCYM, provide general promotion and communications, help develop camp curriculum, enable program and leadership development, and provide Youth Directors leadership training with particular emphasis upon helping the local churches develop youth ministries.

**Archives and History** .....**Amount requested: \$8,200**  
 Funds will provide materials and salary for an archivist and for the general promotion of archives and histories for the Oklahoma Conference churches.

**Administration** .....**Amount requested: \$10,000**  
 Funds will provide administrative support for the Discipleship Ministry Team.

**TOTAL REQUEST** .....**\$163,700**

### **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT MINISTRY TEAM**

The mission of the Leadership Development Ministry Team is to develop ways to identify, invite, train, nurture and involve laity and clergy as servant leaders in the life of the local church and beyond, for the purpose of making disciples of Jesus Christ. The various entities of the Leadership Development Ministry Team work toward that end.

The Board of Ordained Ministry works diligently with the clergy. The Recruitment and Nurture Team has had great success with seminary students and encouraging local congregations to become a part of that endeavor. The Commission on Religion and Race resources both clergy and laity as they minister in a diverse culture. The Commission on the Status and Role of Women assists clergy and lay women to grow in ministry and helps the church recognize leadership gifts of women. The United Methodist Women, while leading the way in mission, train women to be leaders across the Oklahoma Conference. The United Methodist Men enable mission, spiritual growth and evangelism among the men of the Oklahoma Conference. The Board of Laity continues to expand the ministry of equipping laity.

#### **We lift the following specific items for your information.**

**1. Youth Directors Training:** The Leadership Development Ministry Team believes that it is important to encourage and train youth directors with practical skills to strengthen youth ministry. We participated in funding a week of training through a project team that provided practical tools for youth ministry, a chance for youth directors to build networks for support and ideas, to learn Bible study skills and to offer an assortment of exciting worship experiences. This year's training will be held the second week of May at Canyon Camp. We encourage all youth ministers, volunteer, part-time or full-time employees, to participate.

**2. Lay Leadership Oklahoma:** The purpose of Lay Leadership Oklahoma is to raise up and equip a new generation of leaders in the local churches and beyond. The first class of Lay Leadership Oklahoma, organized by the Board of Laity, was completed in fall 2004. Members are nominated by each district superintendent and district lay leader. During the five weekend sessions, members have opportunities to learn from OCU School of Religion professors, learn about Conference ministries, travel to Circle of Care ministry sites, meet

at camps, and discuss leadership and ministry in the local church. The textbook of study is "Polity, Practice and the Mission of The United Methodist Church," by Thomas Edward Frank.

**3. Local Church "Committee On Lay Leadership" Training Tool:** Local churches are encouraged to make the transition from the Committee on Nominations to the Committee on Lay Leadership. To assist in that endeavor, the Leadership Development Ministry Team has offered sessions at Local Church Leaders Workshops on the subject and, this year, introduced a training tool developed by the team in cooperation with the Department of Communications. Based on servant leadership and the mission of the church, it outlines how the expanded Committee on Lay Leadership might function effectively for the ministry and mission of the church. The new training resource is available for local churches in the forms of DVD, VHS and CD, through the Conference and district offices.

**4. Commission on Religion And Race:** The Commission on Religion and Race is in the process of establishing short- and long-term goals for the quadrennium. As part of the monitoring responsibilities, we reviewed data focusing on the racial/ethnic/gender status of candidates for the ministry and ordained ministry. We have also agreed to hire Project Equality to review that status within one of our institutions, as yet to be determined. Also, we are planning and preparing for 1) a display of CORR responsibilities and duties for the annual conference in May; 2) a Human Relations Dinner; and 3) a Local Church Leaders Workshop session for 2006.

Lastly, we provided funding support for the Cameron Campus Ministry, Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Celebration, and funding support for the Black College Tour for African American youth in The United Methodist Church.

**5. Ministerial Recruitment and Nurture:** Currently, we have 114 seminary students at 14 universities. Of those 114, only 26 are adopted to receive financial support from a local church. In 2004, we visited 10 seminaries, and we had several well-attended events. At Oklahoma Explo, we had 15 college and senior high youth participate. At our annual conference 2004 lunch, we had 35 in attendance. At the Day of Discernment, we had 28 exploring the call to ministry. We are looking forward to Call to Ministry, on Sunday, June 12, 2005, and hope that every congregation celebrates this time and takes an offering for the Conference Seminary Scholarship Endowment. This fund is a way to support individuals who are attending seminary to avoid huge debts.

**6. Commission on the Status and Role of Women:** The Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW) is dedicated to supporting the leadership of women throughout the Oklahoma Conference. We promote women's development by providing book scholarships to women enrolled in seminary, course of study, or undergraduate religious studies. Each year, we present the Frances E. Willard Award to a person in the Oklahoma Conference who has been instrumental in encouraging and promoting women's leadership. We partner with OCU to promote a lecture on women's issues at the Owen Wimberly Center for Continuing Education. Our goal is to facilitate inclusiveness throughout the Conference, including gender, culture, and age diversity.

*MICHAEL FLETCHER-TAYLOR, secretary*  
*MARY GAUDREAU, co-chairperson*  
*JOANN ROBINSON, co-chairperson*  
*BILL TODD, co-chairperson*

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**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT MINISTRY BUDGET**

**Leadership Development Ministry Team Administration....Amount requested: \$3,700**

**Youth Director Training. ....Amount requested: \$2,500**

**Commission on Religion and Race .....Amount requested: \$8,500**

Racial Ethnic Self Determination Fund; Monitoring/Affirmative Action; jurisdictional events and training; resourcing/lay clergy persons; Human Relations Award; special emphasis/project teams; administration.

**Commission on Status and Role of Women .....Amount requested: \$2,580**

Frances E. Willard Award: Acknowledges people who have influenced, nurtured and guided women in both laity and ministry; COSROW Annual Conference Breakfast – open to all people, with the intent of teaching about women in leadership; Service to Students: Assistance in all areas of need for women in ministry, both laity and clergy; administration.

**Board of Laity .....Amount requested: \$12,850**

**Local Church Leaders Workshops.....Amount requested: \$2,700**

Leadership Development administration expense: To provide funds for planning, coordination, printing, mailing, travel, etc., for Local Church Leaders Workshops.

**Conference Committee on Nominations .....Amount requested: \$1,000**

Administration expenses.

**TOTAL.....Amount requested: \$33,830**

**Ministerial Recruitment .....Amount requested: \$36,000**

Annual seminary visits, college contacts, coordinator compensation, travel, office supplies, postage, office equipment, national and state “Explo” events, printing and video, task force meetings, telephone.

**Board of Ordained Ministry. ....Amount requested: \$45,715**

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## **MISSION AND SERVICE MINISTRY TEAM**

After washing the disciples' feet, Jesus said, "As I have done unto you, so you must do unto others." Servanthood is the indisputable legacy of Jesus. The Mission Service and Ministry Team (MSMT) is the programming and enabling arm that makes servanthood a possibility in the local church and for the local church.

### **SERVANTHOOD FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH**

The strength of United Methodism is its power of exponential resourcing and responding through the "Connection." When the world recoils in tragedy and crisis, such as the recent tsunami disaster, United Methodists can be there almost immediately with an effective and efficient response. Not only that; our response can be 100% designated for the relief effort directed to the people and the places that need it most. It is the "connection" of longstanding international relationships with existing relief agencies which makes that possible.

The local church can be effective and efficient in its response to need through a number of Conference ministries under the umbrella of MSMT. These are ongoing, established ministries include the Circle of Care; Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministries; Cookson Hills; Volunteers In Mission; nursing homes; urban ministries such as Skyline, Restore Hope and Neighborhood Services Organization; the Chemical Dependency Program; and several others. Supported by the apportionments, these ministries represent the local church with Christlike servanthood in the larger parish. They are ministries on behalf of the local church, for the local church.

### **SERVANTHOOD WITH THE LOCAL CHURCH**

There is also servanthood with the local church. The Mission Service and Ministry Team works with the local church in responding to any number of societal and global needs.

Our various committees respond to issues of Church and Society, Peace with Justice, Environmental Concerns, Health and Welfare, and Global Concerns. The committees are led by people, lay and clergy, who give of their time and energy, without compensation, to stay aware of the various responses of the United Methodist Church to the pressing issues of the world today. We are eager to keep our larger church informed of these missional responses and to partner with the local church in addressing them.

### **SERVANTHOOD IN THE LOCAL CHURCH**

The Mission Service and Ministry Team is also committed to ministry in the local church. We want to empower the local church to engage in missions and ministry and servanthood in the local community and church.

We can provide resources and people to motivate and equip the local church to become "mission impassioned." We can teach a congregation how to become involved in Volunteers In Missions, how to become an "anchor church" for Child S.H.A.R.E. (the foster care program of the Circle of Care), how to launch a Chemical Dependency Program in the local community, how to reach out into the local church's neighborhood through Project Transformation, how to develop a Prison Ministry through the local church, how to hook up with urban ministries such as Skyline and Restore Hope. In short, we want to empower and support the local church in its own servanthood and ministry to the world.

The crown jewel celebrating the mission spirit of a local church is the Five-Star Church Award. A Five-Star Church is a church that has stepped up to support missionaries and mission projects of The United Methodist Church around the world. Any church can become a Five-Star Church, and all churches should.

It is the legacy of Jesus embraced.

*STAN COSBY, chairperson*

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## CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY MINISTRIES

2004 was amazing. The number of adults and young people served doubled from 2003. Records show more than 2,025 adults and 2,512 youth and children, 55 churches (including several of other denominations), 13 civic organizations, and 12 schools (including universities) requested and received education and prevention programs, presentations and trainings. The individuals and families who benefited from referral information and counsel are not recorded but are numerous. The 2004 Summer School on Chemical Dependency graduated 28 adults, which is 10 more than in 2003.

The Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS) granted \$20,000 to scholarship 20 people who attended the 2004 Summer School on Chemical Dependency and \$15,000 for 2005. Every year the Annual Conference also provides scholarships to United Methodist clergy and laity who attend the school. One 2005 goal is to have the maximum of 34 participants attend the Summer School on Chemical Dependency. Classes will be held at a new location on the OCU campus: the Meinders School of Business.

Our Fatal Vision Goggle Prevention Program received a grant from the Margaret E. Petree Memorial Fund. Numerous requests from schools, universities, youth and adult church groups require more goggles and trained presenters to meet the need. More volunteer presenters will be instructed in 2005.

Our community involvement and stand against underaged drinking and drinking and driving has made an impact in Oklahoma. We thank God for the opportunity to serve and make a difference.

*MARY (WOLF) BURESH, director*

## COOKSON HILLS CENTER UNITED METHODIST MISSION

PO Box 130, Cookson OK 74427; 918-457-5181

Cookson Hills Center provides ministry outreach to low-income families in Cherokee, Adair and Sequoyah counties in northeastern Oklahoma. This ministry is constantly growing and changing to meet the needs of the community. The General Board of Global Ministries, the Oklahoma Conference, and the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference have jointly sponsored this ministry since 1948.

This has been a rewarding and exciting year at the center. The newly constructed Senior Citizen's Center was dedicated Sept. 11, 2004, with 400 in attendance. We were honored with the participation of Bishop Robert E. Hayes Jr. and Sen. Kelly Haney. We appreciate those who have generously contributed funds and volunteer time to make this facility a reality. Constructed on the bank of the pond across from the new building is a beautiful gazebo donated by the Muskogee District, offering a place of rest and reflection. The Senior Citizen's Center offers opportunities for fellowship, spiritual support, learning, crafting, health screening and nutritional meals.

The programs at the center continue to grow. The Senior Nutrition Program has grown from 1,400 in 2000 to more than 7,000 in 2004. Nutritional meals are served on Mondays and Wednesdays to any senior citizen who wishes to participate, and additional meals are delivered to homebound seniors. The seniors are raising program funds by providing crafts, jellies, candies, fruits and seasonal vegetables for sale in the new Country Cupboard.

Local churches donated garden seed packets, which enabled the planting of 100 vegetable gardens; 65-dozen baby chicks were given to those who wanted to raise them; school supplies were given to 80 families; and more than 200 families were served in the Christmas Store. Food baskets are given to anyone who comes hungry, and wood is given to

those who need it for cooking or heating their homes. In the spring, the Monticello District in Arkansas prepared and planted a fruit and berry garden.

The Craft Shop is a wonderful outlet for the sale of Native American arts and crafts. Altar cloths for Native American Awareness Sunday are made at the center. Our silk-screening unit enables the printing of T-shirts, bags and aprons for local churches and organizations. The resale store is thriving. We continue to host Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon and Ala-Teen meetings throughout the week. We also provide a computer lab and programs for children and youth. Cookson hosted 21 VIM teams, including the United Methodist Women of Oklahoma for their "Toole Tyme" program, and one Vacation Bible School.

The future is bright for the center. A licensed childcare program will be housed in the Senior Citizen's Center and will make possible inter-generational learning opportunities for children and seniors. The Administrative Board is considering the establishment of a free health clinic and of providing a parish nurse to serve the community.

God continues to bless this ministry with effective leadership, volunteers, friends, support and vision. We ask for your continued prayers as we minister to this community.

*MERI WHITAKER*, director

## OKLAHOMA SCHOOL OF MISSION

The Oklahoma School of Mission is proud of the success of the summertime school. Approximately 450 people were involved in the two events — a weekend event and a weekday school. The youth and children got to participate in sharing a new learning experience. Recent studies were on "Concerning Prayer," "Education of Today" and "Cuba."

All the classes are held annually at Oklahoma City University and are arranged so the students may return to their local churches and serve as instructors for their local congregations. Each study has a study guide and good aids to assist in mission education. This ongoing event is supported by the United Methodist Women and the Mission and Service Ministry Team.

*ADONNA BRIDGES*, UMW representative

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND MERCY MINISTRIES

Our ministries continue to grow and to adapt to the challenges of an expansive frontier. Penn Avenue Redemption Church in Oklahoma City celebrated its 10th anniversary in December. We had a record attendance of 86 in the morning service and 213 in the afternoon. Included in the celebration was recognition that a once-dying church had achieved new life and now has three worship services per week, a children's program and a lay-led prayer-and-share meeting. More than 100 have been confirmed as members during the 10 years. Most of them were prisoners, ex-prisoners and family members.

Kairos TORCH will hold its first ministry weekend at Central Oklahoma Juvenile Center in Tecumseh this summer. TORCH is now present in all three major state juvenile detention institutions. Kairos is now doing four-day weekends at Mabel Bassett (women) and Dick Conner CC, Davis CF, Cimarron CF, and James Crabtree CC. There is conversation about the possibility of a Kairos weekend at OSP in McAlester in the near future. Monthly reunions are held at the following additional institutions: Eddie Warrior (women), Great Plains (Hinton), OSR (Granite), Mack Alford (Stringtown) and OSP (McAlester). Kairos Outside, for women with significant others in prison, had its first Eastern Oklahoma weekend this spring. *I was in prison and you came to visit me...Matthew 25:36.*

This past summer also marked the 10th anniversary of New Day Camp. At two age-related camps, 113 clergy and volunteers ministered to 105 children and 66 youth who had parents in prison. For the past two years, the voluntary support of people within the Conference has been supplemented with funding from Prison Fellowship Ministries.

Our ministry has also been awarded several VISTA volunteer positions. Rev. Tony Zahn and David Bennett have led this creative effort. These positions greatly enhance the services we can provide to ex-prisoners and children and youth.

Rev. Teri Green and Rev. Tony Zahn have also secured private foundation funding. Although not permanent, these successes have helped us overcome some immediate and short-term challenges so that crises were averted and no deficits were created. Our funding base is gradually growing.

On the other hand, the college education funding at JCCC in Helena and OSR in Granite have become district-level ministries. The OSR program has proceeded without interruption, thanks to the leadership of Rev. Norm Wasson. Rev. Brant Tillery is leading the effort to resume the college program at JCCC. Thanks to Cabinet leadership, the Redemption Church ministries at Ardmore and Lawton are proceeding with considerable district-level financial support. Thanks to these efforts, CJAMM has survived the loss of the GBGM funding of three full-time ministry positions.

John Wesley Charter School has survived a change in administration, reduced funding levels and a fire at the school. We are deeply grateful to Dick Curtis of Shawnee-St. Paul for his service as interim administrator and to Elton Matthews, our new full-time administrator. In the midst of these challenges, we have still been able to begin a sports program, an art program and a music program. Each of these helps increase school attendance.

Rev. Steve Byrd, CJAMM associate director, has earned his Chemical Dependency and Alcohol Counselor Certification this year. The ministries of our Exodus Houses have enough credibility that a couple of residents have come to us by judicial order, and DHS is referring ex-prisoner mothers to our ministries. In February, our ministries were featured on OETA as examples of faith-based re-entry initiatives for ex-prisoners. Redemption churches are devoted to making disciples so that ex-prisoners and their families can become new creations in Christ Jesus, the source of all human freedom, meaning and purpose.

*RON WATERS*, board chairperson  
*STAN BASLER*, executive director

## DISASTER RESPONSE

As most Oklahomans know, our state experiences more than a fair share of disasters, ranking at the top of the list in “disasters per conference.” We have experienced 30 FEMA declared disasters since 1972, and many of our disasters are ranked just below FEMA declaration level. We also rank No. 1 in the nation in the number of strong to violent tornados per 10,000 square miles.

Governmental, inter-denominational and inter-faith agencies know they can count on Oklahoma United Methodists in times of disaster. Affiliated with the United Methodist Committee on Relief, your Conference Disaster Response Team works with many other faith-based and secular organizations, and with the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management through the Oklahoma Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (OK-VOAD). The Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference is also represented at OK-VOAD. We network and coordinate through the VOAD so that, when a disaster occurs, we can respond faster and more efficiently.

Chris Bills, Conference disaster response coordinator, is a member of Chapel Hill in Oklahoma City, a retired Army National Guard colonel, and an occasional FEMA Disaster

Assistance employee. Coleen Schaffer from Bartlesville District is your assistant Conference disaster response coordinator. Rev. Mary Gaudreau is the Conference director of care ministries and is one of three national field staff consultants for domestic UMCOR. As an ordained deacon and licensed professional counselor, her focus in Oklahoma and with national UMCOR is in the specialized areas of pastoral care, traumatology and congregational crisis intervention.

Over the past Conference year, your Oklahoma United Methodist Disaster Response Team and our generous volunteers have responded to disasters in Oklahoma and across the nation in a number of ways:

- Clean-up, recovery, case management and counseling efforts after the June wind storm and the Geary tornado.
- Dewey house rebuilt with the assistance of area UM churches (Thank you, Coleen Schaffer.)
- Collection and shipment of more than 575 flood buckets to UMCOR's Sager Brown Distribution Center.
- Convening a Conference-level Disaster Response Committee to establish Conference policy and procedures for responding to both natural and manmade disasters.
- Conducted, with UMCOR assistance, Conference-wide training events: two on Information and Referral/Care ministry and one on Disaster Response Coordination.
- Chris and Mary completed UMCOR disaster response training at the Sager-Brown center; Coleen completed the training during a prior period.
- Mary was a presenter and panel member at the 12th Annual National VOAD Conference, on the panel for "Spiritual and Emotional Care in Long-Term Recovery," and she has worked with state and national agencies to establish universal policies for mental health care following disasters. She conducted care ministry training in Florida, North Carolina and Western North Carolina Conferences.
- Coleen, Mary, Chris and Richard Whetsell, outgoing Conference coordinator, attended the 12th Annual National VOAD Conference in Louisville, Ky.
- Chris completed FEMA Community Relations and Incident Command certification training while working for FEMA and serving in the Georgia Disaster Field Office.

In times of disaster and crisis, United Methodists offer healing and hope to the least, the lost and the lonely. As our UMCOR updates remind us: "Please pray for those who are hungry, displaced, sick or in poverty because of natural and human-made disasters, and for the workers who minister to them."

*CHRIS BILLS*, disaster response coordinator

*MARY GAUDREAU*, director of care ministries

*COLEEN SCHAFFER*, assistant disaster response coordinator

## **EVANGELISM AND CHURCH GROWTH, THE EURASIA ANNUAL CONFERENCES**

**Our Scope, Vision and Mission:** The United Methodist Church in Eurasia includes four annual conferences, eight countries (and counting) and 11 time zones. It is the largest episcopal territory in the world, and currently includes Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. It is to these places and among these peoples that we have the privilege of serving our church and our God through Jesus Christ.

In Eurasia, we have a compelling vision for healthy congregations with dynamic worship and strong leadership. We see the Eurasia UMC inviting people of all ages, nations and

social strata to new life in Christ, for ministry to all the world and to each other. We believe the local church is the most effective means for inviting people to enter into this new life. Therefore, we in Evangelism and Church Development partner with local churches, districts and conferences in making disciples of Jesus Christ through the multiplication of United Methodist congregations across Eurasia.

**Our Work:** Together with our Uzbekistani colleague, the Rev. Lena Kim, we serve as directors of evangelization and church development. We live out our mission in a number of ways, including the following:

- **We are “principle-centered.”**  
Because of the huge scope of our territory and work, programs and models don’t work. What is helpful to a church in northern Siberia, for example, won’t be helpful in southern Kazakhstan. Therefore, we build on a handful of “Kingdom principles” that keep our new churches connected, at the same time allowing each one to express its unique culture and heritage.
- **We help strengthen existing churches.**  
Existing local congregations are the best teams for sharing the Good News with their neighborhoods, friends, families and nearby towns. Therefore, by strengthening existing churches, we are able to best evangelize Eurasia.
- **We focus on leaders.**  
Our missionary work primarily focuses on new leaders. We believe that identifying, training and supporting indigenous leaders is the most effective way for multiplying new congregations and growing existing churches.
- **We develop new Bible groups.**  
In isolated areas, we become the ministry team that resources fledgling United Methodist Bible Groups and other pre-congregations.
- **We distribute Bibles and Christian literature.**  
Every Bible group and local church needs excellent Christian literature. Therefore, we work with the Eurasian district superintendents to help purchase and distribute Bibles and other resources throughout our four annual conferences.
- **We help build cross-cultural bridges.**  
We believe that each culture provides a unique expression of the Good News of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we need each other! It is our joy to share with others the discoveries we are finding as our journey takes us into the hearts of many languages and people-groups.

**Our Partners:** In late 2004 and early 2005, the bridge-building part of our work also took us back to the United States. We have had the opportunity to share our story in nearly 100 churches throughout the United States, over half of those in the Oklahoma Conference. We are privileged to be supported by so many Oklahoma churches through the Covenant Relationship program. A special thanks to Dana Short, Oklahoma Conference missions coordinator, for making the arrangements for our Oklahoma visits. The Woodworth Foundation also continues to be a major source for the programming arm of our ministry, and we are deeply grateful. Without Oklahoma, there would be no church development program in Eurasia. “Well done, good and faithful servants!”

Here are the common ways individuals, churches and conferences have partnered with us:

- Joining us in prayer for the people and churches of Eurasia.
- Faithfully paying the World Service Fund Apportionment. This particular apportionment helps provide salary support to missionaries.
- United Methodist Women faithfully providing Undesignated Gifts. This is also a primary source for missional salary support.
- Giving to the Advance Special for Church Growth and Development in Eurasia.

As our Woodworth Estate grant ends this year, it is critical that we have replacement funds in place immediately. Donors can make checks payable to their local churches, but designate in the check's memo line exactly as follows: "GBGM Advance #012172T – Leadership in Eurasia" (this is a change from last year). The church treasurer will make sure that gift gets to the right place.

- Helping us provide indigenous Bibles and Christian literature. People also can donate to another Advance Special to help us in this needed ministry. Again, donors can make checks payable to their local churches, but designate in the memo line exactly as follows: "GBGM Advance #014275A – Bibles Eurasia." The church treasurers make sure that these gifts get to the right place.
- Becoming a Covenant Partner with missionaries. The Covenant Partner program allows local churches to link up with missionaries through prayer, communication and financial support. There are lots of missionaries to choose from — not just us. Churches can contact their mission representatives at their Conference or GBGM headquarters.

**A personal note:** At the time of the writing of this report (January 2005), we come to the close of our three-year missionary contract with the General Board of Global Ministries. GBGM asks its missionaries to itinerate to U.S. churches during this period – not to fund-raise, but instead to say THANK YOU for all you have done to support us during these last three years. This is also the scheduled time for missionaries to re-vision with GBGM about our future service to Christ. Wherever we find ourselves in ministry in 2005, please know we have been deeply blessed by your friendship, prayers, collegiality and sacrificial giving.

*TOM AND NANCY HOFFMANN*

## FIVE-STAR CHURCH

The Five-Star program provides encouragement and recognition for congregations who exhibit leadership in the field of Christian missions. A Five-Star Church is a congregation that pays its apportionments in full, participates in a Volunteers In Mission project, supports a missionary through the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church, gives to an Advance Special, and responds to emergency needs through an UMCOR Advance Special.

In 2004, sixty-eight (68) churches in the Oklahoma Conference received the Five-Star Church Award. It is our goal for 2005 to educate the United Methodist churches in the Oklahoma Conference about the Five-Star Church Award and to exceed our previous high in the number of churches that receive this missional recognition.

*DANA SHORT*, Conference secretary of Global Ministries

## HEALTH AND WELFARE COMMITTEE

The Health and Welfare Committee, which is small in number but great in purpose, has assumed the responsibility of providing a caring presence within our congregations. That presence leads us to act as a resource to congregations that want to develop health ministries. With that as our focus, we meet twice a year and make time for an educational presentation and also a sharing time about what is happening in our local churches. We have

a third event in June, when we will staff a Health and Welfare booth at annual conference.

We spend our budget annually on providing a scholarship for a person to attend Parish Health Nurse (PHN) training. If you have a member of your congregation who is interested in applying for this scholarship, some simple instructions are given here. The interested person needs to talk with the pastor of the church and discuss how such training would benefit the local church. The pastor then can call or email me with the information. I will contact Dr. Andrea West, the PHN trainer, and tell her to charge the UMC with half of the tuition amount, not to exceed \$250. To enroll or request a brochure, call West at 405-364-8228. The training is held in Oklahoma City.

We devote part of our Health and Welfare Committee meeting time to education in one of the health-related disciplines. In November, we heard a Medicaid specialist from the Department of Human Services, who talked with us about Medicaid eligibility policy for nursing care. In February, the regional director for rural health care gave a presentation on the future of rural health care. Also, West explained the Parish Health Nurse Program.

We have resource materials for starting a dynamic health ministry in your church. We're happy to provide those to you. We want to build our committee membership in order to help other churches develop health ministries. We welcome new members. If you know of someone interested, please have that person call or email me.

*DONNA MERRY*, chairperson  
405-948-8973  
dmerry2683@sbcglobal.net

## HEALTH AND WELFARE AGENCY REPORTS

### **Aldersgate Housing Ministry of Oklahoma City Inc.**

Strawberry Fields Apartments, a senior citizens apartment facility in Mustang, Okla., became a ministry of The United Methodist Church in 1985.

Strawberry Fields was developed to provide affordable housing to persons who are 62 years of age or older or disabled. At the present, the qualifying income limit is set by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and it is \$18,400 for one person, \$21,000 for a couple.

In addition to fulfilling the basic need for shelter, the tenant's need for spiritual, educational, emotional and social stimulations are provided. The board of directors of Aldersgate Housing Ministry, which is the governing body of Strawberry Fields Apartments, works to provide programs and opportunities for enrichment of the spiritual, personal and social life of the resident. The board meets quarterly at Strawberry Fields.

Social services are provided for all tenants who wish to participate. Some of these include: weekly Bible study, arts and crafts, exercise, monthly birthday suppers, short trips on our bus, and weekly shopping trips in Mustang, to name a few. There are also various school and community organizations that provide the tenants with activities.

Since Strawberry Fields opened July 27, 1984, we have achieved 100% occupancy, and the facility has continuously maintained this rate. We are looking forward to our 21st anniversary in July.

We welcome visitors and invite you to come by and see this United Methodist facility.

*JOHN SCRUGGS*, administrator

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## CENTRAL OKLAHOMA UNITED METHODIST RETIREMENT FACILITY INC. – EPWORTH VILLA

Epworth Villa experienced its most successful year in 2004 in terms of sales and occupancy, resulting in improved financial stability. We continue to monitor our long-term debt so as to control costs. Our residents were very involved in the state legislative process in 2004 and were successful in capping the *Quality of Care Fee* by personally meeting with and writing to their state legislators.

Oklahoma City University held several sessions of its “Senior Academy” at Epworth Villa, including classes on topics covering the Civil War, the presidential election, and healthy aging. Two residents celebrated their 100th birthdays in 2004. We entered into an agreement with the University of Oklahoma Physicians group to provide on-site geriatricians for our residents in health services. We continue to host students from Francis Tuttle and Metro Tech who are studying to be certified nursing assistants and certified medical assistants, so they may obtain practical experience. The request for benevolence assistance has increased dramatically, as our residents are living longer than expected and some are depleting their financial resources. The board underwent a restructuring process in 2004 to focus on the long-term vision and strategy of the organization.

Epworth Villa is in its 15th year of providing a superior quality of life for older adults in a Christian environment. In 2004, the board approved our participation in the American Association for Homes and Services for the *Aging’s Quality First Initiative*. Being a member of this program means we are committed to achieving excellence in the quality of care and services provided to consumers and to earning the public’s trust. We believe we have a special stewardship responsibility to maintain continuous quality improvement, public disclosure and accountability, consumer and family rights, workforce excellence, community involvement, ethical practices and financial integrity.

In 2005, we will add 14 cottage units to our campus and remodel our nursing center to better serve our residents. In the first quarter of 2005, we anticipate receiving certification in order to allow current and future residents the opportunity to use their Medicare Part A benefits for skilled nursing care. Also, we anticipate receiving our re-accreditation from the Continuing Care Accreditation Commission in 2005, and we would then be the only continuing care retirement community in Oklahoma to have such credentials.

*RICHARD WOODARD*, president

## CIRCLE OF CARE

Since 1917, the Oklahoma United Methodist Circle of Care has ministered to children, youth and families. Over the years, our services have changed to meet the challenging needs of our society. Beginning as an orphanage, CoC has grown into a ministry serving the spiritual, emotional and physical needs of the children and youth of Oklahoma.

While keeping the focus on providing commendable residential and foster care services, CoC has continued to successfully increase awareness throughout our Conference and state. With the support of churches statewide, CoC has been able to increase donations, number of volunteers, and interest in welfare of our children.

A highlight of 2004 came when we exceeded our goal of having at least 12 cluster events statewide, one in each district, to help meet our \$1.4 million Sustaining Drive goal.

We are pleased and humbled to announce that we have had 12 district-wide events, within the following nine districts:

- Oct. 14 – South OKC District, McFarlin UMC, Norman
- Oct. 17 – Bartlesville District, East Cross UMC
- Oct. 18 – Tulsa District, First UMC, Tulsa
- Oct. 23 – Muskogee District, First UMC, Tahlequah
- Oct. 25 – Clinton District 1, First UMC, Weatherford
- Oct. 26 – Stillwater District, First UMC, Stillwater
- Nov. 1 – North OKC District, Village UMC
- Nov. 4 – McAlester District, Grand Avenue UMC
- Nov. 8 – Clinton District. 2, First UMC, Elk City
- Nov. 13-14 – Kids for Kids Musical Review, Muskogee District, St. Paul’s UMC
- Nov. 22 – Lawton District, Centenary UMC, Lawton
- Dec. 7 – Clinton District 3, First UMC, Altus.

We are very appreciative for the leadership and dedication from all the CoC cluster event committees within each district. Thanks to everyone for their prayers, support and efforts in making this year’s Sustaining Drive full of awareness for our “at-promise” children and youth!

Another highlight this year was continued involvement by the head coaches of men’s basketball at the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University. Kelvin Sampson of OU and Eddie Sutton of OSU, both active United Methodist men, teamed up to be keynote speakers in their respective areas of the state and participated in their cluster events.

Kim Henry, Oklahoma’s First Lady, also remains involved with her support of our ministry in many ways.

For the second consecutive year, the churches paid out apportionments at more than 100%!

The CoC children and youth are, by far, our greatest blessing. We have a group of young people who strive to succeed in life. For the fourth consecutive year, their overall grade point average is above 3.0. The CoC Youth Leadership Team continues to serve the community through work projects and the performance of “Arise My Love.” We believe our children have a special quality that makes them the best of the best.

Following the Circle of Care Board of Directors’ decision on plans to transition our ministry, CoC worked very hard to make the transition run smoothly. As planned, the Child S.H.A.R.E. foster care ministry has expanded and moved its headquarters to the Frances E. Willard Ministry Center in Tulsa. Circle of Care successfully transitioned the young women from Tulsa to the Children’s Home campus in Tahlequah on June 14. The girls have enjoyed their new home and love their new family counselors. The move was very positive all the way around.

These steps and others have enabled us to be in a position to continue to serve Oklahoma children and youth, while significantly reducing our expenses. Our staff continues to provide care for all our children with a standard of excellence that is second to none. With the many transitions CoC has completed the last several years, our ministry still continues to grow, and the staff and families are able to serve an increased number of children each year.

CoC has a dedicated staff that also continues to excel in making a difference in the lives of our “at-promise” children and youth. With 80% of all CoC staff trained as certified child care workers, it is evident the staff members are devoted to being Christian role models. For the first time, non-residential staff members have become certified child care workers, too. We are blessed to have people who make it their mission to make disciples of Christ.

A CoC employee was awarded the OkCARE’s George Parlier Award for the fourth consecutive year. This year’s recipient was Adam Taylor, activities/volunteer coordinator of

the United Methodist Children’s Home. Adam was honored for his outstanding contribution to the child care profession through his direct care of the children and youth.

Candace Morton, Tulsa District coordinator of Child S.H.A.R.E., was honored at the Annual Child-Care Worker Conference. She was presented with the OkCARE Child Care Worker of the Year award. This is the third time CoC staff has received this award.

More than 229 volunteer groups and individuals provided 35,448 volunteer hours that enabled us to more effectively and efficiently help children and families in need. Our volunteers are the lifeblood that helps us keep the doors open and allows us to accomplish much more than we could possibly do without them.

As we continue to serve our children, we are challenged to change the way “at-promise” children and youth are served in our state. We are inspired by the love of God and by the support and encouragement of so many, including Bishop Hayes, members of the Cabinet, Circle of Care Board of Directors and the CoC Board of Members. Thank you for serving with us.

<b>RESIDENTIAL SERVICES</b>	<b>UMCH</b>	<b>UMBR</b>	<b>H. HOME</b>
<b>Number of Children served</b>	47 .....	31 .....	7
<b>Residential Childcare Days</b>	7,094 .....	5,969 .....	1,148
<b>Average Length of Stay (mos.)</b>	17 .....	14.8 .....	0
<b>Age (years)</b>	.....		
0-2	0 .....	0 .....	1
3-6	0 .....	0 .....	3
7-10	13 .....	0 .....	2
11-18	32 .....	31 .....	1
19+	2 .....	0 .....	0
<b>Ethnicity</b>	.....		
African American	3 .....	2 .....	3
Asian	0 .....	0 .....	0
Caucasian	35 .....	23 .....	4
Hispanic	2 .....	3 .....	0
Portuguese	0 .....	0 .....	0
Native American	7 .....	3 .....	0
Mixed Race	0 .....	0 .....	0

<b>Community Services</b>	<b>Child S.H.A.R.E.</b>	<b>FEW</b>
<b>Number of Clients:</b>		
Families	107 .....	3
Children served by families	178 .....	0

<b>Ethnicity served by Circle of Care</b>		
African American	15 .....	0
Asian	0 .....	0
Caucasian	55 .....	3
Hispanic	19 .....	0
Native American	18 .....	0
Other	3 .....	0

**Counties served by Circle of Care**

Adair	Creek	Marshall	Ottawa
Atoka	Custer	McClain	Pawnee
Canadian	Garfield	Muskogee	Payne
Cherokee	Garvin	Okfuskee	Pittsburg
Cleveland	Grady	Oklahoma	Pottowatomie
Commanche	Kay	Okmulgee	Rogers
Craig	Logan	Osage	Sequoyah

**Religions Represented**

American Baptist	Episcopal	Nondenominational
Assembly of God	Episcopalian	Presbyterian
Baptist	Kikapoo	Protestant
Catholic	Lutheran	Southern Baptist
Christian	Methodist	Victory Soul
Church of Christ	Mormon	

*DON BATSON*, executive director

**THE UNITED METHODIST HOME OF ENID INC.**

The United Methodist Home of Enid is rapidly expanding into a full-fledged retirement community. Construction is under way on 40 independent-living and 30 assisted-living apartments, an 18-bed memory support unit, and a community plaza. Combined with 26 townhomes and the existing 129-bed nursing center, services will be provided by the newly incorporated United Methodist Continuum of Care.

We sincerely appreciate the Oklahoma Conference of the United Methodist Church and its support of the expansion project. When completed, it is the hope of the board and staff that northwest Oklahoma will recognize and respect the high standard of care that it has come to expect of Methodist facilities.

Apportionments are important to the United Methodist Home of Enid. These funds supply special items and services to those in need in our nursing center who might not receive them otherwise.

The board of trustees and the staff of the Methodist Home are proud to be a part of the United Methodist family and look forward to serving you well into the future.

*JUDITH FORNEY*, board president  
*SCOTT A. WEGMILLER*, executive director

**OKLAHOMA METHODIST MANOR**

4134 E 31st St, Tulsa OK 74135; (918) 743-2565

In the spirit of Christ, the mission of Oklahoma Methodist Manor is to improve the quality of life for seniors by providing housing, nutrition and health care services that meet the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of each resident.

Building on Christian principles – the vision of Oklahoma Methodist Manor – it is the pre-eminent partner in the Tulsa area, offering a comprehensive care community for senior adults and their families.

The Manor is governed by a 24-member board of directors, which has identified six organizational goals for 2005: 1) Provide high-quality services; 2) Maintain the financial

stability of the organization; 3) Recruit and retain a highly qualified workforce; 4) Address the need for facilities and infrastructure improvements; 5) Develop a marketing plan; and 6) Develop a fund-raising plan.

The Manor currently serves approximately 300 senior adults through an array of lifestyle options on its 40-acre campus in mid-town Tulsa. Independent living options include: 33 cottages, 46 garden apartments and six garden homes. There are 59 apartments where housekeeping services and three great meals a day are provided. The Holliman Assisted Living Center has 41 apartments, and our Health Center has 84 private and semi-private rooms.

Oklahoma Methodist Manor administers a Supplemental Aid Fund (SA Fund) as a means of providing support for residents of the Health Center who have outlived their personal financial resources and who are dependant upon public funding to meet their needs. Income to the SA Fund comes from three sources: The Bargain Basement (Thrift Shop), memorials, and gifts from United Methodist churches across the state of Oklahoma.

In the past three years, sixty (60) people have benefited from the SA Fund, with each receiving an average of \$3,547 in assistance. Oklahoma Methodist Manor has absorbed the \$105,855 in expenses not covered by contributions. The total amount of Supplemental Aid Funding and benevolent care provided by The Manor since January 2002 is \$342,685.

It is the financial support provided by United Methodist churches across Oklahoma that enables us to assure there will be room at the Manor for seniors facing financial need. Each resident of the Health Center at the Manor has a unique story.

Here are three powerful testimonies of faith and courage:

- A distinguished 92-year old woman tells of how, at age 22, she assumed financial responsibility for her younger brother and sister and managed a farm to help raise them. Her husband was a Baptist minister, and she attributes her excellent health to “good clean living.” She speaks quietly, but proudly, of her two great-grandchildren.
- One proud 90-year-old gentleman shares how he served faithfully as a pastor for 60 years.
- Another woman reflects about her father, who was a Methodist pastor; her favorite parsonage; and how she taught kindergarten and special education in Talala, Okla., for more than 30 years.

Today, these witnesses of God’s faithfulness are residents of the Health Center at the Manor. They are among the 16 people currently benefiting from Supplemental Aid. The youngest of these is 75, and the oldest celebrated her 104th birthday this year. All of them have outlived their financial resources.

The Manor provides compassionate, long-term health care in the name of Christ. This includes a commitment to provide care even when someone is no longer able to pay for it.

Oklahoma Methodist Manor is a place where residents enjoy their retirement years with peace of mind, knowing they can count on outstanding health care; a wide variety of recreational programs; good, nutritious food; opportunities for spiritual fulfillment; and a caring and compassionate staff.

It is my privilege to extend thanks to the Oklahoma Conference for the many ways your support of Oklahoma Methodist Manor makes a difference in the name of Christ.

*REV. STEVEN DICKIE, executive director*

**HEARTLAND NETWORK FOR TOWN AND RURAL MINISTRIES**

PO Box 1405, Columbia MO 65205; (573) 442-5465;

Email: heffernanj@tranquility.net

With nearly two-thirds of U.S. United Methodist congregations and nearly one-third of our members located in town and country settings, The United Methodist Church determined 16 years ago that it is important to have a mission presence in the Heartland that focuses on providing resources, support and advocacy for the town and rural peoples of our congregations and communities.

The Annual Conferences of the Dakotas, Iowa, Kansas East and West, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska and Oklahoma joined together to birth the Heartland Network during a time of great pain and change in the region, and called on it to respond to God's call on the church "to empower the people of America's Heartland to develop, proclaim, and carry out visions of hope for a renewed church and community life." To this end, we have worked very closely with the General Board of Global Ministries, with the endowed chair of Town and Country Ministry at Saint Paul School of Theology, and with other UM groups to facilitate more effective ministry in the town and rural congregations of this region.

In addition to providing resources and consultation in response to numerous individual requests in 2004, the Heartland Network provided significant input to training events for clergy and laity in the Nebraska Conference, at the training event of the Bishop's Task Force on Rural Ministry, as well as with our ecumenical partners at the annual meeting of the Montana Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, and at a celebration of the InterChurch Ministries of Nebraska. Visiting lectures that focused on social and economic justice for town and rural people and communities were given at Saint Paul School of Theology and the University of Missouri, and a keynote address on the same theme was given by the director at the annual meeting of the Practical Farmers of Iowa. The Heartland Network helped co-sponsor the Rural Ministry Conference of the Center for Theology and Land, a joint endeavor by the seminary at the University of Dubuque and Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa.

The Heartland Network hosted our January retreat for district superintendents and directors of connectional ministries. The director participated in the rural/urban training event for the North Central Jurisdiction, the annual meetings of several Heartland conferences, Bishops Week in the South Central Jurisdiction, the jurisdictional conference of the North Central Jurisdiction, and also worked with the United Methodist Rural Fellowship on several rural issues discussed at the General Conference in Pittsburgh. At General Conference, she worked for approval of the Action Plan for the National Comprehensive Plan for Town and Country Ministry of the United Methodist Church and for other issues of justice for rural clergy, peoples and congregations. The Heartland Network director is now and has been a member of a team that has worked since 1998 on the National Comprehensive Plan. The director and some members of the Heartland Network Board of Directors are active in the Rural Chaplains Association, and they attended the training event on the Columbia River in Washington State.

Additionally, the director was involved in the ecumenical community, consulted with women of the United Church of Christ, who were writing a study piece on rural life and issues; actively participated in the Rural Church Network of the U.S. and Canada, where resources, information and concerns were shared with colleagues of several denominations at a gathering in Washington, D.C.; and participated in the Town and Country Consultation, held jointly with Saint Paul School of Theology in September.

As part of our ongoing effort since 1996 to affirm town and country congregations that actively live out the Founding Purpose of the Heartland Network, as well as those

congregations that nearly died and were re-emergized to renewed mission and ministry, the Heartland Network in 2004 honored congregations in Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska and Oklahoma with our Founding Purpose and our Easter Morning Awards.

In challenging financial times, we gratefully thank Oklahoma for the Conference grant, for the General Advance and private gifts, and for the clergy leadership of board members Bruce Brotherton, Kathy Leithner and Terry Koehn that enable us to do the ministry and accomplish our daily tasks of networking people with people, with resources, groups, ideas and needed information; working with interfaith and secular groups on efforts important to town and rural peoples and communities; and ministering in creative ways where called upon as situations arise in America's Heartland and around the globe.

*JUDITH BORTNER HEFFERNAN*, executive director

## PROJECT TRANSFORMATION

Project Transformation's mission is to connect the energy of young adults, the strength of church-supported institutions, and the untapped resources of urban neighborhoods with the evolving needs of urban youth and children.

In 2004, Project Transformation focused primarily on the need for literacy development among inner-city children while providing life-enrichment activities and encouraging one-on-one adult/child mentoring. The eight-week summer camp that was the crux of the ministry was led exclusively by more than 30 college interns and two house chaplains, who were supported by volunteers. They planned, led and organized the activities at their designated sites. The interns lived together in community, problem-solved together, and on Fridays visited various mission and social service programs around the Oklahoma City and Tulsa metropolitan areas. The hope is that these students had the opportunity to develop leadership skills and to develop spiritually, with the possibility of expanding their ties with Project Transformation or moving on to another ministry.

Project Transformation has identified many of the local churches and the individuals within these congregations as assets to the community they serve. Many of the congregational members are teachers, doctors, nurses and government officials and other professionals. Our hope is to connect the resources and love these people possess with the needs of the neighborhood.

Project Transformation is designed to enhance the educational, emotional, spiritual and social needs of elementary children. The majority of these children come from the transitional communities where the Project Transformation sites are located. Many of these children come from homes where they do not experience the necessary support for their educational and developmental needs. We were pleased that more than 300 elementary children attended the 2004 Project Transformation camps. Because of the inclusive multi-ethnic emphasis, 29 Hispanic, 50 African American, and several Asian, Native American, Laotian and Vietnamese children participated.

The pool of more than 800 inter-generational volunteers is one of the most valuable aspects of this ministry. We had high school students and a whole range of adults, including more than 50% who were retired adults, now able to actively participate in ministry. The inter-generational component of Project Transformation greatly enriched the experience of both the children and volunteers.

In 2004, Project Transformation was able to launch a pilot after-school program at one of the summer day camp sites. This program worked with the nearby schools to recruit 25 children who needed assistance in reading and homework. The children attended the program, led by three interns and several volunteers, four days a week. They had hot meals, reading time, homework time and other various educational activities. Each Thursday, a group of

volunteers arrives, and each person is assigned a child to mentor. That person mentors the same child for the entire year.

Project Transformation is staffed by an executive director, an After-School Program coordinator, and two “house chaplains” who work with the summer interns.

*AMY CURRAN*, director

## **RESTORE HOPE MINISTRIES INC., TULSA**

Restore Hope Ministries was established in 1978 by The United Methodist Church to respond to the needs of the poor living in the Tulsa area. The commitment – to aid in the effort to reduce poverty, eliminate hunger, prevent homelessness and give hope to those in despair – is stronger than ever. Restore Hope Ministries continues to ease the burdens for dozens of families each and every day.

During an average month, Restore Hope Ministries distributes food and clothing to more than 1,300 families. That is an average of 1,700 pounds of food and 900 items of clothing each day. More than 80 families each month receive assistance in paying their rent, to prevent them from joining the ranks of the homeless.

And, at the heart of everything, are those who pray with and give spiritual counsel to more than 600 persons each month through the chapel ministry.

In addition to the regular, ongoing programs, Restore Hope Ministries conducts several seasonal events annually. These events include “Hole-It-for-Hope” – Hole in One Shootout; the annual “School Supply Drive,” which served 2,816 students in 2004; the “Christmas Family Sponsorship Program,” which matched 164 client families with sponsors; and our Christmas Gift Room, which benefited 1,068 people.

None of this would be possible were it not for the faithful support of our friends, the Tulsa District congregations, and the Oklahoma Annual Conference. We wish to express our thanks to the Mission and Service Ministry Team for its leadership on behalf of ministries that serve beyond the local church. To learn more about Restore Hope Ministries, please visit our Web site at [www.restorehope.org](http://www.restorehope.org).

*LAWRENCE A. JOHNSON*, executive director

## **SKYLINE URBAN MINISTRY, OKLAHOMA CITY**

Thanks to the initiative of longtime supporter Ron Rosser of Nichols Hills UMC, Skyline is in the process of receiving special designated gifts to complete a detailed list of essential building improvement projects on our two aging facilities. The list totals nearly \$50,000. As we do effective ministry among our low-income neighbors in the inner city, it is of great importance that we be exemplary stewards of our properties so we can adequately perform our ministry and so the light of Christ shines brightly and appealingly.

There is evidence, both in the Midtown area around our Eighth Street Center and in Shidler-Wheeler near the McKee Center, of significant new investment and real estate improvement moving into the inner city. At the same time, we are surrounded by increasing numbers of people needing assistance and encouragement toward their achievement of worthwhile life goals. We have served more people in our Community Cupboard than ever before in this past year – more than 20,000 – allowing people to receive food no more than three times during the year. All across our state, with an economy that is growing and perhaps accelerating for upper income families, larger numbers of families are becoming chronically poor. Addressing the widening gap between rich and poor in our nation is a central religious issue, particularly for the people who lay claim to the legacy of John and Charles Wesley.

Therefore, Skyline Urban Ministry is working effectively to provide immediate relief to those suffering from the symptoms of poverty, while at the same time addressing its causes. Among those central causes are spiritual deprivation, the lack of hope, and the sense of being cut off from choices that obscure the vision of so many families around every one of our churches in Oklahoma. Approximately 25% of the children in our state are growing up in poverty. In spite of recent attention to the problem, the schools available to them are often lacking in the high-quality stimulation needed to spark the imaginations of children whose view of the world has often been dulled by too many hours spent alone in front of television sets. Children who live in households without computers are at a severe disadvantage in our society. Shockingly, about one-third of Oklahoma's adults between the ages of 18 and 65 lack direct access to medical care. While home ownership provides the primary path out of generational poverty, many families need guidance to learn how they might take on this responsibility in order to garner its benefits.

Working with our partners, Skyline Urban Ministry is addressing the causes of poverty, as well as its symptoms. Those partnerships include Skyline Urban Development Inc., the Oklahoma City Cooperative Urban Parish, John Wesley Charter School, the Empowerment Zone Governance Committee of Oklahoma City and Goodwill Industries. The staff of this agency is strong and profoundly dedicated to the fulfillment of God's mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ from among the poor. We are grateful for the ongoing support of the Oklahoma Conference and its member congregations in Central Oklahoma especially, as well as many families and groups that support us directly. Pray for and expect great things from God with us!

*DALE G. TREMPER, executive director*

## UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

The United Methodist Women of Oklahoma have for their 2005 theme: "Changing Our World Through Prayer and Action." Throughout our organization's history, we have examples of women who have brought change to our world through prayer and action. This past year has been one of celebrating our rich history and heritage, where we have heard stories of the power of persistent prayer and examples of self-sacrifice. Women throughout this Conference are dedicated in making a difference in the lives of all God's people through prayer for the mission of the Church.

### **Our goals this year:**

- To increase our mission pledge by 10%.
- Each local unit will be visited by its District Mission Team, with intentionality towards young women and newly retired women.
- Increase our attendance of children and youth by 25 at each School of Mission.

The hands-on project will, again this year, be Adopt-a-School. This project was selected to emphasize support for public education locally. United Methodist Women can and have made a difference in many ways through their gifts and involvement in the lives of children in the public school system. On the Conference level, we will distribute school supplies equally to Cookson Hills and Neighborhood Services Organization.

Our calendar is full and exciting this year. In April, we will meet at Canyon Camp for our Spiritual Growth retreat, led by the Rev. Jessica Moffatt. "Cornerstone of Hope" will be our theme for Schools of Mission at OCU in July. The Mother/Child Retreat is in August at Cross Point Camp. Our annual meeting will be held at Lawton's Centenary UMC, Sept. 30-Oct. 1; "Rekindle the Gift" and District Leadership Training will be at St. Mark's UMC in Bethany; and, again, our ever popular Toole Tyme events are set for Cookson Hills and Neighborhood Services Organization in November.

For 136 years, United Methodist Women have been changing the lives of women, children and youth around the world through mission. So let us take that next leap of faith into tomorrow, as the Lord continues to call women to work alongside one another in prayer and action, as we fulfill OUR PURPOSE.

*DONNA ROBERTS, president*

## **VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION**

**The purpose of Oklahoma Volunteers In Mission is to share the love of Christ in ways that make a Christian difference.**

OK VIM maintains and staffs two offices. The main office is in Oklahoma City, and the Hands Together Mexico (HTM) office is in Rio Bravo, Mexico. Also located in the same complex in Rio Bravo is the Larry Acton Retreat Center, a dormitory built by volunteers to house many of the more than 3,000 missionaries who go to serve in Rio Bravo during each year. Among other ministries, these missionaries annually build 200 or more “casitas” (small homes) for families who live in substandard housing in the area. A clinic built by VIMers, in conjunction with other Mexican agencies, is also located and operated in the HTM complex. More than 10,000 patients are treated at that clinic each year and at remote day-clinics branched out from there.

The VIM office in Oklahoma City develops more than 200 safe, meaningful team mission sites each year. The sites are located in Oklahoma, all across the United States, and in numerous other countries. These sites are offered as mission opportunities for approximately 5,000 volunteer missionaries who are processed through the Oklahoma City office each year. These missionaries will serve almost 30,000 volunteer days. The Points Of Light Foundation valuation for this amount of volunteer service would exceed \$3 million annually. In addition, these volunteers will spend more than \$500,000 preparing for and getting to and from the mission sites, and they will take about the same amount in construction materials, medical supplies and other materials and equipment to the sites.

Mission service is defined by location, and by types of missions as well. VIM serves in neighborhood restoration, homeless shelters, food banks and other inner-city ministries. There are medical missions, mission Bible schools, HIV/AIDS awareness and education missions. Much of missionaries’ service is in the construction and repair of homes for the needy, local churches and conference ministry facilities, such as UM camps, CJAMM, and Circle of Care homes for children. Through utilization of volunteer labor, many thousands of construction dollars are saved, in many cases making possible projects that otherwise could not be afforded.

Coordination of these missions is divided into segments, headed up by VIM staff in the following positions:

- **Coordinator for International Missions** handles missions abroad and in the Central Americas, plus the hundreds of teams that serve in Mexico.
- **Coordinator for Oklahoma and National Missions** covers Oklahoma and all the U.S., including Alaska. OK VIM also partners with the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference, providing assistance in new construction, repairs and maintenance at OIMC local churches and conference facilities. With the recent expansion into National Missions, this segment is expected to have the greatest rate of growth in the near future.
- **Coordinator for Mission Logistics and Communications** arranges low-cost travel and lodging for the mission teams, as well as directs promotions and publicity, among other responsibilities that include coordination of Office Volunteers, still another emphasis in mission opportunities.

To ensure that the missions are as successful and as problem-free as possible, each team is provided an organizational infrastructure, guidance and supervision, based on the experience drawn from years of coordinating hundreds of teams for thousands of volunteer days. Each team leader is trained by VIM staff before being permitted to lead, and mission sites to which VIM sends teams in Oklahoma must have VIM-trained Site Teams to receive and manage the volunteer teams.

From its meager beginnings in 1989, Oklahoma Volunteers In Mission has grown steadily, becoming a model for other conferences operating their own VIM ministries. Sound policies and procedures are continually developed and improved with the guidance of a strong VIM Steering Committee made up of dedicated, skilled VIMers.

OK VIM strives to strictly adhere to the ministry's stated set of values:

- We will seek to glorify God in all we do by acting out our basic belief that the commitment to Christ and service are inexplicably bound together.
- We will be an extension ministry of The United Methodist Church in Oklahoma, responding to the specific requests of Methodist-related churches and agencies, both locally and around the world, and will partner with them in mission.
- We will equip our leaders and team members for effective ministry and seek, through our tasks and the sharing of our own time, talents and lives, to build relationships that enhance ministry and fulfill our purpose.
- We will value and respect other cultures and ways of life and will conduct ourselves accordingly.
- We will fulfill our commitment to every mission by returning home and sharing the story of Christian difference-making.

VIM will continue to be a remarkable ministry of the Oklahoma United Methodist Conference that offers people of all ages and abilities the wonderful opportunity to joyfully embrace the privilege and responsibility of Christian service. By sharing the love of Christ, the Christian difference God intends is realized through service with the family of God, at home and around the world. All thanks and praise be to God!

*JEREMY BASSET*, Steering Committee chairperson

*TISH MALLOY*, executive director

*IRA HART*, associate director

## **DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS**

The start of the new quadrennium brought significant change in Conference communications. Our long-time director, Boyce Bowdon, announced his plans to retire on June 1, 2005. This, coupled with the arrival of Bishop Robert Hayes Jr., resulted in some rethinking of the department's structure for the future. The bishop has now announced the appointment of Dr. Joe Harris as the new assistant to the bishop/director of Conference communications, effective Sept. 1, 2005. An additional staff person is expected to be named by September. The department is also reaching out to professional journalists across the conference to become regular contributors to the *Contact*.

The department was fortunate to have the on-site services in February of a United Methodist Communications consultant, Amelia Tucker-Shaw, who assisted members with the reorganizing of the department's mission. The insight gleaned in that process should make the department more responsive to the future communications needs of the Conference, districts and local churches.

Our 12 district communications coordinators are expected to receive training and to play major roles in the implementation of the new Conference data and information Web services being hosted by Brick River Technologies, Inc. of Exeter, N.H.. Essentially a Web-based

database system, Brick River provides for efficient Conference, district and local church Web services, such as managing and archiving information, building surveys and forms, and giving each local church a customized Web presence. For further information about Brick River, contact Jo Ann McNaught in the Conference Ministry Center.

The Conference Ministry Center has installed a new email system that will supply each pastor serving a church or appointed to an extension ministry in the Annual Conference with an email account that will remain constant regardless of the pastor's location. The account will be Web-based and will be housed within the conference office. When this system is in place, email will become the primary means of communication between all active clergy and the Annual Conference. In the near future, retired and retiring clergy will have the option of participating in this system. It is being tested now. Information will be mailed to all pastors when the testing is satisfactorily completed. We anticipate the latest release date would be early summer. Contact Andrea O'Steen, computer administrator at the ministry center, if you have questions.

*BOYCE BOWDON*, communications director  
*HOWARD KUCHTA*, chairperson

## **DEPARTMENT OF CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

This has been a very exciting and busy year in the Department of Congregational Development. We continue to work diligently at development in the many areas that are included in our responsibilities. We have taken a new approach this year, in an attempt to be more faithful to the work that is before us, by dividing our department into project teams. Each project team will focus its work throughout the year, emphasizing the needs in a specific area. The teams and their coordinators are: New Church Development Team, Mark Foster; Next Step Training Team, Larry Wilson; Kaleidoscope Team, David Croninger; Small Membership Church Team, Lyle Shipley; Ethnic Ministries Team, Sungsu Hwang; Transforming Congregations Team, Chris Tiger; and Visionaries Team, Donna Helderman.

### **CONSULTATIONS**

Numerous consultations with local church pastors and lay leadership take place during the year, and we have done on-site or one-on-one consultations with the following local congregations and/or pastors:

Blanchard	Catoosa
Crescent	Faith, Tulsa
Quayle	Quail Springs
Sand Springs	Southern Hills, Tulsa
Wesley, El Reno	West Guthrie
Wickline, Midwest City	

### **VISIONARIES FOR GOD'S CHURCH**

The Visionaries program continues to grow slowly. We are grateful to Judy Benson and the Conference Board of Laity, and to the district and local lay leaders, for taking the lead in this vital ministry. We are ready to begin several new churches as soon as we can develop donations for this work in a sufficient amount to sustain the support of new congregations.

### **KALEIDOSCOPE EVENTS**

The Kaleidoscope experience has received high praise from those who have been involved with it. We look forward to offering this in the coming year. It looks like we will hold two sessions, one in the Tulsa area and one in the Oklahoma City area. We anticipate

receiving new invitations from other districts as well. We have learned that the best dynamic for this experience happens when we have at least seven to eight churches involved. We can go to any district that enrolls that many or more. Other than that, we will attempt in 2005-06 to hold the two events previously mentioned, and to invite anyone in the state to participate.

#### **NEXT STEP**

Next Step has continued to be a powerful tool of peer learning across our Conference. This program is designed to enable churches ready to take a “next step” in attendance, program, outreach, missions and evangelism. Leaders from around our Conference, as well as experts across the Connection, are brought together for a two-day training opportunity for teams of leaders from individual churches. Next Step combines the best that the entire Church offers in teaching with the gifts of local leaders who have made significant strides in churches of all sizes. In the coming year, the Department of Congregational Development and the Discipleship Ministry Team will combine efforts in continuing and expanding the Next Step program.

#### **NEW WORKS**

Congregational Development continues to support new works across our Connection with grant monies distributed to enable exciting ministries in our Conference. Resources continue to be used at Trinity in Muldrow, Hope Community Church, Meadowcreek in Collinsville, First Native American in Norman, Owasso, Chinese International, Lighthouse in Woodville, Acts 2 in Edmond, Abiding Harvest in Tulsa, Bridgeview in Norman, St. John’s in Oklahoma City, Volunteers In Mission, Hispanic Ministries, and the Redemption Churches of CJAMM. These and many other exciting things are happening in Oklahoma United Methodism through the work of Congregational Development.

#### **PERCEPT (Go on-line to receive demographic information)**

Every local church in our Annual Conference can get a great deal of information by going to [link2lead.com](http://link2lead.com) and, after registering there (free), enter the church zip code and receive a report on the basic demographic data for that area.

Other studies are available for purchase that provide data on a 1-, 3-, or 5-mile radius around a church, with additional information. Contact the Office of Congregational Development and ask for a *Ministry Area Profile*. Cost is approximately \$225.

*LARRY D. WILSON*, chairperson  
*DAVID SEVERE*, executive director

## **THE COMMISSION ON THE BLACK CHURCH**

The Commission on the Black Church has had a great year. We have been supporting the ministries of the churches and the growing numbers of African American young adults in the Conference. There is a push this year that has never come to us before this time period.

Many young adults who participated in the earlier youth retreats have come back. Those who were 12 years old when we started retreats eight years ago are now 20. They are raising children and are ready to make sure other African American youth in the Oklahoma Conference have the same opportunities they and their grandparents had. In the South Central Jurisdiction, retreats were held for young African Americans. These retreats are helping drive the retention of new generations of blacks in the Oklahoma Conference.

Through the Commission, we are rearing a new generation of ministers, teachers and lay leadership for the church and are attracting people who would never have given The United Methodist Church a chance. Praise God.

*WANNIE SCOTT*, chairperson

## HISPANIC MINISTRIES

The Hispanic Ministries Committee has had another year of progress. We have seen the development of several ministries. The Northwest Oklahoma City ministry, led by Eric Puente, has made significant progress in developing as a worshipping community. The Panhandle Hispanic Ministry, led by Eleazar Guillen, and our Fuente de Vida ministry in south Oklahoma City have made significant increases in the number of people involved. Our ministry in Heavener is being served by a new pastoral couple, Carlos and Wendi Ramirez, who are revitalizing a ministry that has experienced times of great challenge. Our other ministries in Tulsa (Nueva Esperanza and St. Marks), Laverne and Pauls Valley all have stories of development and hope to tell.

This year, our Hispanic Ministries Committee has grown enough to develop a list of persons who have been elected to be responsible for the further development of our conference ministries. They are listed below, as well as their tasks.

**Hispanic Ministries Committee Chairperson** (one-year term). After one year, the chairperson steps down and the first vice chairperson becomes the chairperson. Purpose: Chair meetings of the Hispanic Ministries Committee, represent the interests of Hispanic Ministries in the state to the Annual Conference, help develop funding for Hispanic Ministries in the Annual Conference, and help guide other area chairpersons in doing their work.

**1st Vice-Chairperson** (one-year term): Tino Espinoza. Purpose: develop cooperative ministries between various Hispanic Ministries in our conference, such as, statewide camps, congresos, and so on.

**2nd Vice-Chairperson** (one-year term): Daniel Llanos. Purpose: Develop and help people take part in continuing education events such as Lay Mission/Mentor Training, Module III training, and so on; develop spiritual life retreats for pastors and for laity.

**Secretary:** Carlos Ramirez and Wendi Neal. Purpose: Take the minutes at meetings, keep records of committee activities and, perhaps most importantly, develop a newsletter about events in our ministries at the statewide level. The newsletter would be sent to all Hispanic Ministries, to all Hispanic Ministries Committee members, and to our Annual Conference Anglo leadership to help keep them informed.

**Financial Officer:** Jaime Espinoza. Purpose: Collect and send in reimbursement sheets, get statements from the Conference Treasurer's Office about the Hispanic Ministries financial status and, perhaps most importantly, find ways to promote stewardship and giving in our Hispanic churches.

**Social Concerns/Marcha:** Perla Martinez Goody. Purpose: Find ways our committee can bring to the forefront and make an impact in social concerns relating to the life of the Hispanic community; be our representative at MARCHA meetings.

**Board of Ordained Representative:** Tino Espinoza. Purpose: Represent the concerns of Hispanics in ministry on the Board of Ordained Ministry.

**New Church Development:** Eric Puente. Purpose: Lead the committee, in coordination with district superintendents and the Conference program director, in planning when, where and how new ministries should be started and developed throughout the state of Oklahoma, help determine when a ministry is not developing, and help making decisions to close.

These officers represent a great step of progress from five-and-a-half years ago, when the Hispanic Ministries Committee was without regular funding, without leadership and without organization. We thank God for this progress.

Finally, I have led the Hispanic Ministries Committee for five-and-a-half years, and will be ending my tenure on the committee at the end of this annual conference. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to serve in this capacity. I know that the Hispanic Ministries Committee will do bigger and better things in the future as new leadership steps in.

*MICHAEL BURKETT*, chairperson

**RACIAL ETHNIC COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

Racial Ethnic Coordinating Committee continues to be a very viable and meaningful ministry in the life of the Oklahoma Conference. RECC is very instrumental in supplementing salaries and support for ministries for most of our ethnic churches. A special thanks to you, the Annual Conference, for supporting the increase in our budget for 2005, from \$135,000 to \$141,750. This increase was needed for the increasing needs, which empower our ethnic pastors and churches, to be engaged in new and continued ministries. I feel very optimistic that the support we offer our ethnic churches is needed, and we will be more intentional in using tools that will help measure the needs, as well as in the viability and productivity of these local churches. All of us can help our ethnic sisters and brothers grow in the name of Jesus. We are all in this boat together.

RECC will continue to offer financial assistance as provided by the Annual Conference for effective ethnic churches, as well as to enable and empower these churches to move toward self-sustenance. But, more importantly, we will assist these churches to be evangelists.

We believe the potential is there and, by the grace of God and with intentional leadership, we hope to see this evangelism and enthusiasm evidenced. Most of all, we hope to see souls saved, and hope and healing take place.

May God continue to bless your mind, ministry and mission as we move to a new level of inclusiveness. This is our ministry, these are our churches, and we are all a part of the Connection.

We thank God for Bishop Robert E. Hayes Jr., a bishop for all God’s children.

The Racial Ethnic Coordinating Committee will continue to operate on the same budget amount of \$141,750 for 2006.

*REV. ERNEST JACKSON JR., chairperson*

**COMMISSION ON SMALL MEMBERSHIP CHURCHES**

The small church is defined by the General Board of Global Ministries as a church with 150 or fewer people in worship. This represents 82.5% of the Oklahoma Annual Conference. We are a Conference of small churches.

The size issue makes it imperative that a small church maintain its vision in the face of many changes occurring across Oklahoma.

Small-church pastors are challenged to communicate the changeless gospel in terms of their specific settings. This requires understanding and respect.

This year, the commission offered a workshop in three districts. Consultations were held with two local churches in two other districts.

Key elements we are celebrating: what we have, not lamenting what we do not have; and becoming a “robust” church, combining a passionate faith and concise mission with effective procedures.

*JAMES C. HOLLIFIELD, chairperson*

**CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT BUDGET**

**INCOME**

Church Receipts .....	\$229,500
W.W. Woodworth .....	\$65,580
Transfer From Investments.....	\$9,186
<b>TOTAL INCOME.....</b>	<b>\$304,266</b>

**GENERAL EXPENSES**

Trans. To ACC .....	\$60,000
Meeting Expense .....	\$2,000
Hispanic Committee.....	\$5,000
Director's Expense.....	\$2,500
Promotion PR.....	\$1,000
Public Media.....	\$0
Percept Contract .....	\$11,566
Training Events.....	\$25,000
Sub-Total.....	\$107,066

**BLACK CHURCH COMMISSION**

Administration.....	\$2,000
Ministry Support .....	\$3,000
Jurisdiction/National .....	\$1,000
Heritage Trail L.D.....	\$1,000
Young Adult Watch.....	\$4,000
Sub-Total.....	\$11,000

**CONGREGATIONAL GRANTS**

First Native American .....	\$20,000
Chinese International .....	\$20,000
VIM.....	\$20,000
Hope Community, Oklahoma City.....	\$0
Redemption Churches.....	\$6,000
Meadowcreek, Collinsville.....	\$25,000
Owasso-First UMC.....	\$25,000
Woodville.....	\$0
Catoosa Disciple UMC .....	\$25,000
Marginalized Fellowships .....	\$40,000
Undesignated New Development .....	\$0
Sub-Total .....	\$181,000

**SMALL MEMBERSHIP CHURCH**

Data Gathering .....	\$500
Projects .....	\$1,500
Training Events.....	\$2,000
Administration.....	\$1,200
Sub-Total.....	\$5,200

**TOTAL EXPENSES..... \$304,266**

**VISIONARIES PROGRAM**

**Anticipated Income ..... \$100,000**

**Anticipated Expenses**

Bridgeview UMC.....	\$25,000
Abiding Harvest UMC .....	\$35,000
New Projects .....	\$40,000

**TOTAL EXPENSES..... \$100,000**

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**AGENCIES AND TRUSTEE/DIRECTORS REPORTS****LYDIA PATTERSON INSTITUTE**

It is my pleasure to bring this report to the members of this Conference. I wish to thank the bishop, clergy and lay members of the church for your benevolent support. Lydia Patterson Institute is proud to be among the many ministries of this jurisdiction.

In its 91 years of existence, Lydia Patterson has had an impact on many lives. It has changed lives from poverty to subsistence and comfort. It has trained clergy and lay leaders for the church. It has added thousands of professionals to the world of business and social welfare. It has created defenders of justice through political affiliations in this country and in Mexico. It has contributed to the arts and humanities through its many talented students. Lydia Patterson Institute has formed advocates of the Christian faith in every student who has passed through its doors.

Every day is a day of celebration at Lydia Patterson Institute. Last school year, we graduated 87 students, of whom 84 are in college today. For the first time, Lydia Patterson students are traveling to other countries, expanding their experiences and carrying their language and culture to other parts of the world. Vania, a student at Simpson College, spent one semester in France. Carlos, a student at Southwestern College, traveled to Ecuador. Arely, a student at SMU, is presently in Spain, and Veronica, a student at Oklahoma City University, is off to Argentina for one semester.

For some of these students, their hopes for continuing their education were very limited, perhaps even nonexistent. Most did not speak English. At Lydia Patterson Institute, their lives changed.

Last summer, students traveled to Corpus Christi to learn about Jurisdictional Conference and to entertain the delegates. They presented a "puppet show" to celebrate the election of the bishops. This "puppet show" has created excitement within the El Paso area for the messages delivered through its presentation. These are our students talking to young people their own age about living a clean life.

This school year, we opened our doors with 452 enthusiastic and energetic students. Every student is subsidized two-thirds of the cost of his or her education. In addition, one-third of our student body attends on a work-scholarship basis. Students with scholarships work one hour every day at the school.

We continue to work very closely with United Methodist colleges and universities. Every year we add new colleges to the list of those providing scholarships for our students. Among the colleges serving LPI students are McMurry University, Oklahoma City University, Southwestern College, Lon Morris College, Wiley College, Huston-Tillotson, Simpson College, Mt. Union College, Hiwassee College, Hendrix College, Philander Smith College, Kansas Wesleyan University, Hamlin University, Ferrum College, Huntington College, High Point University and, soon, Young Harris College.

The student lay ministry program has created excitement throughout the church. Last summer, I spoke to the new college presidents at the annual meeting of the National Association of Schools, United Methodist Colleges and Universities, about this program. I also made a presentation at the Higher Education Institute in Nashville. This program is noted for providing the vehicle connecting Lydia Patterson Institute with colleges and universities and local churches, while also training leaders for the church. Students in this program are serving internships in Texas, Kansas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Virginia, Ohio, Iowa and Alabama. The purpose of these internships is to provide churches with resource personnel to develop or enhance their ministry with Hispanics. Students now serving in internships are majoring in religious education, and one has received a calling to the ordained ministry.

Because of the importance of this program and its impact on church leadership, two former LPI students, Bishop Joel Martinez and Dr. Raquel Martinez, have established an endowment. A concert was held in El Paso last fall to raise funds for this purpose. Another concert will take place in San Antonio this spring, and it is our hope others will follow.

In keeping with our strategic plan, and in view of the growth of our ministry, plans for expansion are in place. Property is being purchased around the school to expand our campus and to extend God's helping hand into the lives of an even greater number of young men and women.

Touching lives has been God's gift to Lydia Patterson Institute. Mrs. Lydia Patterson answered God's call to this ministry in 1913. Today, you and I are being called to write our own legacy.

*SOCORRO BRITO DE ANDA*, president

## **THE OKLAHOMA UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION INC.**

Reporting the year's events offers us each a time to reflect on the Foundation's mission, to report on its execution of that mission, and to place all that has transpired in 2004-05 in the context of Christ's church, where we have been and where we are headed.

The mission of the Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation is to serve Oklahoma United Methodist congregations, institutions and ministries by encouraging stewardship, fostering planned giving, promoting endowment formation, and managing funds and assets to strengthen and support the important work of Christ's church.

Certainly the Foundation's market performance is an important and highly visible measure of impact. Last year, the Foundation supervised a 6.87% return in the Diversified Fund and 8.21% in the Equity Fund. The Foundation and its Board of Trustees responds to the market with a long-term view. Looking at just one year, one quarter, month, week or day lacks the perspective of the church's mission in Oklahoma. Certainly more fruitful or austere market results directly impact the churches and ministries we serve. Yet, our goals remain with a long-term view of investment management, because our view of the United Methodist Church's mission is likewise for the longevity.

We welcome new Trustees Darrell Cates of Woodward, Paul Hitch of Guymon, Chris Hudson of Oklahoma City and Denver Woolsey of Edmond. In welcoming the new, we have to say goodbye to Trustee Margaret Ball, who has rotated off the board.

Partnering with the Conference Board of Laity and the Congregational Development Commission, the Foundation co-sponsored Stewardship Focus Day last fall. More than 200 clergy and laity from all corners of the state traveled to United Methodist Church of the Servant in Oklahoma City. The event's great success revealed the hunger for growth and awareness about faith and financial issues in our church. Stewardship Focus Day will once again be held Aug. 26, 2005, at United Methodist Church of the Servant.

The Cross & Flame Legacy Society honored Trustee Richard Small with the Jim Egan Legacy Award. The Jim Egan award recognizes people who exemplify the generosity and dedication to United Methodist causes as shown by Egan. Small has assisted many United Methodist ministries and institutions in very generous ways through philanthropy and influence. We encourage every Conference delegate and friend of United Methodism to join this Society by including your cherished ministry or church in your will or estate plan.

We thank each person who began a new account with us this past year. Benefits will flow in many and great ways. Let us know how we can specifically serve you.

*ALAN EVANS*, chairperson  
*JOHN CROOCH*, president

## **MOUNT SEQUOYAH CONFERENCE AND RETREAT CENTER**

150 NW Skyline Drive, Fayetteville AR72701

Email: mail@mountsequoyah.org

Since 1922, God has revealed his plan for equipping disciples through the ministry of Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center. Though serene and secluded, with deer, other woodland animals and 156 registered species of birds, Mount Sequoyah is an urban conference and retreat campus located in and north of downtown Fayetteville, Ark. Four-lane highways, a regional airport in northwest Arkansas, and an international airport in Tulsa (90 minutes away) give it easy access in a world of fast-paced travelers.

Under the excellent direction and leadership of Rev. Mark Dorff, the interim director during 2004, renewal began for buildings and grounds, programs increased for training Methodist leadership, staff and budget restructuring created more efficiency and accountability, and an increase was seen in volunteer participation from all over the jurisdiction. There is currently an emphasis for securing private funding to continue to upgrade the Mount Sequoyah facilities and to endow ongoing programs.

The renewed and involved board of trustees recently selected Bishop Max Whitfield as the chairperson. The trustees also selected new executive leadership: Dr. John and Sheri Altland began serving at Mount Sequoyah in early November 2004. The Altlands have been active in United Methodist churches in Texas and Arkansas. As the executive team, they provide experience in event and program planning, facility management, marketing, fund raising, food service management, leadership training and non-profit management.

During 2004, the South Central Jurisdiction increased financial support by \$75,000 to address immediate facility renovations and maintenance needs. In early 2005, Mount Sequoyah purchased adjacent property and the district superintendent's home, previously owned by Northwest Arkansas District, to secure the integrity of the campus inside Skyline Drive.

The board of trustees, assisted by the new executive team, is developing several master plans to address lodging facilities and grounds beautification. A fund-raising and a marketing initiative will be developed in the coming year to provide the means to carry out the renewed vision for the mountaintop ministry, while securing the future of Mount Sequoyah Center for generations of United Methodist leadership in the 21st Century.

As the trustees move forward, we continue to focus on four key initiatives. First, we believe there is a very strong commitment to the historic mission of growing Christians, with a commitment to service on the part of key advocates of every age, gender, ethnic and cultural background. Second, there continues to be a priority interest in ongoing programs and services strongly linked to United Methodist churches, districts and conferences of the South Central Jurisdiction. Third, there has always been an openness to create and seize opportunities to serve multiple constituencies, in the name and spirit of Jesus Christ. Fourth and finally, the greatest need at Mount Sequoyah continues to be the upgrading, renewing and restoring of facilities to fully create Christian hospitality for guests who go to Mount Sequoyah.

*JOHN AND SHERI ATLAND, executive director team*

## **PERKINS SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY**

Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology, one of The United Methodist Church's 13 theological schools, remains clearly focused on its mission of preparing women and men for faithful leadership in the church of Jesus Christ. This past year, we spent time and effort on four key issues for the furthering of our mission – formation, finances, facilities and faculty.

The formation of leaders, spiritually and theologically grounded for ministry, is both a priority and strength of our curriculum. A recent independent study has demonstrated that the single most formative aspect of theological education is time spent in the classroom, followed closely by supervised field education. At Perkins, our professors continue to place a high value on the face-to-face encounters in the classroom. The classroom encounters are complemented by our rigorous internship program, which remains a national model for ministerial preparation. Our focus on formation moves beyond our degree programs into areas such as the Local Pastor Course of Study School, offered in English and Spanish, as well as the Perkins Youth School of Theology, which provides the beginnings of serious theological formation for high school youth considering various ministries.

Such formation requires funding, of course, and Perkins celebrates the work of the Annual Conferences of the South Central Jurisdiction during the Perkins-Prothro Scholarship Match campaign that recently came to a close. When all monies are counted, we expect to have more than \$10 million from conferences for new scholarship endowments for their candidates who are students at Perkins, including matching funds from the Perkins-Prothro Foundation and other gifts. We particularly celebrate the generosity of the Oklahoma Area for its payment on its pledge. Combined with funds from the Perkins-Prothro Foundation, the Oklahoma Area will have added more than \$417,000 to its scholarship endowment.

While we have spent the last quadrennium raising funds for scholarships, in the coming years we will also focus on our facilities, looking toward renovating or replacing our current facilities to meet the needs of ministry students for years to come. Our current facilities have served generations of students and pastors well, and with the careful planning currently under way, we are hopeful that future generations of our church leaders will thank this decade's dreamers and benefactors, just as many of us have been grateful to those who made the past century of theological education possible.

A large part of what makes theological education possible is our faculty. Our students are able to study with one of the finest faculties in the nation, and this year we were blessed with two visiting professors as well, Old Testament scholar Pablo Andiñach from Buenos Aires' Instituto Superior Evangélico de Estudios Teológicos, and Robert Hunt, visiting professor of World Religions. Hunt also serves as director of the new Global Theological Education program at Perkins, working to address the cultural and pastoral issues presented by ministry in a global and multi-ethnic context. In addition, new assignments among our faculty and staff are helping us be more effective in our work with the church. Dr. Edwin Sylvest was named director of extension learning, overseeing the academic work of our programs in Houston/Galveston and San Antonio. Dr. Edwin David Aponte was named director of advanced studies, leading our Doctor of Ministry and Master of Theological Studies degree programs. Roberta Cox was promoted to director of public affairs, responsible for the ongoing contact with our external constituents.

Perkins also looks forward to announcing the hiring of new faculty in several areas. Drs. William Babcock and James Kirby will retire as professors of Church History. Dr. Kenneth Hart will retire as professor of Sacred Music. In addition to these transitions, we are searching for faculty in the areas of pastoral counseling and evangelism. These openings were occasioned by Dr. Patricia Davis' move to adjunct status when she accepted a position with a Dallas law firm, and by Dr. Scott Jones' stepping from his academic chair to lead the Kansas Area as a newly elected bishop of our denomination. We congratulate all these professors and thank them for their service to The United Methodist Church.

*WILLIAM B. LAWRENCE*, dean

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**SAINT PAUL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY**  
5123 Truman Rd, Kansas City MO 64127; www.spst.edu

The enrollment of our degree and Course of Study students continues to be strong and vital, with students primarily coming from the South Central Jurisdiction. The seminary's international student population also continues to grow.

New faculty and administrators include Dr. Pamela D. Couture, vice president for academic affairs and dean; Dr. Rena Yocom, director of the Course of Study School; and Dr. F. Douglas Powe Jr., E. Stanley Jones assistant professor of evangelism. Dr. Henry H. Knight III was installed in the spring as the Donald and Pearl Wright professor of Wesleyan studies.

New books include: *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*, by Warren Carter, Lindsey P. Pherigo professor of New Testament; and *What About Divine Healing? A Study of Christian Healing*, by Susan Sonnenday Vogel, associate dean for spiritual and professional formation and interim director of field education.

Dr. Kathleen Kenney, '89 Doctor of Ministry, received the Saint Paul Outstanding Graduate Award for her work in social justice ministries. Kenney is the associate director of the Catholic Diocese of Richmond's Office of Justice and Peace. She serves as an advocate for prison ministry and criminal justice reform as well as for peace and justice ministries in Haiti and Africa.

Thirty high-school-age youth explored their Methodist roots on a trip to England as part of the culmination of the Lilly-funded youTheology program at Saint Paul. This past fall, a second group of youTheologians began participating in theologically-based study and inquiry during weekends at Saint Paul.

Doctor of Ministry students began classes in a new Wesleyan spiritual formation track in January. The 30-credit-hour degree track is designed to teach historical and contemporary practices that integrate heart, mind and hand. The track provides leadership development to foster greater communion and mission in ecclesial communities.

Special guest lecturers this year included Dr. Don Saliers, Dr. Cheryl Sanders, Dr. S.T. Kimbrough Jr., Dr. Fred Craddock and Dr. Donald Messer.

The trustees, faculty, staff, and students of Saint Paul thank you for your interest, prayers and support.

*MYRON F. MCCOY*, president

## SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY

The past year was marked by significant progress at Southern Methodist University as SMU moves toward the Centennial celebration of its founding by the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1911.

**Listed below are some of the year's highlights:**

- SMU's fall 2004 enrollment was 10,901. Minority enrollment makes up 21.46% of the total student body. SMU's fall enrollment included 796 international students from 89 countries. The average composite SAT score of incoming first-year students last fall rose to 1206, up 62 points since 1999. The top five states for first-year students outside of Texas are California, Florida, Missouri, Illinois and Georgia.

- The campus continues to add new facilities funded by The Campaign for SMU, which

surpassed its \$400 million goal by raising \$542 million. The Collins Executive Education Center of Cox School of Business, to be completed in 2005, will be the only center at a Texas university devoted exclusively to executive education, offering degree programs and professional development courses. The Dedman Center for Lifetime Sports is undergoing an extreme makeover and expansion to provide state-of-the-art fitness and recreation facilities. A new engineering building to be constructed on campus will house the Departments of Environmental and Civil Engineering and Mechanical Engineering.

- Forty-three academic, business, civic and church leaders from across the nation and abroad were elected in July to serve four-year terms on the SMU Board of Trustees. They were elected by the South Central Jurisdiction during its quadrennial meeting. Ten new trustees include Bishop Scott J. Jones of the Kansas Area and Bishop Rhymes H. Moncure Jr. of the Dallas Area. They join Bishop Ann B. Sherer of the Nebraska Area, who was re-elected to serve an additional term on the board.

- Six SMU alumni were elected to the episcopacy of The United Methodist Church in July. Scott J. Jones, who was also a Perkins faculty member, was appointed to the Kansas East and Kansas West Annual Conferences. The others are Robert Hayes Jr., appointed to the Oklahoma and Oklahoma Indian Missionary Annual Conferences; Robert C. Schnase, Missouri Annual Conference; Charles N. Crutchfield, Arkansas Annual Conference; Sudarshana Devadhar, Greater New Jersey Annual Conference; and Minerva G. Carcaño, also a former Perkins faculty member, Desert Southwest Annual Conference. All earned the Master of Theology degree from Perkins except Crutchfield, who earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from SMU. Another Perkins graduate, Sara Frances Davis, was elected bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

- Brad Cheves became SMU's vice president for development and external affairs July 1. Cheves had served as associate vice president for development at SMU from 1998 to 2001, when he left to become vice president for external affairs at Pepperdine University. Geoffrey C. Orsak became dean of the SMU School of Engineering on June 1. Orsak joined the SMU engineering faculty in 1998 and has also served as associate dean for research and development.

- Dependents and spouses of United Methodist clergy are now eligible for grants of \$3,500 for graduate study at SMU. This represents an expansion of the financial aid program that previously was available for undergraduate study only.

- After an interlude of 36 years, SMU's Evening Law Program began anew last fall in Dedman School of Law, with 94 students in the first-year class. Eight applicants vied for each opening in the inaugural class.

- Perkins Youth School of Theology enrolled 25 high school students in its first three-week Summer Academy at SMU-in-Taos. The participants attended theology classes, worshiped with area faith communities, and toured local sites.

- The ministry of SMU's Wesley Foundation continues to flourish. The Foundation sponsors 31 active small groups for students and draws an average of 150 students to its Wednesday night chapel services. The Wesley Foundation is planning 2005 Spring Break mission trips for students to Costa Rica and the Taizé e Taiz Community in France, and a summer mission trip to India.

SMU treasures its Methodist heritage and maintains a particularly close relationship with Highland Park United Methodist Church and its senior minister, the Rev. Mark Craig, an SMU trustee. I enjoyed serving as guest preacher at that church in September. We ask your continued prayers and support as SMU moves forward in the coming year.

*R. GERALD TURNER, president*

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## THE EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT MINISTRY (TEEM)

The Education and Employment Ministry's mission is: "To rebuild unemployed and under-employed individuals through a program of self-help so they can take responsibility for their lives." The TEEM facility at 14 N.E. 13th St. in Oklahoma City was donated, renovated and dedicated in 1987. More than 8,100 people have graduated from TEEM's Career Development Workshop. Many of these continue in gainful employment and career development.

TEEM is an interfaith 501(c)(3) organization with the goal of helping out-of-work people become responsible, employable and self-sufficient.

TEEM has developed programs that provide job skills training and life skills enhancement. Classes include but are not limited to: Career Development Workshop (one-week), GED, Conflict Resolution, Health & Nutrition, Microsoft Applications (Word, Access, Excel and PowerPoint), Entry-Level Computer Technology, Unarmed Security Guard Training, Sewing/ Drapery and Design, Pre-Cosmetology, Food Sanitation and Management, Personal Life Management, Successful Living, Prevention Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP). A chapel is available on site, and ministers are available for consultation with students.

TEEM works with a variety of people from recently laid-off college graduates to people who need to study for the GED (General Education Diploma) exam. Of our students, 72% are female, 55% are African American, and 7% are American Indian. Only 18% of our students graduated from high school. Virtually all of TEEM's students have children and live below poverty income levels. Many who come to TEEM are female, pregnant, high school dropouts, and losing hope fast as they are not surrounded by family or other support help. The Department of Corrections and Department of Human Services are honest and "up front" about the fact that they send the "hardest to employ" to TEEM because we accept anyone who shows up. Even if our students are not yet working, it is constructive and useful for all of society for many of them to be learning basic hygiene skills, healthy sexual practices, parenting skills and marketable job skills training.

TEEM seeks to help chronically unemployed and under-employed persons: (1) set realistic career goals, (2) break personal barriers of dependency, (3) acquire necessary skills for long-term employment, and (4) move toward self-sufficiency by engaging in a career track.

Many of our students have barriers to unemployment such as mental illness (22%), substance abuse (28%) and past felony incarcerations (17%). A safe environment is important because many of our female participants have suffered spousal abuse. We are often surprised at the number of ex-gang members and prostitutes who "hit bottom" and show up seeking our help. Therefore, providing an environment where learning is offered and healthy living is emphasized is all-important. Many can only realistically seek a "next best step" before moving on to higher functioning. For example, a paranoid schizophrenic may need to find an equilibrium on necessary medication before seeking computer skills, etc. It is unwise to even try to find a job for someone who is still abusing drugs. The next healthy step is often paramount before progress can be made. The message is very powerful that God is here for us no matter the circumstances of our lives.

Over the last three years, we have seen an average of 573 students per year. That is a monthly average of 48 new students. A summary of student achievements regarding some of the marketable job skills we offer is informative. Students earned 887 Microsoft Certificates (Word, Excel, Access and PowerPoint) in 2002-04. That is an average of 24.6 Microsoft Certificates earned each month in the past three years. We have averaged 12.27 job placements per month in the past three years. On less money, we have done much more programming and had better results due to good business practices and significant cost cuts. This has also

been supplemented by networking with more non-profits and faith-based organizations.

We are clearly more efficient and a much better ministry overall than we have been in the past. Yet we are still operating in a very challenging market and always need support from individuals, businesses and faith-based organizations to continue to meet these great challenges.

TEEM continues to collaborate and coordinate with all available community resources in an effort to provide the best and most comprehensive services to our students. Further, TEEM actively and aggressively works with organizations to cut out duplication of services. The goal is to effectively and efficiently work with the business community, the social service community and the religious community. TEEM seeks to do this on an interfaith basis while seeking diversity and fair and equal treatment of all persons and organizations. TEEM has developed partnerships and working relationships with 113 organizations on a regular basis. Last year, we coordinated and collaborated with 93 organizations. We have added 20 organizations in the community the past year alone, which provide one service or another for our students.

For example, Lions Club provides free eye exams and glasses for any TEEM students. Downtown Rotary Club provides a van for job interview transportation. Several medical clinics provide free prescriptions for TEEM students. Practicum intern students who provide staff programming support come from the University of Oklahoma, Oklahoma City University, Bethany Nazarene College, Oklahoma State University and the University of Central Oklahoma.

Over the past three years, TEEM has progressively intensified its one-on-one approach. Our experience has taught us that the one-on-one approach is the most effective approach for students who have dropped out of conventional educational systems. Intense individual attention is needed for maximum results.

We are proud of the work we do at TEEM and share in the students' enthusiasm as they awaken to new possibilities and exciting career paths. There is nothing quite like watching people regain a sense of integrity and personal dignity. It is believed that the TEEM Program gives each student the best opportunity to become successfully employed and economically self-sufficient while learning to appreciate all the gifts and talents with which God has blessed each person.

Bless you for all the support you have provided to TEEM.

*DON VAUGHT, executive director*

## **COMMITTEE ON COURTESIES AND RESOLUTIONS**

Bishop Hayes, sisters and brothers of the Connection of the people called Methodists, and special and welcome guests, this may be the report you have been anxiously awaiting: the last scheduled report of the annual conference.

The 2005 family reunion or, if you prefer, our Connection, of the Oklahoma Annual Conference opened on Sunday evening with a worship session at St. Luke's United Methodist Church. The Ebony Choir led a spirit-filled session of United Methodists into the presence of God. As a pastor in our Connection for the last 16 years, I was both astounded and blessed to see a majority of laity and clergy, of all races, clapping their hands, swaying to the music and absolutely enjoying being in the power and presence of our gracious and wonderful Lord.

Dr. Zan Holmes' sermon, "Do We Look Like Our Picture?", was stunningly anointed by the Holy Spirit. I hope I never forget his story about the late Groucho Marx. If you were there, you probably remember that Groucho said he entered a "Groucho Marx Look-Alike" contest and ended up winning third place! As Holmes finished preaching that night, I recalled, from the New Testament letter to the Hebrews, that Jesus is the great "author and finisher of our faith." Is it possible that Jesus just may also be the "Great Retoucher of Our Pictures"? I cannot speak for everyone here who attended that wonderful service, but, for me and my house, I can honestly say with conviction: "WE HAD CHURCH LAST SUNDAY NIGHT"!

Thank you, Bishop Hayes, for being true to your stated objectives for conference delegates and attendees this year – that we would worship and praise together during conference and throw in a little business along the way. I have personally enjoyed this year's annual conference more than most of those in years past and look expectantly forward to next year's annual conference.

An inspiring time of Thanksgiving and Remembrance was held Monday afternoon and was blessed with beautiful music and inspired preaching by Holmes as we honored those among our church families who have passed on from the church, temporal and struggling, to the Church Eternal, joyful and triumphant. We continue to thank God for the memories they have given to us and hope that we, too, may leave others with precious memories when the Lord calls our names.

Who among us, who attended Monday evening's service, could possibly forget the Spirit-inspired message that Holmes brought for us as he fed us with God's food that night. His message – "Have We Learned the Lesson of the Loaves?" – was one of many highlights of our conference and reminded us of several important issues in our Christian lives. One of the first questions he asked was "Have we learned to be disciples?" I was not really sure that was a preaching question – perhaps it bordered on being a "meddlin'" question, but Holmes later convinced me that it was, perhaps, both when he went on to ask: "Have we failed to grow through what we are going through?" And, as Holmes proclaimed, "Any faith that cannot be tested cannot be trusted," I realized that these were truly words given him by the Holy Spirit and I no longer minded his "meddlin'." The conclusion of his message that night was superb. He said that he did not graduate "magna cum laude" or "summa cum laude"; he graduated "thank you, Lordy," and most of us can quickly claim that accolade... Amen?

Another inspiring moment came on Tuesday morning when our Conference Lay Leader Judy Benson gave an inspirational address, primarily to the laity, about doing the work of ministry with others.

Bishop Ray Owen, now retired, addressed our retiring pastors with the message titled "Taking Hold of Life – Again." He advised these wonderful men and women who have given so much of their time and talents across this Oklahoma Conference to "laugh long, loud, and often, especially at self" – because laughter would truly enhance their lives with God. Another bit of wisdom he shared: He advised them to "never let pessimism steal your joy." I believe this is great advice for all of us, no matter how old or young we are. Finally, Bishop Owen advised, "never lose your ability or desire to laugh." If you were not fortunate to be there, here is your opportunity to glean some wisdom from a man of God who, I believe, knows what he is talking about.

Communion services were held each morning before the conference day began and were an inspirational and uplifting way to start the day, centered in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The OCU barbecue meal was held indoors because of the weather conditions (much-needed rain), and we want to thank OCU for providing such a wonderful dinner for so many people. In fact, let's all say it together, for so many people here at OCU have done

so much for us: "Thank you, OCU. Thank you, OCU."

That night, we had the pleasure of greeting our former bishop, now retired, Dan E. Solomon. He preached the message "The Reason for Our Hope," and we enjoyed fellowship with him at a reception following his inspiring message.

We had the honor of hearing many reports on our connectional ministries from agencies, committees and boards, most of which took many hours to prepare. We also were blessed with wonderful music during our sessions. One which quickly came to mind as I prepared this report was the song "How Great Thou Art," sung by Angela Dyer on Tuesday afternoon. She is the daughter of the previous chairperson of this committee, Rev. Dale Dyer. Thank you, Angela, for sharing your gift from God with us.

On Wednesday before lunch break, the Circle of Care and our Volunteers In Mission family members shared some of their many victories.

I was deeply touched by a young woman who spoke of our Child S.H.A.R.E. ministry, and I hope that other pastors like me will take her message and her plea of the great need for more foster care homes throughout Oklahoma to our congregations. The tears in my eyes were exceeded only by hers as she told her story of accepting one more foster child and how God made way where there seemed to be no way.

Then the VIM ministries were brought forth and made me so proud once again to be a United Methodist Christian. I have been part of VIM teams in the past, and I am looking forward to serving on more VIM teams in the future, for my heart was once again warmed last November, when the team with which I was serving enjoyed the hospitality of a small fishing village, named Carboneras, beside the Gulf of Mexico.

The Service of Commissioning, Ordination, and Recognition of Orders is always a high moment in the life of the annual conference. The entire congregation was again inspired and challenged by the message of Bishop Hayes, who spoke on "No Deposit, No Return." How remarkable and true were his statements that spiritual "deposits" of prayer and scripture reading will return the spiritual power needed for Christian living.

Tom Albin of the Upper Room Ministries presented Bishop Hayes with a copy of Rueben Job's newest book, "Prayers for All Who Seek God." Albin also shared greetings from the General Board of Discipleship and the Upper Room Ministries.

We are deeply grateful and indebted to Dr. Robert Long and the staff of St. Luke's United Methodist Church for hosting the worship sessions of the annual conference. Equally, we are also indebted to Oklahoma City University for the hospitality its staff has shown and the unceasing efforts to make our time with them as comfortable and as pleasant as possible. Thank you, Dr. Long and the staff at St. Luke's, Maggie Ball and all the wonderful OCU staff members, who have been such gracious hosts.

Our special thanks go to those members of our families who have served us well as tellers, both laity and clergy. They have truly been magnificent in their service. We also want to thank all members of the Conference Ministry Center staff, for all they have done behind the scenes in this Oklahoma Annual Conference Session.

As we go forth from here to again be the scattered family of God at work in the world, we are challenged to claim our task of teaching and preaching the timeless message of the gospel of Jesus Christ to all who will hear it. Let us continually desire to go with God as we seek to fulfill our ministries in the year God has graciously set before us.

Respectfully submitted by your Committee on Courtesies and Resolutions,  
*ART RADABAUGH*, chairperson