

IN THIS EDITION

A Letter from Bishop Hayes to the Laity

Annual Conference 2011

- Annual Conference at a Glance
- What You Need to Know About Voting at Annual Conference
- UMRF Luncheon
- Celebrate the Laity Luncheon
- Laity Lounge
- Meet the General/Jurisdictional Nominees

Camping Ministry Opportunities

- Senior Adult Retreats
- Single Parent Family Gatherings
- Where are the Young Adults?

Leadership Resources that Can "Work for You!"

A "Possible Mission" For UMM

Laity Workshop / Learning Opportunities

- Seminary Lite
- Stewardship Focus Day
- Options/Obligations of an Effective Servant Leader
- From a Mustard Seed

Evangelism

- Got Hospitality?
- Evangelism: How do I do Better?

A Report on Lay Speaking In Oklahoma



A NOTE FROM JUDY

LAITY THE BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE

By Judy Benson
Conference Lay Leader

Representatives of the people of God called Oklahoma United Methodists will gather in Oklahoma City on May 29 through June 1, 2011 for a great celebration of mission and ministry.

If you are not a delegate you can join at home by watching sessions online through live streaming at www.okumc.org. There will be link on the Conference website home page to direct you to the right spot!

"The Bridge to the Future"—based on Matthew 17: 20-21—will be the theme. How appropriate for laity! After all: Who knows the architect?; Who works with the plans?; Who builds the bridges?; Who dreams of what's on the other side?; Who invites friends to go with them?; Who acknowledges where they've been, but desires to be in a better place?; Who has the faith?

I served on the Bishop's and Connectional Table, "Call to Action" which focused on vital congregations. After extensive research based on facts, we discovered things you probably already know, but now affirm.

If your church is effective in four areas, which all interlock, you are likely to be a "Vital Congregation." One factor relates to an effective pastor; another relates to the quality of worship; another has to do with small groups especially focused on children and youth. And the fourth is all about you as lay leader or as lay delegate to annual conference. Facts tell us that the more leaders you have in your churches—up to 50% of your members, the more likely your congregation will be a vital congregation. Leaders are those who will step out and take a responsibility in the mission and ministry of your church.

My friend, I want to thank you for being the leader in that "vital congregation." You are so important to the effectiveness of your church and God's kingdom. You are the one most likely to recruit and nurture other leaders in your congregation—and we know for certain that you are making a difference by being who you are for God.

Please pray for Annual Conference and the important decisions that will be made that God will be glorified in all we do,—and know that we are praying for you and your church in your unique ministry!



ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2011 AT A GLANCE

WHEN: May 29 – June 1

WHERE: Oklahoma City - St. Luke's UMC and Oklahoma City University

THEME: "The Plan: a bridge to the future" based on Matthew 17:20-21

REGISTRATION: Sunday 1 p.m.-5 p.m. / Monday 7:30 a.m. -11 p.m.
St. Luke's --Fellowship Hall Center, OCU

GENERAL TIME SCHEDULE FOR BUSINESS 8 a.m. to noon / 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

PLACE: Sunday / Monday morning /Evening Worship
St. Luke's
Monday afternoon through Wednesday
OCU

WORSHIP: Morning Devotions
Tuesday / Wednesday 8 a.m.

SPECIAL PREACHING: **Sunday 7 p.m.**
Rev. Dr. Eugene Lowry
Monday 10:45 a.m.
Memorial Worship / Holy Communion, Bishop Hayes
Tuesday 7 p.m.
Service of Ordination
Bishop Hayes
Wednesday 4 p.m.
Service of Sending Forth
Bishop Hayes

TEACHING: **Monday Morning**
Robert Henry, president Oklahoma City University

MUSIC: Moore First UMC Choir
St. Luke's Sanctuary Choir

RECEPTIONS: **Sunday 9 p.m.**
St. Luke's honoring Bishop and Mrs. Hayes, Dr. Eugene and Sarah Lowry, and families of commissioned.
Tuesday 9 p.m.
St. Luke's honoring Ordinands and families Fuxia Wang, and Kristen Brown

VOTING FOR GENERAL/JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCE DELEGATES

Monday 6:30 p.m.
Freede Center, OCU

CHILDCARE: Infants through 5th Grade - Reservations by May 15
Contact Gabrielle Moon, St. Luke's (405)232-1371

HOTELS: Crown Plaza,
2945 NW Expressway
(405)848-4811 or (800)227-6963
(Okla. UMC rate) - \$80

Comfort Inn at Founders Towers near NW Expressway and May 5704 Mosteller Drive
(405)810-1100
www.comfortokc.com,
(UMC Conference 2011) - \$69.99

Sleep Inn & Suites
5200 N. Classen Circle
(405)286-5400
www.sleepinn.com
(Oklahoma Methodist Conference) – \$69.99

OCU Dorm and Meal Plan
Reservations by May 13
(405)208-5011

ESPECIALLY FOR THE LAITY

LAITY SESSION **Sunday 3:30 p.m.**
St. Luke's Family Life Center

INFORMAL "MEET THE NOMINEES' LAITY DINNER

Sunday 5 p.m.
St. Luke's Family Life Center
\$5 donation
RSVP to Sally Phillips
knitwitsal@hotmail.com

OCU PICNIC Monday – 5 p.m.

CELEBRATE THE LAITY LUNCHEON Tuesday over lunch break
St. Luke's

UMRF LUNCHEON Wednesday

HOSPITALITY LOUNGE Freede Center
OCU – Second Floor

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT VOTING AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE

By Joseph Harris
Annual Conference Secretary

All voting is scheduled for Monday, May 30, to elect Oklahoma Conference's delegates to the 2012 General/Jurisdictional Conferences of The UMC.

At the OCU Freede Center, the first ballot vote will take place early in the afternoon business session, which opens at 2 p.m. After the supper break, balloting will resume, at 6:30 p.m. The evening business session is solely dedicated to the elections.

Digital voting machines will be used, providing almost instant results. The machines use small cards, similar to the memory cards used in digital cameras.

For General Conference, nine clergy and nine lay delegates will be elected. An additional nine clergy and nine laity will be chosen to complete the Jurisdictional Conference delegation. Also, four clergy and four lay alternates will be elected. The full delegation will total 44 people.

VOTING CARDS AND MACHINES:

Each Annual Conference delegate will receive a voting card at the time of registration. Each person is responsible for securing his/her card. All voting machines will be distributed within the Freede Center arena and will remain there.

One voting machine will be shared by two voters: one clergy person and one layperson.

The district superintendents and district tellers will respond to any equipment problems, including requests to replace lost cards. Voting cards will be collected on Wednesday.

PRACTICE ONLINE NOW OR HANDS-ON MAY 30:

- An instructional video, titled "Voting Device Demo," is available now at <http://www.OurChurchVideos.com/okumc>. All Annual Conference delegates are encouraged to view it before attending the conference.
- At Annual Conference, voluntary voting practice will be offered between noon and 1:30 p.m. Monday, May 30, in the Freede Center.

VOTING PROCEDURES:

- Voters will be seated by districts.
- Clergy and laity will sit in pairs, to share voting machines. Following the instructions of the Annual Conference secretary and the bishop, voters will alternate using the machines.
- Lay voters choose the lay delegates, and clergy voters choose the clergy representatives. Each nominee will be assigned a three-digit number.
- Voting will be on a slate basis, as in past years. (On the first ballot, for example, laity will vote for nine lay nominees, and clergy will vote for nine clergy names.)

You must vote correctly on each full slate or your entire ballot will be invalid for that round. (On the first ballot, for example, the voter must enter nine eligible three-digit numbers. If you enter only eight numbers, or an ineligible number, such an action will invalidate your entire ballot.)

- The results of the first ballot will be printed and distributed by the tellers before adjournment for the evening meal. This list will contain the names of the top vote-getters—60 clergy and 60 laity—who receive five or more votes. This handout will be a useful reference for subsequent balloting.
- Materials about write-in lay nominees will not be distributed unless authorized by Conference officials.
- Tellers and district superintendents have been trained and are prepared to assist with your questions about any voting issues that may occur.
- A church's Alternate Annual Conference Delegate must get authorization and a separate voting card to be activated as a voter. The alternate must get authorization from that district's superintendent and then go to the registration desk to get the card.

VOTING ON OTHER MATTERS:

Prior to the meeting, Annual Conference delegates will receive mailed copies of the Pre-Conference Workbook, containing reports of ministry by the Oklahoma Conference's committees, agencies, institutions, and other related entities. The resource also will be online.

Annual Conference participants are encouraged to review all advance materials, to prepare fully in mind as well as heart, for this major yearly gathering of Oklahoma United Methodists.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE EVENTS

Laity News

4

Spring 2011

UMRF LUNCHEON

By Claudean Harrison, UMRF President

You are cordially invited to the Oklahoma United Methodist Rural Fellowship (UMRF) Awards Luncheon and annual meeting on Wednesday, June 1, 2011, at noon in the atrium of the Wanda L. Bass School of Music - OCU campus during Annual Conference.

Luncheon cost is \$15 and deadline for reservations is May 19, 2011.

Send reservations to Rev. Dave Karges, UMRF treasurer, P. O. Box 380, Jenks, OK 74037 or karges.djk@cox.net.

God is truly working in our rural and small membership Oklahoma churches. Their stories can be heard and experienced during an outstanding lunch prepared by a local, accomplished chef.

Rev Adam Shahan will lead us in our musical

praise and church representatives will share their mission and plan to advance the Lord's kingdom. Make plans on this last day of Conference to be a part of this spirit-filled event.

OUTSTANDING TOWN AND RURAL CHURCH AWARDS

Are you thinking about just such a church, a fruitful congregation that is working hard? Encourage them to apply for UMRF recognition. The form is short, concise and easy to complete. Applications are on the Conference website or they can also be accessed by contacting Claudean Harrison, UMRF President. clharrison@aol.com or (405)756-1133. The Oklahoma UMRF champions churches and their mission to make "disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world." As advocates for Oklahoma town and country churches, the Fellowship recognizes the hard work and connectional programs during this traditional luncheon. Come join with us as we celebrate town and country churches that are truly making a difference in the lives of Oklahoma Christians as they spread the "Good News."

CELEBRATE THE LAITY LUNCHEON

Tuesday, May 31, 2011 • St. Luke's UMC, Oklahoma City • Christian Life Center
(Immediately after the Tuesday morning session)

Tickets are \$12 per person

Join your fellow delegates, guests and pastors in CELEBRATING the LAITY of the Oklahoma Conference! Enjoy great music, food and fellowship! A highlight will be the presentation of the "It Worked for Us Awards," honoring a lay-led ministry from one church in each district.

Only 400 tickets are available, so please don't delay in making your reservations.

Reserve your tickets by May 23, 2011

If you have questions about the luncheon, email: barbara.perry@okstate.edu

"CELEBRATE the LAITY" LUNCHEON

Names _____

Address _____ City _____

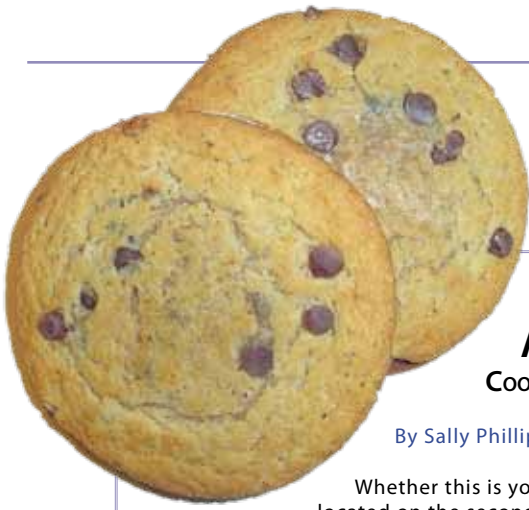
Phone _____ Church _____

Email _____

Number of reservations @ \$12 per ticket _____ Amount enclosed _____

Make check payable to: **Conference Treasurer**

Send reservations to: Barbara Perry
4319 St. Patrick Drive
Oklahoma City, OK 73120



OKLAHOMA LAITY NEWS

LAITY LOUNGE AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE COOKIES AND CATCHING UP AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE

By Sally Phillips, Enid District Lay Leader

Whether this is your first time or your twenty-first, I want to remind you of the Laity Lounge, located on the second floor of the Freede Center (northwest corner).

Here you can rest, visit with friends, share information, and enjoy a cup of coffee and a cookie or two. (If you were asked to provide cookies for our lounge, this is the place where you can leave them.)

There will also be laptops available on which you can check your email. I look forward to seeing you there!

OPPORTUNITIES

MEET THE GENERAL/JURISDICTIONAL NOMINEES

Among the decisions that will be made at Annual Conference is the election of nine Lay Delegates to General Conference, nine Lay Delegates to Jurisdictional Conference, and four Lay alternates.

The first ballot will be taken Monday afternoon and the Delegates will gather again at 6:30 p.m. in the Freede Center at OCU to complete the selection of the Oklahoma Conference Delegation for the 2012 General and Jurisdictional Conferences.



OPPORTUNITIES YOU WILL HAVE TO ASSIST YOU IN MAKING YOUR DECISIONS AND GET TO KNOW THE NOMINEES ARE:

- A booklet that contains information about their involvement and beliefs about the UMC will be mailed to local church Lay Delegates. Delegates should bring the booklet to Annual Conference and share it with their alternates.
- The information in the booklet will be placed on line at www.okumc.org.
- Nominees have the opportunity to place an audio statement on line also posted at www.okumc.org.
- The nominees will be introduced at the Laity session on Sunday 3:30 p.m. at St. Luke's UMC.
- They will have red ribbons attached to their name tags.
- Come to an informal light meal at 5 p.m. on Sunday following the Laity session. The nominees will be available to meet you and be in conversation with you. (\$5 cost – email Sally Phillips if you plan on coming at knitwitsal@hotmail.com to help us know how many meals to prepare.)
- Nominees will be available to talk with you at the Freede Center at OCU on Monday at 1 p.m. until the afternoon session begins.

FROM A MUSTARD SEED: Enlivening Worship and Music in the Small Church



Pick your date
and come experience
an exciting learning
opportunity.

From a Mustard Seed: Enlivening Worship and Music in the Small Church

REGISTRATION

Registration Deadline: October 3, 2011

Register on-line at: http://www.okumc.org/Small_Membership_Church (click on workshop link)

Contact Person's Name (First and Last) _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Church _____

Daytime Phone Number and Area Code* (_____) _____

E-mail _____

A FRESH, HOPEFUL LOOK AT WORSHIP IN SMALL CHURCHES

Mark the workshop and number of persons attending from your church.

- #of persons _____ Monday, October 10 Fairview UMC (Slapout) Woodward District--5 p.m. to 9 p.m.
- #of persons _____ Tuesday, October 11 Lamont UMC, Enid District--5 p.m. to 9 p.m.
- #of persons _____ Wednesday, October 12 Adair UMC, Muskogee District--5 p.m. to 9 p.m.
- #of persons _____ Thursday, October 13 Antlers UMC, McAlester District--5 p.m. to 9 p.m.
- #of persons _____ Friday, October 14 Ware's Chapel UMC, OIMC--5 p.m. to 9 p.m., 439 S Carnegie, Carnegie, OK 73015

ONE DAY SCHOOL

- #of persons _____ Saturday, October 15 ... Turtle UMC, SOKC 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Mail your registration fee (\$10 per person, per event) to:

From a Mustard Seed:
Enlivening Worship and Music in the Small Church
1501 N.W. 24th St.,
Oklahoma City, OK 73106-3635

Make checks out to Annual Conference Council.
For questions about registration, contact Ann Browning at (405)530-2199;
abrowning@okumc.org



Dr. Bruce Epperly

Dr. Daryl Hollinger

Keynote speakers

Dr. Epperly is the Professor of Practical Theology and Director of Continuing Education at Lancaster Theological Seminary. He is an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ. Currently, he also serves as a co-pastor at Disciples United Community Church in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Dr. Epperly has written nineteen books in the areas of theology, spirituality, ministerial excellence and spiritual formation, and healing and wholeness. He has appeared on "Nightline," "ABC World News Tonight," and the "PBS News Hour."

Dr. Hollinger is Dean of Chapel, Seminary Musician and Adjunct Professor of Worship and Music at Lancaster Theological Seminary. He is Minister of Music at St. Peter's United Church of Christ, Lancaster, Pennsylvania and has been active as a church musician for over thirty years.

As a composer, Dr. Hollinger is often commissioned by choral groups, congregations, and national organizations. His numerous songs for worship are innovative, spirit-filled and easy for congregations to sing.

Together they wrote, "From a Mustard Seed: Enlivening Worship and Music in the Small Church." They have agreed to introduce the new songbook and other less known music books that the UMC offers along with the "UMC Hymnal" and "The Faith We Sing."

OKLAHOMA LAITY CAMPING

"fun" things first, keep asking and you will find that they did grow spiritually when attending one of our three campsites.

PLAN TO CAMP!

By Sharri L. Hiller
Ardmore District
Lay Leader

Have you stopped to think how the camping ministries of the Oklahoma Conference of The UMC fit into "the plan?"

Sending a camper to camp that does not currently attend your church is sharing faith outside the walls of your church. Sending campers (of any age) that do currently attend your church is developing leadership at all levels that will help your church grow.

Encouraging members and clergy of your church to volunteer at one or more camps each year is truly being missional.

And last, even though every child or youth (or even adults) that comes back from camp will usually talk about the

FAQ's

WHY DO OUR CAMPS COST MORE THAN THE CAMP WHERE THE CHURCH DOWN THE STREET TAKES THEIR CHILDREN AND YOUTH?

Our camp costs are probably cheaper than your neighboring churches costs, but your neighboring church is not asking the camper to pay 100% of the cost. Can your church scholarship campers?

HOW DO I BECOME A VOLUNTEER AT A CAMP?

Look at the camp book or online at www.okumc.org/camps to find the name of the camp dean. Contact them to see if you can help.

HOW DO I REGISTER CAMPERS?

All churches and previous campers have received camp books from the Camp's office. A form for all Conference camps can be found in that book. You can also register online at www.okumc.org/camps.



SENIOR ADULT RETREATS

By Myrna Moore



WHAT? You think the United Methodist Camps are just for kids? NO WAY! The Senior Adults have RETREATS at all three United Methodist campsites!

Now, if you are looking to do the "Ropes Course," then maybe we aren't what you are looking for, BUT if good programs, entertainment, fellowship, singing, Bible study a beautiful natural setting, good food and fun are 'your thing,'—you should try one or all of our Senior Adults Retreats.

The campsites have great facilities, that are on ground level and handicap accessible. If you give us a chance, we will make every effort to see that you not only have a good time, but also want to come again next year. We would like to meet you and welcome you into our group of regulars. Why, you might become a star player at one of the 'after entertainment' evening games ("Hand and Foot" or "Mexican Train").

We try to keep the registration fee as low as possible. You get two nights lodging, six meals (five at Canyon), programs, entertainment and fellowship for a very reasonable cost. Many churches pay half of the registration fee for the kids' camps and also for the senior adults. Check with your church for help with your registration fees.

Oh yes, if you aren't quite in the 55+ group, don't worry. We don't I.D. anyone! All ages attend. Last year at Egan we had retreaters ranging in age from 22 to 93. All we need is YOU!

This year's retreat dates are: Sept. 20-22, at Canyon Camp near Hinton; Oct. 25-27, at Cross Point on Lake Texoma; and a new adventure on Oct. 10-12, at Camp Egan near Tahlequah with a "Senior Adult University" event with Janey Wilson from the Wesley Foundation at OU. Look for the 2012 dates to come. For information: myrnamor@sbcglobal.net, Myrna Moore, 1005 Wakefield Road, Perry, OK 73077-1224, (580)336-2369.



SINGLE PARENT FAMILY GATHERINGS

We are so excited that the Single Parent Family Gatherings (SPFG) are just around the corner! Please invite a family to attend! The family may not be in your church, but they ARE in your neighborhood! The dates are Canyon: June 10-12, Cross Point; June 24-26, Egan; August 12-14. SPFG is always in need of volunteers, sponsors, and donated items. If you or your church is interested in helping, contact the camp office at (405)530-2017 or "like" us on Facebook by searching "Single Parent Family Gathering". André Stravlo, [ASTravlo@okumc.org](mailto:AStravlo@okumc.org); <http://www.okumc.org/camps>.

WHERE ARE THE YOUNG ADULTS?

An opportunity is coming for you to connect with young adults in your community—disconnected college kids—newly married—career young adults looking for a connection. Why not scholarship them to the Young Adult Camp that will be held at Cross Point, July 29-31, 2011? Let them know they are important to you and your church. More information to come!

OKLAHOMA LAITY RESOURCES

Laity News



Spring 2011

LEADERSHIP RESOURCES THAT CAN “WORK FOR YOU!”

By Herschel Beard

Having the opportunity to serve this quadrennium on the General Board of Discipleship (GBOD) has allowed me to “put faces with names” on so many of the resources and programs I’ve used for many years, such as “Walk to Emmaus,” “Guidelines for Leadership,” and many of the Upper Room resources.

I can tell you that our Board has made it a priority to define the work of GBOD as being a resource tool for the local church—especially small churches that are limited financially—in being able to obtain resources that can help them make disciples of Jesus Christ through their churches.

We have some exciting things coming out of the Upper Room and GBOD!

We are about to publish a new music publication called, “Worship and Song” —which will be similar to “The Faith

We Sing” song book—with some great new songs, as well as prayers and litanies.

Also, checkout the Africana Hymnal study relating to what we’ve found when surveying North American Christians of African descent. Our Board will be sending legislation to General Conference to publish some new resources for ethnic churches in a CD format, which will also capture some of the rich cultural heritage associated with these historic and vibrant churches.

Laity Sunday is October 16, and downloadable resources for this year’s theme, “Disciples Transforming the World—Through Gifts,” is already on the website so you can get a jump-start on planning an exciting day of worship in your church.

One of my favorite readings is a project called “Romans 12” published by staff writer

Deb Smith. It is under the “Best Practices” tab and is a newsletter designed to give local churches ideas of what works in other congregations across the denomination. You can subscribe **FREE** of charge by contacting Deb at dsmith@gbod.org. There’s a link on the website to subscribe.

I encourage you to visit the GBOD website: <http://www.gbod.org> for these and many more **FREE**, downloadable resources for your local church, whether it is large and small. Most are under the heading of “Lead Your Church” and “Ministry of the Laity,” and “Worship.”

I hope you will view the GBOD as your church’s personal resource guide for helping you fulfill our mission of “making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

A POSSIBLE MISSION FOR UNITED METHODIST MEN

“My goal is for each local church men’s group to have a sense of belonging to a larger body of men who are impacting the life of their church, community and beyond for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Part of that goal would include a sense of brotherhood and accountability to the other groups within their district, and each district to the other districts, as part of the Oklahoma Conference UMM.

Establishing lines of communication will initially be my primary task. Through communication and networking, with God’s guidance and strength, I believe the Oklahoma UMM can become an effective tool for “making disciples of Jesus Christ, for the transformation of the world.”

—Bill Chisoe, president, Oklahoma Conference United Methodist Men

OKLAHOMA LAITY WORKSHOPS

“SEMINARY LITE”

LAY CERTIFICATE IN THEOLOGICAL STUDIES TO BEGIN

If you've ever wondered what seminary students learn or had a longing to go deeper in the study of our Christian faith, then make plans to attend the new lay theology program at Saint Paul School of Theology at Oklahoma City University. Scheduled to begin in Sept. 2011, “Seminary Lite” is a new program offering classes for the laity. Each month a different class will be offered by a qualified professor on a Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Saint Paul on the OCU campus (with lunch in the cafeteria).

Topics will include:

- Introduction to New Testament
- Introduction to Old Testament
- Introduction to Church History
- Introduction to Christian Theology
- Introduction to Worship
- Introduction to United Methodist Heritage
- Occasional Electives

Upon completion of the six introduction courses, a lay certificate will be awarded. But whether or not you're interested in the certificate, all are welcome to enroll in one course or several.

The first offering will be held on Saturday, September 17, 2011 with Introduction to Christian

Theology taught by Dr. Elaine Robinson, Dean of SPST at OCU. The cost of the course is \$50.

For more information or to register contact: Rachel McClain, (405)208-5757, rachel.mcclain@spst.edu.

STEWARDSHIP FOCUS DAY

AUGUST 26, 2011

In His Grip

By Mark Springer, Assoc. Conference Lay Leader

You will not want to miss this event.

This year's speaker is Clif Christopher, a dynamic speaker and pastor. His recent book, “Whose Offering Plate is it?” makes us realize that it is God's offering plate, not the local church. His presentations are thought provoking and challenging. You will leave this event fully aware that guilt and duty are perhaps the worst stewardship methods.

A method that is working is to raise awareness to take the church to the local community. This will result in fulfilling the mission to go into the world and it will bring new disciples into the church for training. Every congregation has a vital mission in their community and God will supply all that it takes to be in service. Too many Christians are on the *journey* but missing out on the *adventure*.

Remember, it is God's offering plate.

“Options/Obligations of an Effective Servant Leader”

HOSTED BY: OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE BOARD OF LAITY

This workshop is for all church laity that have an interest in helping their church become the vital congregation that God is calling it to be. By becoming the leader that God is calling you to be!

- **Saturday, October 8, 2011** * 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
- Oklahoma City University Campus, Meinders School of Business, Gardner Room, 3rd floor

NO CHARGE for the workshop, materials and your lunch.

Presenter: Rev. Vance P. Ross, deputy general secretary—General Board of Discipleship (GBOD) Rev. Vance P. Ross is the first ever deputy general secretary for Connectional Relations and Strategic Initiatives for the GBOD. In this role, he builds relationships with key United Methodist leaders for effective communication and ministry development across the denomination.

If you have any questions contact Chuck Stewart, chuckstewart@windstream.net. RSVP by Oct. 4

OKLAHOMA LAITY EVANGELISM

Got Hospitality?

by Donna Heldermon

“Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.”—(Romans 15:7)

Hospitality: the act of being ‘hospitable,’ of being welcoming, of going out of our way, even at the risk of a sense of awkwardness and inconvenience, to invite people to share in our lives, our church’s ministry and as part of our church family.

Have you ever felt an internal nudge or the urge to invite someone to church, to Sunday school, or to a special event, but just felt too awkward to say the words? Ever think of the blessings you have forfeited in not getting to know someone new, interesting, different than you, because of this same sense of awkwardness and fear of ridicule or rejection?

Those nudges and urges are the voice of the Holy Spirit

telling us, go and share. Heeding them opens us up to the opportunity to experience new ideas and to grow spiritually by being obedient to God’s call to serve Him by welcoming others.

HOSPITALITY IDEA/GET PEOPLE INTO THE HABIT OF INVITING!

Choose an event happening in your church – Print tickets of invitation – Give them to your members as a comfortable way of inviting someone by saying, “We’re having this event and we’d love for you to come!” Then love them with the love of God as only your church family can when they appear!

We are missing out if we are not reaching out. Jesus made it a point to reach out and invite into relationship the people he met throughout his daily walk. If we are to walk in his example,

inviting in has to become a way of life for us —and to do that, it has to become a habit.

So, this next week let’s make the commitment to reach out and to extend hospitality to someone in at least one new way, —one way that is inconvenient or awkward to us.

This could be as simple as sending a note or making a phone call to someone, who has been ill or missed a church event recently, —someone who is not already our best friend.

Another way to stepping up our hospitality is by inviting a new attendee/family, to lunch after church or coffee and bagels on Saturday morning, just get acquainted.

We CAN do this —I know we CAN, I know we CAN, I know we CAN!

In showing hospitality to strangers, ... some have entertained angels without being aware of it. —(Heb. 13:2)

EVANGELISM—HOW DO I DO BETTER?

By Frank Denney

In a class on evangelism at Local Church Leaders Workshops across the Conference this year, the question was asked, “What letter grade would you give the people of the Oklahoma Conference in evangelism?” Consistently the answer was a “D.”

We do lots of other things well, but we hang our head, tuck our tail between our legs, or shuffle our feet when this subject comes up.

With the blessing of the Bishop and the Discipleship Ministry Team, the Evangelism Task Force has planned several events to try to teach us, in a Methodist way, to do better. The first was in March at Chapel Hill UMC in Oklahoma City with Rudy Rasmus, pastor at St. John’s UMC in Houston (Beginning with nine existing members in 1992, St. John’s has grown to over 9,000 members [3,000 of the total either are or were formerly

homeless] in seventeen years into one of the most culturally diverse congregations in the country.)

The next evangelism event is May 14 at Abiding Harvest UMC in Tulsa. The keynote speaker is Bishop Scott Jones (residing bishop for the Kansas East, West, and Nebraska Conferences). Cost is \$10 to cover lunch.

Participants can select two of the following classes to attend:

OKLAHOMA LAITY LAY SPEAKING

- "Local Church Hospitality,"
- "Developing a Bringers Culture in your Congregation,"
- "Small Church Evangelism,"
- "Mobilized Prayer Unit,"
- "Assimilating New Members,"
- "Who me, Evangelism?,"
- "Needs-Based Evangelism,"
- "How to Share Your Faith,"
- "Evangelism and Young Adults."

Another event will be at Ardmore First UMC, August 6, with special keynote speaker Elaine Heath, who is the Teacher of Evangelism at Perkins Seminary.

Additional trainings are planned in the McAlester District with Bob Crossman as the keynote presenter and in the western districts.

These are quality trainings; there are many from which to choose.

Register by emailing Bob Pierson at bperson@tulsacoxmail.com.

Prayerfully consider if this is the call you need to answer.

LAY SPEAKING IN OKLAHOMA

By Pat Parvin

I bring you greetings from all 975 lay speakers of the Oklahoma Conference (102 are youth lay speakers).

This year we will again go to CYME on July 4 to lead the basic class and have an advanced course, "Restoring Methodism," led by Rev. Jim Hollifield, Newkirk UMC. We have asked all districts to consider using "Restoring Methodism" as an advanced course. This course brings into focus again the rich history of Methodism, the use of small groups and the role that laity played in building the church then and now.

This year has brought about a change in district directors. We will miss the leadership of Sue Helms, Stillwater director and Gail Payne, Muskogee director. (*You will find a complete listing of our directors and upcoming training events online at www.okumc.org - look under the "Leadership" link.*)

In February, I attended a Convocation of Annual Conference Lay Leaders and Directors of Lay Speaking Ministries at Indianapolis, Indiana. This set a new precedence, as this was the first time that lay leaders and lay speakers have come together for their annual convocation. We were so blessed to have Dr. Lovett H. Weems Jr., who is the Professor of Church Leadership and Director of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership of Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. as our speaker. Some of his thoughts were: renewal does not come from something we have never been before; renewal has to take hold within the congregation; becoming more of what we are but selectively focus on the positive; and God is always calling us to lead and to follow.

In the midst of our busy lives, let us remember "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit says the Lord." Let our eyes be open to see and our ears to hear what the Holy Spirit would have us to do in a call to action. The second chapter of James asks the question, "what's the use of saying you have faith if you don't prove it by your actions? This kind of faith can't save anyone." So you see, it isn't enough just to have faith. Faith that doesn't show itself by good deeds is no faith at all. I can't see your faith if you don't have good deeds, but I will show you my faith through my good deeds.

Lay Speakers are ready to show their faith by their deeds. God bless you and God bless the UMC.

McALESTER DISTRICT LAY SPEAKING NEWS

By Maurice Hawthorne,
McAlester District Lay Speaking Director

Lay Speakers are active in the McAlester District.

Lay Speaker's Training was held on January 21-22, 2011, with eight first-time attendees certified as Local Church Lay Speakers, and 15 in the advanced course on "Restoring Methodism" and "Who are Certified Lay Speakers?" At the present time, there are 17 Local Church and 43 Certified Lay Speakers in the District. At least six churches in the District are supplied by current lay speakers or former lay speakers who have become Licensed Local Pastors. "Restoring Methodism" was so well received that some churches are planning to use it in their own local church.

AN OPEN LETTER FROM BISHOP HAYES TO THE LAITY OF THE OKLAHOMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE



Dear Sisters and Brothers:

Greetings, grace, and peace in the name of our Lord, who conquered death and is alive forevermore!

As we quickly approach the 168th session of the Oklahoma Annual Conference, I can sum up my feelings in one word, "excited!" Once again God has "brought us safely by His love," and as Methodists have been doing since 1784, we will gather to celebrate our unique heritage and chart our course for the future!

As I have said so many times, "The laity of our Conference is the driving force that moves us forward," and I am eager to hear your stories and to share our common concerns and joys. Along with our spirit-filled worship services, we will elect delegates to represent us at our upcoming General and Jurisdictional Conferences in 2012. This will be an important gathering, and I am in anticipation that

the power of the Holy Spirit will unite our hearts and minds for the purpose of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world!

I ask that you begin praying now for the success of our annual conference. I urge you to come and experience the sights and sounds of this dynamic movement known as the Oklahoma Annual Conference.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Your servant in Christ,

Robert E. Hayes Jr.

Bishop

All God's People in
All Places,
And in
All Times,
Are Called to Love
And to Serve.

