



# Laity Ministry

Fall 2006

INFORMATION FOR LOCAL CHURCH LAY LEADERS


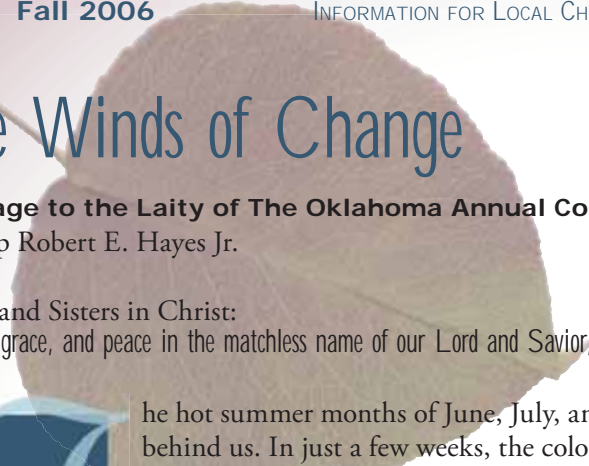
published by the Oklahoma Conference Board of Laity

## The Winds of Change

### A Message to the Laity of The Oklahoma Annual Conference

By Bishop Robert E. Hayes Jr.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ:  
Greetings, grace, and peace in the matchless name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!



The hot summer months of June, July, and August are behind us. In just a few weeks, the colors of fall will dominate Oklahoma's landscape, and the much-awaited cool fronts from the north will blow across our plains and hills. They will be God's signal that everything around us is about to change!

In so many ways, that's how I feel about what is taking place in the Oklahoma Annual Conference. The winds of change are blowing through our churches, and God's new season of spiritual renewal is upon us! As we move forward into God's exciting future, let us be clear that our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ!

To that end, I challenge every lay person in the Oklahoma Conference to "get involved" and "be in touch" with the work of your local church, the district, and the conference. Consider these opportunities: Charge conferences will be electing new leadership this fall to take us into the next year and beyond; Laity Sunday provides special opportunities for involvement in worship, teaching, and nurturing; our Christian Conferencing survey is an invitation to each congregation to be in prayer, discernment, and conversation about what we mean when we say our mission is "to make disciples" and how each congregation accomplishes that goal. Our Local Church Leader Workshops are coming up in January and February, and I'm thrilled to announce I will attend at least six of them. The theme will be: "Trained to empower – sent to transform!" The theme scripture will be Luke 10:1-2.

These are exciting days in the life of our Conference and our churches. Get involved, be in touch and invite someone to church! God's winds of change are blowing, and I pray that you will feel the fresh breeze of renewal and revival in the Oklahoma Annual Conference.

**May God bless and keep you.**

Sincerely,

Bishop Robert E. Hayes Jr.

## New Possibilities!

Don't you love this time of year? Changing leaves, cooler breezes, excitement of schools, music, art shows, harvest, marching bands, renewed friendships, opportunity to do a new thing or do old things better.

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**"God is doing  
a new thing!  
Do you see it?"**

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To see the possibilities and discern the most effective ways to act out the possibilities as God gives us the grace is a terrific goal!

As lay leader of your church, you're challenged to see the possibilities for all that your entire church and its members can be, as God gives the grace!

We haven't begun to tap the resources of our God, have we?

One of the purposes of this newsletter is to say "Thank You!" to you for saying "yes" to working with your pastor to lead your church.

We hope the information included here will be helpful in offering useful possibilities as your church family is in ministry – making disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ.

You are not alone – God is with you! Your conference United Methodist Ministry Center has people who are available to resource your needs. Our Board of Laity prays for you and wants to support you and the ministry of your church family.

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# Reflections

By Frank Denney,  
Cushing, Oklahoma

A recent opportunity led me to Seoul, South Korea to attend and participate in the World Methodist Conference.

The conference was a deep spiritual experience. The business of the conference was Bible study, sermons, music, and messages all focused on the theme of the conference, which was “God in Christ Reconciling.”

I could fill a whole page about the conference itself: the hospitality, I received from one of our own Oklahoma Conference ministers, Sung Su Hwang (serving at Chandler) and his family; the blessings, I received going to and coming from the conference; the spiritual uplifting, I received from being at the conference. But, that is not the purpose of this article.

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“Do you have  
your ticket?”

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I want to take a side trip and discuss a particular aspect of our spiritual journey.

The first morning, the Bible study was presented by Trevor Hudson, a pastor from South Africa. It was, without question, the most passionate Bible study I have ever experienced. The text used was Romans 8:19-27. Hudson developed two parallel messages as he held the attention of the 2,500 delegates in the palm of his hand for nearly an hour. “Do you have your ticket?” he would ask. This was his way of getting us to think about these questions:

- Where we are going in our spiritual journey?
- What is our destiny?
- What is our purpose?

He cried out about the groaning mentioned in the passage, of creation and mankind, in relationship to the search for meaning and for a relationship with Christ. Because of a long standing friendship between Jeremy Basset, Oklahoma Conference Volunteers In Mission Director,



who also attended the conference, and Trevor – I was able to spend the following Sunday with Trevor. He is truly a disciple of Christ, intent on building God’s kingdom. In his Bible study, he mentioned the title of a couple of books he’d written. One title particularly caught my attention, “A Mile in My Shoes,” and I made a note to get my hands on a copy.

As I sat on the couch in our home the morning after coming back to Oklahoma, I told my wife, Lee, about the conference and Trevor’s Bible study. I mentioned the book and that I was going to try to purchase a copy. As wives can do so effortlessly, she welcomed me back to reality by telling me we had it on our bookshelf. In less than a minute, I had the book in my hands.

The book tells of a journey, a pilgrimage, on which Trevor leads members of his congregation. They visited people in tough situations – poverty, drug addiction, disease, and others. They didn’t just casually view them, they lived with them for two or three days, literally placing themselves in those person’s plights. The intent was to grow in the “transforming grace and caring compassion of Christ.”

The elements of this journey were encounter, reflection, and transformation.

## ENCOUNTER

Encounter involves coming face-to-face with the pain in other people’s

lives, and experiencing hope as we are obedient to Christ’s teachings.

## REFLECTION

Reflection is thinking about, and even writing, what we have seen and processing it with scripture, Christian teaching, and our own past experiences. Through this process we clarify what our future actions will be.

## TRANSFORMATION

Transformation is growth from where we are to being more Christ-like. This comes as a gift to those generously open to the Holy Spirit.

I haven’t booked a flight to South Africa, but I do come in contact with people daily, who have struggles just as real as the people Trevor and his pilgrims experience. The same principle applies. We are called to share Christ’s love in the world. Wherever Christ went He came in contact with needy people. These needy people are just as prevalent to us today. The message, of Trevor’s book, is that we are called to grow in our “Christ-likeness.”

\*“A Mile in My Shoes,” by Trevor Hudson, published by Upper Room Books

*New Possibilities continued*

We would like to hear from you if you have an effective ministry that you would like to share with others.

If you’d like a team to come to your church to help with your leadership, we’re available.

Instead of thinking of the end of the year – we’re thinking and praying for the possibilities of the beginning of fall – new possibilities – for you, your church family, your district, and our conference!

“God’s doing a new thing! Do you see it?” We pray that your cup is at least half full but better yet, full to overflowing with blessings!

Judy Benson, Conference Lay Leader

# A busy summer for Oklahoma Lay Speaking ministries

**By Patricia Parvin,  
Conference Director  
Lay Speaking Ministries**

## LAY SPEAKERS CONFERENCE

We started out the summer with our fourth Bi-annual Oklahoma Lay Speakers Conference, on May 19-20, at Canyon Camp.

Our theme was “**Let the Good New Roll – That the World may know Jesus Christ.**” Sandy Zeigler, General Board of Ordained Ministry, Nashville; Bill Laycock Jr., Marietta, Georgia; and two of Oklahoma finest, Dr. Joe Harris and Rev. David Wilson, inspired us with their words of wisdom and encouragement.

## LAY SPEAKING AT CYME

We offered, again, the Basic Lay Speaking course for youth at CYME, held at Cross Point Camp in July. Leaders for the course were Rev. Diana Northcutt, Adam Brinson, and Kevin Hall. There were 21 youth that completed the course. Eight of those youth said they were being called into ministry. The youth attending were from South Oklahoma City District: Kelly Somers and Keegan Long-Wheeler; North Oklahoma City: Geoff Lacy, Alice Daniel, Billy Barnard, Brett Henderson, Trey Witzel, Clayton Miller, Patricia Baker, Sonia Miller, Becca Plautz, April Johnson, Kelsey Purifoy, Alyssa Baker, and Adam Hull; Tulsa

District: Rachael Heister, Lydia Ekhooff, and Jeremy Hess; Enid District: Michelle Sadowsky and Danielle Hubble; and from the Bartlesville District: Rhea Miller. On Thursday night, Bishop Hayes spoke to all the campers and signed the lay speaker’s certificates. This was very special for those completing the basic course, as the youth were the only ones that had their certificates signed by our Bishop.

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The laity luncheon was a great success.

The district directors of Lay Speaking presented the skit “*Mac Jesus To Go.*” This is a funny, but true, example of what the world’s true concept is of Jesus. We gave out many of the scripts and if you would like one please contact me. At conference we made available

100 books of the Bible study, “*That the World may know Jesus Christ.*” This is a study of the Book of John, chapters 14, 15, 16, and 17. The world desperately needs to know Jesus Christ. You can order this book and the study guide by contacting – World Methodist Evangelism Press, [www.WorldMethodist.org](http://www.WorldMethodist.org) or [www.WMEPress.org](http://www.WMEPress.org).

## SCJ LAY SPEAKING MINISTRIES

On July 14-16, we had our second South Central Jurisdiction Lay Speaking Ministries Conference. The beauty of the Ozark Mountains at Mount Sequoyah in Fayetteville, Arkansas provided a quiet, serene atmosphere for the conference. Three advanced lay speaking classes

were held throughout the weekend. The classes were taught by Dr. Diana Hynson; Sandy Zeigler, General Board of Discipleship; and John Bodnar, North Texas Conference. Jim Lane conducted the conference and district director training on Friday. At the business meeting on Friday, articles and bylaws were adopted and officers were elected. Three of the officers are from the Oklahoma Conference: Bill Chissoe, president; Patricia Parvin,

vice-president; and Sue Helms, secretary. The treasurer elected is Barbara Clark, from the Arkansas Conference. Plans are being made for another conference next year, which will be held in Oklahoma.

## LAY SPEAKING TRAINING

The next Lay Speaking Training event will be in

the Ardmore District at Cross Point Camp, Kingston, Oklahoma, on November 17-18. Gloria McGee will lead the basic course. Guy Ames III and Chuck Stewart will lead the advanced course, “*Preaching.*” The cost is \$55 per person. You can go out of your district to take these courses. Please contact Sharri Hiller at (580)662-2100, [riggscons@juno.com](mailto:riggscons@juno.com).

## MORE THAN PREACHING

Being a lay speaker is much more than preaching. Many, if not most lay speakers, will never be asked to fill the pulpit. There are numerous areas of ministry outside of preaching in the pulpit. Many ministers of the United Methodist church started out as a lay speakers. We encourage lay speakers who only have a desire to preach to prayerfully consider entering the ministry and contacting their pastor or district superintendent. We all have gifts to be used in making disciples of Christ. The lay speaking ministry can help you discover your gift.

[WWW.OKUMC.ORG](http://WWW.OKUMC.ORG)



*For more resources,  
great ideas, upcoming  
events, prayer concerns  
and leadership training  
opportunities, surf the  
internet to  
[www.okumc.org/  
leadership/laity](http://www.okumc.org/leadership/laity)*



# Laity Resources



## Good Sense Ministry

### Good Ideas or God Ideas?

**Brand new possibility! Thinking outside the box!**

#### TEMPLE UMC

Are you thinking your church is too small to try something different? Follow the example of Temple UMC, a church congregation of 35.

This small church has started an afterschool program as a community outreach ministry, since they have just a few children in their church.

In addition, they are having a “community day,” where they will serve ice cream to everyone in Temple, letting them know that their little church is alive, and well, and in service in the name of our Lord.

For information on the ministries offered at Temple UMC contact Dana McIlhane (580)342-6472.

#### BETHANY UMC, ENID

Bethany UMC in Enid, a congregation of 35 to 50 members, is known as a giving church.

For seven years they have sponsored the “Shepherd Cupboard Food Pantry.” They are assisted with this mission outreach by other churches in the area. The benefits are great for the church and for those who are served.

If you’d like information to help you begin this kind of successful mission, contact Geneva Martens (580)234-7415.

#### LAWTON DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Lawton District Council is exploring the possibility of creating a new category of district lay ministry. Borrowing and adapting terminology from the current *Discipline*, they want to create a new group. The **District Lay Missioners** would be trained and give one or more days per month to serve as missionaries within the Lawton District.

Missioners would assist pastors in revitalizing churches. They would also work in their communities to begin developing cell groups and house churches.

Please pray for these efforts in service for our Lord.

Let us know if you have ideas that others might want to try in their communities.

#### USING HANDS, HEART AND HEAD TO END FINANCIAL STRESS

- Do you have people in your church family who have a problem with the use of money?
- Are they hindered by the pull of our materialistic culture?
- Do they lack the knowledge about wise financial practices and the need for effective tools to implement them?

The United Methodist Foundation, with the Board of Laity, is co-sponsoring and have trained people ready to teach the “*Good Sense Budget Course*” in local churches.

Through this program you will learn how to become a diligent earner, generous giver, wise saver, caution debtor, and prudent consumer. You will leave the course with a spending plan in your hands; the knowledge to implement it in your head; and the motivation to follow through with it in your heart.

If you would like to know more about how you can provide this course for members of your church family, contact Mark Springer, Associate Conference Lay Leader, (918)622-1405, [springer@tulsacoxmail.com](mailto:springer@tulsacoxmail.com), or Judy Benson, [bensonjj@pldi.net](mailto:bensonjj@pldi.net)



## Children God’s Precious Gift

Children’s Sunday or Children’s Sabbath is one of the ways we celebrate children. Children’s Sabbath is observed between Oct. 1 and Oct. 15, but can be celebrated any time of the year.

On Children’s Sunday the primary parts of worship are led by children of the congregation. Children’s Sabbath is primarily used to educate the congregation about the needs of children today and to help families.

Themes you could use might be, “Love One Another,” “The Lord’s Prayer,” “Caring for God’s Creation,” or

whatever else would be of interest to your congregation. Worship resources, music, and examples of Children’s Sabbath Celebrations are available at [www.gbod.org/ministries/children/articles](http://www.gbod.org/ministries/children/articles), or from Cokesbury. For more resource information contact Linda DeBerry (580)286-2371, Joanne Kurklin (405)329-3786, or Rev. Mary Lue Eastmond, Conference Christian Education Director.

