Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! May the peace of Christ be with you.

The pandemic has been a catalyst for disruption, although it is not the sole cause. Who would have thought that this disruption would hit our families, jobs, communities, and churches as hard as it has? The spiritual and emotional energies spent in responding is all consuming.

Our society is experiencing disruption at every level. Disruption moves through our lives like a rushing river that floods its banks and goes where it will. Disruption carves out new pathways for raging waters to flow. Nothing is safe in the pathway of disruption.

Our clergy and churches are among the people and groups responding. While we may not get the headlines, the effort is genuine, consistent, and extends the love and care of Jesus Christ to the world around us. Thank God for each of you.

In the Book of Acts, every disruption opened the way for the church to go beyond itself. In Acts 6, a justice issue coupled with severe persecution resulted in people being set apart for ministry and the gospel message moving beyond the boundaries.

In Acts 10, God’s dream and the work of the Holy Spirit woke Peter to a broader vision that propelled the gospel beyond the Jewish people. In Acts 13, the Spirit moved the church at Antioch to send Barnabas and Saul to extend the church beyond itself to all humanity.

In our theme text, Philippians 2:1-4, Paul is experiencing disruption as he wrote the letter while in prison. He wrote, “If there is any encouragement, any love, any sharing in the Spirit, and sympathy…” I want to pause and think about that last word: “Sympathy.” It seems out of place. What does it mean?

In this case, it is not used to express sympathy to someone who has experienced loss. Instead, Paul uses the word this way: “an affinity, association, or relationship between people or things so that whatever affects one affects the other or others.” Similar concepts are “to be in agreement” or “to approve something harmoniously.”

The concept of sympathy as affinity simply expresses the idea that we are in a spiritual relationship with each other. The theme of this conference is “To Affinity and Beyond.” Its point is that we have an affinity, or a spiritual relationship with each other. And it is out of that affinity with each other that we go beyond ourselves and embrace the mission of the church, which is “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

We come together because of our affinity with one another. We move beyond ourselves to fulfill the mission of Jesus Christ. One without the other is incomplete. Hence, “To Affinity and Beyond.” When we come together and move beyond, disruption does not have the last word. Innovation overcomes disruption, just as light overcomes darkness.

I am so very proud of our pastors, leaders, churches, and
agencies. You have stepped up in so many ways. I want to share some stories where people have come together, then moved beyond themselves to serve.

TISH MALLOY AND RANDY COMPTON: EXTENSION MINISTRIES

As the Bishop said, our churches and extension ministries have gone beyond, even beyond what they thought they could do in responding to this pandemic.

(Let us) take you on a journey around this annual conference to let you in on how our churches have made a difference in their communities during this last year.

Our first stop is in the Northern Prairie and the community of Waukomis. They have traditionally spearheaded a drive to purchase school supplies for every child enrolled at Waukomis Public Schools, culminating in a cookout where supplies are handed out.

This rural church was not deterred in their mission to support the school during the pandemic. The request went out and the funds came in, just like clockwork. The supplies were gathered in the church sanctuary. The teachers gathered the supplies for their students and handed them out, as if this was what they had always done!

Many of our churches found that normal worship was no longer possible when the virus became so prevalent. In the Heartland District, Pauls Valley and pastor Diana Pruitt thought creatively of ways to meet both the guidelines and the congregation and community’s need to connect safely.

They utilized the enclosed park adjacent to their property and practiced safety protocols for the worship and glory of God. The pastor took her authority to not allow folks in who would not follow the guidelines. The services and related ministry went on effectively until the congregation was able to return indoors.

The same could be said of Rev. Tim Trujillo and the people of Antlers in the Lake Country District. They quickly began online worship but did not stop there. They began developing new ideas for continued ministry to children and youth. They engaged them through Facebook live on a weekly basis. Pastor Tim and his wife, Vicky, conducted the sessions and created strong bonds.

In the Crossroads District, Rev. Carlos Ramirez at Putnam City UMC has led both English and Spanish speaking congregations throughout the pandemic with an excellent online presence.

In addition, he has been creative in being responsive to spiritual needs of the church. One church member’s testimony: “I recently mentioned to a church friend that I sure miss having communion at my church. Today, I received such a sweet visit! Pastor Carlos Ramirez came to my front sidewalk, prayed for me and my family and gave me communion! My last communion was the first Sunday in March!”

There were other ways churches dealt with sacraments. Green Country’s Kip Heately at Muldrow-Roland Trinity hosted “drive by” communion, having blessed the elements online, an outreach that had people from other churches coming through from as far away as Ft. Smith, AR.

For other churches, mission and outreach has been impacted but with tremendous creativity. Lawton-Centenary in the Wichitas District has engaged their youth group by continually preparing and delivering blessing boxes to people in need. They all follow safety guidelines offered by CDC and the Conference. They have delivered over 1,000 blessing boxes since they began.

In the Council Oak District, Owasso Public Schools started a Virtual School Campus (VSC). When the pastors at Owasso-First heard that OPS would begin the school year with online learning, they began praying and imagining a way to provide a safe place for the children of church members who needed their kids to engage in online learning.

They had the space and wifi capacities, and they recruited servants to coordinate, feed, monitor, and shepherd the students through their days. A retired school administrator immediately volunteered to run the ministry. This continued until Owasso returned to in person learning.

Turpin and Baker in the Oklahoma panhandle’s Cimarron district led the way in live-streaming interactive services on Facebook, housing drive-in and drive-up communion, hosting outside church services and recording a Bible Study Series which airs each week on Wednesday Night called “Wednesday Night in the Word.”

Their pastor, Reece Player...
said, “each piece of this has been expressed by some at different times to be encouraging, needed, and helpful.”

These are eight examples and represent only a small fraction of what has happened across the 77 counties of this great state. We are indebted to your work and affirm all you have done.

DERREK BELASE: PANDEMIC RESPONSE

At the conference level, we did not stop new initiatives during the pandemic.

The Rural Church Commission, along with our partners at the Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation, gave out nearly $15,000 in technology grants to help churches as they have navigated technology needs and updates to move online. These dollars went to assist over 25 churches in the conference.

We undertook three significant online training initiatives: a six-week worship planning series hosted by Marcia McFee for 81 unique churches in the conference; suicide prevention training and a series of one-hour webinars with our partners at Crisis Care Ministries; and a virtual mission and education program called “Branching Out.”

Our disaster response program has been active in the northeast part of the state for many months. As of today, they are working cases in 27 counties involving over 100 communities. To date, 117 households have achieved their recovery plans; 220 cases are closed, 320 remain open. This work will continue through June 2021.

In addition to that major project, the Oklahoma Conference Disaster Response team obtained and distributed 125,000 masks and 1,320 gallons of hand sanitizer to schools, churches and health care facilities throughout the state.

Family Camps allowed families to spend a weekend at one of our conference’s three campgrounds during the month of July. Each family that registered stayed in their own cabin to help maintain a safe social distance from other campers, and meal times were staggered when safe distancing was not possible in the dining hall. Around 160 people participated in this program.

Thanks to the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, the Tulsa Area COVID-19 Response Fund and state CARES Act funds, Restore Hope Ministries in Tulsa was able to pay the past due rent for more than 800 families with pending eviction cases in Tulsa County. That’s 1.8 million dollars. As executive director Jeff Jaynes said, “We had a crisis before COVID-19 ever hit,” referring to the 14,000 evictions the previous year.

In the area of new work, we celebrate Charis Alive and an initiative in south Oklahoma City as well as the Kingdom Fellowship in Tulsa.

At Charis Alive, Rev. Victoria Lee developed an English class in conjunction with OU Wesley Foundation to reach 125 participants and started 2 Meet Me Mom groups with over 90 women signed up. They began a new online worship service called Family Blessing on November 8.

Rev. Michael Long and Rev. Gwendolyn Derrick were appointed July 1, 2020 to lead an African American led church in Tulsa which is preparing to observe the 100th Anniversary of the Race Massacre. It is called Kingdom Fellowship. Their Vision Statement is: “Kingdom Fellowship seeks to build a community of faith for the Northside in North Tulsa one life at a time by the Holy Spirit’s power through hand-to-hand partnerships that promote sustaining health, education, economic and spiritual transformation.” May it be so at this crucial time in the city of Tulsa.

Finally, in south Oklahoma City, Rev. Josue Araujo and Rev. Kevin Tankerson are developing a new, multiethnic church anchored at Lambuth and The Christ Experience. The ministry would reach the south Oklahoma City area and downtown. This is a challenging task, but having their leadership on the ground is helpful in identifying ways to initiate a new ministry.

Initiatives such as these and so many more allow us as United Methodists to minister to groups that we have not been effective in reaching, making disciples and transforming the world.

JOE HARRIS: CONFERENCE INITIATIVES

The Annual Conference has responded in several ways to the changes in our churches brought about because of COVID, the unrest in our land and the unsettled nature to life as we have known it. We created two web pages that provided
resources at the beginning of the pandemic and additional resources and guidelines that outlined what churches should consider when planning reopenings. Most of the content was created by Oklahomans for Oklahomans. These resources are continually updated to provide our leaders with the most current information.

The reopening guidelines were crafted by conference staff in conjunction with doctors from several of our local churches, the CDC recommendations and the Oklahoma Center for Non-Profits. We also created weekly communications email blast updates that keep the conference informed with the latest information to help local churches ministries during this pandemic.

The conference has also responded to the demonstrations and heightened racial awareness across Oklahoma. We created a web page that contains resources, curriculum, videos and articles that help us deal with racism and discrimination where we find them in our communities and in our churches.

The extended cabinet has joined with leadership of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference to jointly study the book “CASTE” by Isabell Wilkerson. This book examines the history of racism and discrimination in the world as well as in our country. It offers in-depth challenges to everyone and opportunities to move forward in fair and equitable ways. Plans are to expand this study to clergy and laity.

Rev. Bessie Hamilton has assumed the position of conference coordinator of multi-ethnic ministries. Her experience as co-pastor of OKC-Quayle, leadership at the Langston University Wesley Foundation and her 20 years’ experience in community development brings needed skills in empowerment to our ethnic ministries.

The conference has changed its structure to include the new Minority Local Church Committee brought together by various groups in the conference sitting at a common table. We are also looking at Tulsa next year to have possible Orders meeting in May to observe the 100th anniversary of the Tulsa Massacre.

The Conference Communications Ministry continues to work to bring news from around the conference weekly. The ministry helped produce the TV special seen throughout the state this spring. It was put together in two weeks by Communications staff and funded by donors to the conference. Broadcast in Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Lawton and Chickasha, the special told stories of conference partners OCU, OIMC, Circle of Care and the OKUM Foundation. More than 22,000 watched the special with another 1,905 viewing it on YouTube, 1,964 on Facebook and 126 on Instagram.

The Communications Ministry also worked closely with GNTV to provide the virtual conference.

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**CCLI/CVLI Updates**

The 2021 budget for the Oklahoma Annual Conference was approved with the removal of conference coverage for CCLI/CVLI. Individual churches will need to add this cost to their 2021 church budgets. Renewal information will be sent out in January 2021. Information about CCLI, CVLI and OneLicense were sent to ministry leaders by email on Dec. 8. If you have additional questions after reading the provided information, send an email to tbeckman@okumc.org.

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**AC 2020 Video Reports**

- Special Offering: Disaster Response
- AC 2020 Scripture Reading
- OK Camps Report
- OCU Wesley Center
- Campus Ministry Report
- Cookson Hills Report
- Communications Report
- Volunteers in Mission Report
- Skyline Urban Ministry Report
- Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministries Report
- Oklahoma Methodist Manor
- OIMC Report
- Saint Paul School of Theology Report
- Retiree Service
- Bishop’s Closing Remarks
- Commission On the Status and Role of Women: Francis E. Willard Award
- Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation: Arise, St. Mark’s UMC
- Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation: Wells in the Congo
- Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation: Place of Worship
- Oklahoma City University School of Religion Report
- Epworth Villa Choir
- Circle of Care Report
- Neighborhood Services Organization Report
- AC 2020 Highlights
The clergy ordained at the 2020 Oklahoma Annual Conference gathered one at a time in the conference studio to receive the bishop’s laying of hands and their ordination stole. A limited number of family members were allowed to join their loved one at a safe distance during ordination.
Shoebox ministry thrives despite pandemic

BY REV. DAN EISCHEN

For many years, Westville-First in Adair County has sponsored a ministry of providing wrapped shoe boxes filled with toys, toiletries, hats and gloves, school supplies, and small toys to at-need children in the Westville school identified by the school administration.

Westville-First was closed from mid-March to mid-July, and it is now closed again due to low attendance because of the pandemic. Even so, members of the church put in extra effort to keep their annual Shoe Box Ministry active for the holidays.

Mary Bagby, who serves the church as chair of the Administrative Council, chairs the project. Although the shoe boxes are distributed to the school right before Christmas each year, members of the church work throughout the year donating shoe boxes and items to fill them. In December, members of the United Methodist Women meet to fill and wrap the shoe boxes.

The number of filled shoe boxes varies each year but according to Bagby, this has been a “banner year” for the shoe box ministry. Members donated enough to fill almost 100 shoe boxes, including a large number of gloves, 25 battery operated toothbrushes, and around 75 knitted hats donated – more than any previous year.

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A future educator. An aspiring family lawyer. Seminarians. These represent just a few of the students from the Oklahoma Conference who receive support from the special Sunday scholarship funds at the United Methodist General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Trinity Jordan knows how important these scholarships are during uncertain times.

“With the help of this scholarship, I have been able to focus my energy on learning to adapt to the unstable semester, because I have been less focused on the financial stress that comes with every new semester,” she said.

Jordan, a member of Elk City and student at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford, is one of 23 students who received financial assistance this last year.

She is studying psychology and hopes to someday give back to her community by working as an advocate for veterans and their loved ones, either as a partner in treatment or counselor who works to diagnose and treat those who are suffering.

According to Allyson Potts, executive director of loans and scholarships at the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, $5.6 million in financial assistance was distributed to more than 2,100 students for 2020.

Potts encourages congregations to support special Sunday offerings which fund a portion of the scholarships, including United Methodist Student Day, World Communion Sunday and Native American Sunday. The remaining funds for these awards come from gifts, annuities and endowments GBHEM has invested and administered for decades.

In 2019, 52 Oklahoma congregations contributed $14,519 in special offerings for those three days while our students were awarded $32,500 in scholarships and grants. These young people represent 17 churches in our annual conference. Students going to Oklahoma City University received one fourth of the total awarded.

Gifts for student scholarships do not go unnoticed.

“I am grateful and honored to receive assistance from my church,” said Jordan. “To be so loved by my church is like a big hug that served as a reminder that no matter what may lie ahead, my church family will be a constant line of support for me."

Rev. Derrek Belase, director of Connectional Ministry for the conference, encourages churches to find creative ways to take the offerings and utilize the denominational resources for the offerings, which can be found at [www.umcgiving.org/how-we-give#sundays].

“Imagine what would happen if every church made a small contribution to these special Sunday offerings,” Belase said. “So much good can happen when we support young people with their educations. Connectional giving is a great way to do that.”

Students who are members of The United Methodist Church may apply for a Fall 2021 GBHEM scholarship online between December 15, 2020 and March 24, 2021 at [www.gbhem.org/scholarshipapplication].

Student loans are also available with a credit worthy cosigner at interest rates as low as 3.75 percent, which is lower than average federal educational loan rates. The United Methodist Student Spring Loan application is open through May 5, 2021 at [www.gbhem.org/loanapplication].

2021 Special Sundays

Native American Sunday
April 18

World Communion Sunday
October 3

United Methodist Student Day
November 28
Epworth Villa’s newest centenarian

BY BETH CASE AND WES HOWL

If you were to ask anyone at Epworth Villa to name an amazing centenarian, they would unanimously answer, “Betty Harding.”

Harding was born at the Chilocco Indian School in Oklahoma where her parents were on faculty. Her second husband of 1/4 Cherokee heritage was a student at Chilocco. He would listen to her playing the piano and was smitten. Although students could not fraternize with the faculty families, years later, a set of circumstances would lead to a reunion and marriage.

Harding moved to Apache, earned a degree in piano at the Oklahoma College for Women, and pursued additional study out of state. She and her first husband owned a Ford dealership in Apache. In addition to helping with management of the dealership, Harding was the organist at the Methodist Church for 35 years and taught private piano lessons. She remained in Apache until her first husband passed away.

In 1983, she married Mike Harding, who had listened to her piano playing at the Chilocco school nearly 50 years before. During that time, he became a baker, served in World War II, and became the president of Krispy Kreme donuts.

Betty Harding, a resident of Epworth Villa, plays the piano in Epworth Villa’s Brill Chapel. Harding, who turned 100 years old on Dec. 11, is a lifelong pianist and long-time member of the United Methodist Church. Recently, Harding played a piano duet with Wes Howl, who plays the organ at Epworth Villa. Their duet was featured as part of the Epworth Villa choir performance shared during the 2020 Annual Conference. The video can be found here on the Oklahoma Conference’s YouTube channel.

For many years, Betty and Mike Harding enjoyed travel, golf, and family. They eventually moved to Epworth Villa in September 1991. Since that time, she has been one of the most active accompanists for worship and social events in the Epworth Villa community. And to this day, Betty Harding is still playing the piano for worship services in Epworth Villa’s Brill Chapel. Organist Wes Howl likened her devotion to preparation and study of musical score to that of a teenager in a conservatory.

“I have collaborated with many musicians through the years, but I have found Betty to be the most sensitive, musical partner of any I have known,” Howl said. “Playing with her is a delight usually found only in higher level chamber musicians. She has never sought the spotlight but appreciates the opportunities afforded at Epworth to share her gifts and contribute to her chosen community.”

On Betty becoming a centenarian, Epworth Villa’s CEO, Ron Kelly said, “God has given us a gift in Betty Harding. By being a servant and sharing her gift with her community, she has found a way to thrive. Today we celebrate Betty and thank her for a lifetime of service to the church and others.”

Photo submitted by Beth Case.
Last year, the Academy for Innovative Ministry taught its 17 participants how to make a Ministry Action Plan, or MAP, to help make their ministry dreams a reality. None of the MAPs included instructions for a pandemic.

Fast forward to September 2020, and adaptability is the name of the game. Rev. Derrek Belase, director of Connectional Ministry for the Oklahoma Conference, said the academy has had to adapt both its approach and its lessons for the 12 participants in this year’s cohort.

“What we’re seeing in the second academy is that adaptive thinkers can make changes in the midst of changes,” Belase said. “We saw this in the first academy participants in what they’re able to do, and we’re seeing it again in the second academy.”

The academy is intended to serve as a form of research and development for new ministry ideas. It teaches its participants how to examine their ministry contexts to see what needs are not being met by the church and how to make a plan to meet those needs.

“We’re wanting to invest in the new,” Belase said. “What do you want to take a risk on? If we were a corporation, what’s the research and development? What’s something we can fail at, and how do we take the next step?”

The academy’s first cohort received grants to help fund their ministry projects, but the pandemic has caused many of those plans to change. Rev. Trey Witzel, whose project was centered on reinvigorating Guthrie-First, was reappointed less than a year
after the first academy ended. Combined with the reappointment of the church’s associate pastor and the start of the pandemic, Witzel was unable to continue to implement the project himself. He handed all of his documentation to Sara Martin, who now leads Guthrie-First and is a member of the academy’s second cohort.

“The goal had always been to help Guthrie-First return to being autonomous in leadership again,” Witzel said. “We thought this was a good time to transition to that.”

After receiving feedback from the academy’s first cohort, local church leader development has been emphasized in the academy’s curriculum. Belase said developing a lay leadership team expanded to a full two-month session to address pulling a leadership team together and dealing with resistance to change when the time comes.

“We did not have enough leadership development for local churches in the first academy,” Belase said. “Innovative ministry is not just about the pastors; it’s about having a strong lay leadership team in the churches.”

Having a leadership team in place helped Rev. Dane Lemmons adapt his ministry’s recovery work to the pandemic. The Keepers of Faith, Hope and Recovery ministry through Stillwater-Highland Park had two main areas: a weekly 12-step meeting and sober social gatherings. The pandemic forced the ministry to cancel all social gatherings and move recovery groups online, which caused participation to drop. They were also forced to delay a planned Keepers Worship Service geared toward those in addiction recovery.

Rather than focus on what they could no longer do, the leadership team – which Lemmons referred to as The Committee – examined what other needs the ministry could meet. They decided to develop tools and resources to help recovering addicts connect with sober work and housing options.

“Amid active addiction, the only connections a person makes is who has his or her drug of choice and who will use with them, so it’s important that people in recovery connect with other people and realize that there are people out there that want to help them,” Lemmons said. “We have put worship plans on the back burner, but we will still be doing this eventually. We would rather delay the start than start and not have it be successful.”

Despite significant budget changes at the conference level – including the elimination of New Places funding – Belase said there will be a third cohort after the current academy ends. Both Belase and Rev. Chris Tiger, director of New Faith Communities, work to raise outside funds to help ensure the academy can continue.

“From a purely conference director standpoint, this is the kind of thing we can’t let go in the midst of a budget change. We need to find ways to fund the academy,” Belase said. “This pandemic will be gone, we hope and pray; that doesn’t mean that innovation and creativity in ministry won’t be needed. We’re going to continue to do this work because the church will continue to change.”

With the pandemic affecting every aspect of church life, Belase said it’s only natural that the academy would also adapt its approach and curriculum to meet the needs of its participants. He anticipates deep and reflective community engagement to be present in the projects the current cohort will develop in the spring.

“Our local churches and pastors are all adapting right now. By virtue of the situation we’re in, they’re all innovating, they’re all adapting,” Belase said. “We want to come alongside them as long as we can.”

Lemmons believes it’s an understatement to say 2020 has been a challenging year. He said finding new and safe ways to meet the needs of recovering addicts has motivated him to develop forms of communication that can continue after the pandemic ends.

“The thing we have tried to remember during the pandemic is not be afraid to try new things,” said Lemmons. “Since it is an unprecedented time, then let us do unprecedented ministry in the name of Jesus Christ.”
Rev. Dr. Lois V. Glory-Neal receives Distinguished Graduate Award

Leawood, KS and Oklahoma City, OK – Saint Paul School of Theology is pleased to announce that Rev. Dr. Lois V. Glory-Neal is the winner of the 2020 Distinguished Graduate Award.

Born in the Cherokee Nation, Rev. Dr. Glory-Neal was the first Native American woman to be received into full connection as an ordained elder in The United Methodist Church. She became the first Native American District Superintendent in 1992. Rev. Dr. Glory-Neal graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree from Oklahoma City University in 1984. She continued her education by earning her Master of Divinity from Saint Paul School of Theology in 1988.

The Distinguished Graduate Award is presented annually at Saint Paul School of Theology. Due to COVID-19 constraints, Rev. Dr. Glory-Neal was recently presented her award at an intimate, socially distanced gathering at the Oklahoma Conference UMC offices in Oklahoma City. A video tribute honoring her years of service in the church and community can be found online at https://youtu.be/054Tp4mlYaY.

“The Rev. Dr. Glory-Neal served God faithfully in ministry as an ordained elder and as District Superintendent – the first Native American woman to do both. Generations of people in ministry are the recipients of her faithful and trailblazing work. It is truly our privilege to have this opportunity to honor her,” says Dr. Anne C. Walker, Saint Paul associate dean of academic programs and executive director of the Oklahoma campus.

Rev. Lois Glory-Neal (second from left) was awarded the 2020 Distinguished Graduate Award from Saint Paul School of Theology. The award was bestowed at a private event at the Oklahoma Conference office. Also pictured, left to right: Rev. David Wilson, Neil Blair and Bishop James Nunn. Photo courtesy Saint Paul School of Theology.
This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

1 John 4:9
OCU plans Virtual Youth Service Day

For nearly 40 years, Oklahoma City University has hosted United Methodist youth for an annual Youth Service Day and welcomed them to campus. As with everything else this past year, COVID-19 has altered plans.

This year’s event will connect Methodist youth in a virtual setting, and youth groups from across the Oklahoma Conference are invited to submit videos ahead of the gathering. Each group that participates will receive a gift package with a variety of OCU-branded goodies and snacks for watch parties.

“In a time full of challenges, we hope to highlight the ways God is still working through our state’s youth,” said Rev. Elizabeth Horton-Ware, director of OCU Religious Life.

Youth groups that would like to participate are invited to email Horton-Ware for a full list of details and instructions at erhortonware@okcu.edu.

Submissions are due Feb. 15 and will be open for votes between Feb. 16 and March 5.

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spst.edu
GBCS offers free lectionary curriculum for youth

T he General Board of Church and Society has published its Year B lectionary curriculum for youth. The curriculum is the last in the “Connecting Faith and Justice Youth Curriculum” series to complete the lectionary set.

The year-long curriculum for junior and high school students runs from Nov. 29, 2020 through Dec. 26, 2021. It was written by a diverse group of educators, youth pastors, ministers, missionaries and other leaders. The standalone lessons last about an hour and are designed to be flexible and adaptable to fit the context of various youth ministries.

To download the curriculum, visit umcjustice.org/resources.

Ministry in a Minute

Chuck Stewart, center, was named the recipient of the He Worked For Us Award at the 2020 Oklahoma Annual Conference. The award was presented by Herschel Beard, associate lay leader for the conference. Stewart is the long-time lay leader for the Oklahoma Conference. He is also the executive director for Camp Egan, one of three United Methodist camps in the state. Left to right: Beard, Stewart, and Bishop James Nunn.

Photo by Derrek Belase.
Save the Date

Second Annual Women’s Retreat
Feb. 19-20, 2021 | Cross Point Camp
Cost: $65/person until Dec. 18; $75/person after
$25 deposit may be required
Deadline to register is Feb. 5, 2021
https://mailchi.mp/710994833789/2021-womens-retreat

Employment


- Director of Student Ministries. St. Paul UMC, Abilene, Texas; full-time. If interested, please email Rev. Steve Patterson at spatterson@stpaulabilene.org or call 806-570-7149.

- Director of Children’s Ministry. St. Paul UMC, Louisville, Kentucky; full-time. Includes benefits. Submit resume to Karla Temple at 2000 Douglas Blvd., Louisville, KY, 40205. For more information call 502-459-1595 or email info@stpaulchurchky.org.

Appointments

- Gwendolyn Collins-Derrick, from co-pastor at Tulsa Initiative, to Kingdom Fellowship Tulsa, effective July 1.
- Cali Eck, from OKC- New Hope UMC to Leave of Absence, effective June 20.
- Lisa Hines, from Adair/Foyil to withdrawn, effective Nov. 1.
- Bob Howles, to co-pastor at Felt, effective Nov. 1.
- Sandy Howles, to co-pastor at Felt, effective Nov. 12.
- Jim Jones, from Checotah to Lost Creek, effective Jan. 1, 2021.
- Mike Laird, from OKC-Clark to Cordell, effective Jan. 1, 2021.
- Michael Long, from co-pastor at Tulsa Initiative to Kingdom Fellowship Tulsa, effective July 1.
- Pam Shirk, from Wanette UMC to not appointed, effective Oct.1.
- Earl Zellar, to Lenora, effective Dec. 1.
- Zach Zink, from OKC Chapel Hill to transitional leave of absence, effective Aug. 20.
Retired local pastor Carl T. Cochran, Jr. passed away on Oct. 27. He was 92 years old. Cochran served five churches in the Oklahoma Conference between 1988 and 1995, including Red Rock, Clinton-Bethel, Kiowa, Wister and Felt. A funeral service was held on Nov. 2 in Conroe, Texas.

Mike Mahaffey, a retired local pastor with the Oklahoma Conference, passed away on Nov. 14. Mahaffey pastored churches in the Oklahoma Conference for 20 years, including Morrison, Okay, Muskogee-Wesley, Fletcher, Catesby and Fairview. Services will be planned for a later date in 2021.

Rev. Marsha Purtell, age 69, passed away on Nov. 15 after 15 years of service in the Oklahoma Conference. Purtell served five churches, including Oktaha, Schulter, Muskogee-Wesley, Magnum-First and Tishomingo. She was serving as the chaplain at Epworth Villa at the time of her death. A celebration of life service was held on Nov. 24 at OKC-Quail Springs.

Rev. Don Bennett passed away on Nov. 18. Bennett served as a local pastor in the Oklahoma Conference in the 1960s. A service for the family was held after Thanksgiving.

Long-time pastor Rev. Nick Harris passed away on Nov. 23, just a month before his 80th birthday. Harris began his ministry in the Oklahoma Conference in 1969. He pastored churches in Carmen, Lamont, Ponca City-Albright and Fairview-First before leading OKC-First for 21 years. A memorial and celebration service have been delayed until a safer time.

Jean Moss passed away on Nov. 27 at the age of 91. She was married to Rev. Bill Moss, a pastor in the Oklahoma Conference between 1954 and 1989; he passed away in 2018. The family will hold services for Jean Moss sometime in the future. Stephens-Key funeral home in Pryor is handling arrangements.