

# Bishops returning to OKC after 36 years

By **HOLLY McCRAY**

Three quarters would buy you a gallon of gasoline, and a first-class stamp cost 13 cents when the denomination's Council of Bishops previously met in Oklahoma City. That was in Spring 1978.

The world's first test-tube baby was born that year — and

more than 900 members of a religious cult died in Jonestown, Guyana.

The TV drama "Dallas" made its debut, and "Grease" reigned in movie popularity.

The United Methodist Council of Bishops returns to downtown OKC on Nov. 2-7.

• The public is welcome to opening worship with the bishops at 4 p.m. that Sunday, in the sanctuary of St. Luke's United Methodist Church.

• During an invitation-only event Thursday, also at St. Luke's, the bishops will connect with members of Oklahoma's Native

American community. This Act of Repentance seeks to move the global Church toward reconciliation and healing relationships with indigenous people.

• Business sessions downtown are closed.

When this issue of *Contact* went to press, the bishops' meeting

agenda was not yet available. But some subjects they weighed 36 years ago surely remain relevant today.

In 1978, Oklahoma's Bishop Paul Milhouse also served as the Council's president.

In Oklahoma City, the bishops  
**See Bishops, page 4**



**SUBLIME SLIME** — Green glop drenches Skiatook's Vacation Bible School leaders, to reward the children for their mission project success that week. The loose-change collection was designated for Pearl's Hope, a UM Circle of Care ministry. Based on whether boys or girls collected the most money, Professor WOW or Tootie the Tool Girl would get slimed. The fundraising resulted in a tie, a double dousing, and a gift of \$290. Youngsters also met a challenge to collect more than 300 large toy building blocks, so Pastor Susan Whitley also got slimed. Pearl's Hope Director Julia McDonald said the agency always needs the toy blocks, and VBS Directors Joanna Darrow and Sharon Langenberg said that idea complemented the Workshop of Wonders theme. From left, Samantha Darrow, Rev. Whitley, and Leslie Allred get slimed by Miranda Stotz and Lindsay Dollar.

## Pray at noon for daily bread

### Ardmore makes time for The Lord's Prayer

Noontime doesn't mean just time for a ham-and-cheese sandwich in Ardmore.

Members of about 25 churches of various denominations in Ardmore, including Ardmore-First UMC, are setting their cellphone alarms to go off at noon as a daily reminder to stop and pray The Lord's Prayer.

On a recent day, a friend of Jessica Moffat Seay reported hearing at least 20 cellphone alarms go off at a restaurant and observing many diners stop to pray.

"Very cool!" said Rev. Seay, First UMC senior pastor.

The initiative drew praise from Larry Bauman, Ardmore District superintendent. "I believe praying this simple, yet profound and powerful, prayer can be a point of unity for all of us across the far too many divides of denomination and doctrine so evident in Christ's Body," Rev. Bauman said.

His phone alarm is set for noon, too.

The initiative Pray Down at Noon was founded by Terry Teykl of Houston, Texas, a prayer evangelist and UM clergyman who recently led two seminars for the district. Two weeks later, Seay spoke at a two-night community-wide faith celebration sponsored by the Ardmore ministers' alliance.

She challenged everyone there to join First UMC



in the intentional prayer time.

Residents also get a reminder to pray each noon from a billboard on Interstate 35 at the 12th Street exit.

The project is promoted on a Facebook page, The Lord's Prayer at Noon Daily, created by First UMC. Within 10 days after it launched, Seay said, 1,600 people saw the page and promised to pray.

"Some people in other time zones have asked how that works. You just pray at noon in your own time zone," she explained.

It is believed that the early Christians regularly spoke The Lord's Prayer at morning, noon, and night.

"Imagine the Body of Christ praying The Lord's Prayer all around the world. As it becomes noon in each time zone, our sisters and brothers will be praying for God's Kingdom to come and God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven," Bauman said.

## Stillwater-First secures Historical Site recognition

By **HOLLY McCRAY**

Through stained-glass windows, sunlight speckled faces as people waited Oct. 6 in the east foyer of Stillwater-First UMC. Heads turned to watch three men uncover a draped frame on the wall.

With a flourish, First Church officially became United Methodist Historic Site No. 489.

By happy chance, that site number correlates with the church's history. On Oct. 6, 1889, First Methodist Episcopal Church was established, birthed from the first of the historic Oklahoma Land Runs.

Not many Oklahoma houses of worship can count 125 years of continuous ministry. Fewer can claim they are '89er churches.

And Stillwater-First is one of only four United Methodist Historic Sites in the state. This designation is awarded by the denomination's General Commission on Archives & History.

Jerry Gill encourages more congregations to seek this special recognition. A keen historian who earned bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees in that field, Dr. Gill serves on the Oklahoma Conference Commission on Archives & History.

**See Historical, page 5**



**A circuit-riding preacher is depicted on the official plaque now installed at Stillwater-First.**

# CORR workshop pushes people to move beyond prejudice

By **HOLLY McCRAY**

The punch knocked Paul Saltzman off-balance. His knee barely touched down before he was running.

The white supremacists pursuing him were enraged by his voter registration work in Mississippi.

Although injured, he outran those men in 1965. But Saltzman reruns his memories each time his documentary film “The Last White Knight” is shown during his educational seminars about prejudice.

On Oct. 4, he led one of those seminars, sponsored by the Conference’s Commission on Race & Religion (CORR), hosted at Oklahoma City University.

Saltzman, a prolific filmmaker and TV producer, is founder of the nonprofit Moving Beyond Prejudice organization. More than 40,000 young people, youth-at-risk, and community groups have



**CORR Chairperson Rose Marie LeRoy presents a gift to filmmaker Paul Saltzman.**

attended his presentations.

At the CORR event, participants watched two Saltzman documentaries, “The Last White Knight” (2012) and “Prom Night

in Mississippi” (2009).

These films “evoke feeling and provoke discussion. We want to create safe space to have difficult conversation,” Saltzman said.

“God is using his gifts and talents as a film producer to bring these issues,” said Rose Marie LeRoy, CORR chairperson and pastor at Stilwell. “It’s important to relate to people of different backgrounds.”

When someone doesn’t know you, but they don’t like you, that’s prejudiced, a fourth-grader once told the filmmaker.

Saltzman defines prejudice as “a judgment of another person out of your own shame so that you will feel better.”

He has retrained himself to stop and reflect when he recognizes bias in himself. He follows the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12) and wants to act out of love.

“If we understand how preju-

dice works – the mechanics of it within our own psyche – then we can actually shift it.”

Such change involves overcoming fear as well as behavior patterns, according to research Saltzman has studied. He also learned meditation at an ashram and has undergone training by a center for nonviolence.

“Your decision-making is impaired when you are in fear,” he said.

He instructed the seminar participants to put their hands over their hearts and, simply, breathe. One breath can move a person from fear to neutrality, and the next breath can release love, he explained.

Saltzman’s recovery from that violent attack in 1965 took more than two breaths. The young civil rights worker from Canada quickly learned who struck him in the face, but when he sought justice from

a Mississippi court, the case was dismissed.

Four decades and many life experiences later, Saltzman called his attacker. The Klansman agreed to meet. Saltzman filmed their meetings, across five years, and “The Last White Knight” is the result.

When the men first spoke by phone, Saltzman said, he personally felt reconciled with Byron de la Beckwith Jr., who remains a KKK member.

“What is the reason to move beyond prejudice for you?” he asked his Oklahoma audience. “If your heart is contracted,” you miss out on many wonderful life experiences.

He advocated action based on love, not fear. “I think, on the whole, we are progressing. What do you think?”

Find more information about Saltzman’s nonprofit work at <http://MovingBeyondPrejudice.com>.



## Student ministry enjoys broad support

Visit the lower level of the Chapel most Wednesdays at lunchtime and you’ll be greeted by a buzz of activity. Beginning at 11:30 a.m., the Wesley Center hosts a free lunch that attracts one of the most diverse gatherings on the Oklahoma City University campus.

International students, dancers, faculty, housekeeping staff – the list goes on – come together for fellowship and good food.

Each week, a question printed on table cards invites conversation on issues of faith while people enjoy lunch. Some questions are more theoretical (“Can you be spiritual without being religious?”), but most seek reflection on current events from a perspective of faith (“How can we support people of faith when they are the victims of hate speech and violence?”)

This tradition started a few years ago when Jennifer Long directed the Wesley Center, which is the United Methodist campus ministry at OCU. At first, Rev. Long and a few students cooked a

simple meal for about two dozen people.

The ministry grew. It now regularly serves about 200 people, and sometimes the total is close to 300.

This academic year, the director of Sodexo Food Services on campus, Nirali Mickow, offered to help with the meal. Sodexo donates the food to provide an entrée, salad, vegetable, and bread for each diner. This wonderful blessing saves money for the ministry as well as time for the student volunteers, who previously shopped and cooked.

The Wesley Center provides paper goods, desserts, and sodas. And the ministry receives help with these as well. A monetary gift from the North Oklahoma City District churches funds most of those items and the pizzas served after Monday night Evensong worship. Lee Hall in the Academic Affairs office coordinated with Coca-Cola to make a generous donation of Coke and Dr Pepper products.

Additionally, local churches



**OCU junior Ivey Lawson, an Exercise Science major, prepares homemade cookies for the Wednesday at Wesley lunch.**

provide cookies on some Wednesdays, and students sometimes bake cookies and brownies.

“This meal offers our student interns and volunteers a wonderful

opportunity to serve the campus community,” said Rodney Newman, director of Religious Life. “We have a dedicated group that creates an atmosphere where all

## Who will you nominate?

Nominations for the OCU Bishop’s Scholarship are now being accepted for the 2015-16 academic year.

The Bishop’s Scholarship awards full tuition to three incoming freshmen students who are members of The United Methodist Church and plan to pursue careers in Christian service by majoring in one of the degree programs of OCU’s Wimberly School of Religion. A student must be nominated by the pastor of the teen’s local church. Find the guidelines and nomination form at [www2.okcu.edu/religiouslife/scholarships.aspx](http://www2.okcu.edu/religiouslife/scholarships.aspx) or contact Charles Neff, [cneff@okcu.edu](mailto:cneff@okcu.edu), 405-208-5060.

Nominations should be submitted to Rev. Neff’s office by Dec. 15.

are welcome and where people see that the Chapel is a cool place to be. We appreciate all those who recognize the significance of this ministry by investing in its success.”

The Oklahoma United Methodist  
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Strength for the journey: A collection of ideas and thoughts from our bishop

# Living in the tension

*"I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:1-3)*

By **BISHOP ROBERT HAYES JR.**

Today I feel compelled to address what I believe is the most volatile issue in U.S. culture and within our denomination: human sexuality. More specifically: homosexuality and same-gender marriage.

Debate has intensified since the recent Supreme Court decision that made it possible for same-gender couples to legally marry in five states, including here in Oklahoma.

This subject is so provocative that mere mention of the topic can trigger strong emotions and sides are chosen. There seems little tolerance by people of any view for those who hold a different opinion, or for those who are neutral. And silence on the subject is not a helpful response.

We know that our United Methodist Church says the practice of homosexuality is "incompatible with Christian teaching," (paragraph 161.f, *Book of Discipline*) and that marriage is "shared fidelity between a man and a woman" (paragraph 161.b, *Book of Discipline*). But the U.S. legal system and the voices that cry out for equality and justice from their perspective are saying something totally different.

The tension between these two stances literally has dominated our Church's con-



**Bishop Hayes**

versation for a long, long time. Until we acknowledge and address the anger, pain, and passion generated by this subject, it will continue to divide us.

Yet a way forward remains unclear. I admit that I have no easy answers. I am not suggesting a fix-it-all solution within these few paragraphs.

As a bishop in the Church, I believe that I have an obligation to voice hope and reassurance in the midst of our differences.

I feel there is wisdom available to us in the lessons woven into the fabric of our Christian history — lessons that will help us to see these issues from another perspective. They may even teach us how to treat one another as we search for answers to our future.

## Division and problems are not new

When you look at the history of the Christian church, you will discover that controversy, disagreement, and discord were present from the very beginning. From the moment the 12 were sent out by Jesus to "make disciples" (Matthew 28:19), there were problems.

A primary hindrance was Rome itself. The empire viewed the Christian movement with suspicion, believing it was an effort to overthrow that system of government. So persecution was the way they dealt with this newfound faith.

Another great obstacle was the Jewish religion. The Pharisees and rabbis saw an imminent threat to their authority in the masses of people who were following Jesus. They sought to crush that perceived menace wherever it existed, giving rise to prosecutors such as Saul.

Even the question of who was eligible to be a disciple sparked arguments.

Some members in the early church insisted that only Jews could be followers of Christ, but Acts 8, 9, and 10 paint a different picture. Stephen baptizes the Ethiopian; Paul is converted on the road to Damascus and chosen as the "apostle to the Gentiles"; Peter converts all the members of Cornelius'

household and preaches Good News to non-Jewish believers.

Additional problems in that first era included the role of women in the new movement, the practice of circumcising those who converted, eating food forbidden by Jewish law, and a host of other issues. Yes, there was a multitude of problems that plagued the early church.

My point is this: Somehow those early Christians found a way to live together amid the tension of their differences!

What did they have that enabled them to overcome their arguments and disputes? What was the key to their success? I often contemplate those questions.

And precisely at that point, the passage Ephesians 4:1-3 comes to me!

## A plan of action

The author of the letter to the church at Ephesus makes sure his readers understand that *unity* is his theme. But it is not a form of unity that declares everyone must think alike. Rather, it is the unity demonstrated in the virtues befitting a person who follows Christ: humility, gentleness, and patience.

The writer goes on to say that we should make every effort to "pour out ourselves for each other in acts of love, alert at

noticing differences and quick at mending fences." (*The Message*)

This scripture has led me to action. I will pursue a dialogue with individuals in our Conference, scheduling times to meet together and discuss this controversial subject that creates such discord among us.

Early next year I will invite both pastors and laity to talk with me and with each other, not in an effort to change anyone's mind, but committed to find ways that we can be the Body of Christ, working together — ways we can live faithfully within the tension that exists within the Church and our society.

We must find the path that leads us to the unity that was present in the early church. We owe it to the Church we love to do this.

And for me personally, I intend to govern my ministry among you by trying to fulfill the duties set forth in paragraph 403.e of the *Book of Discipline*: A bishop should have ... "a passion for the unity of the church. The role of the bishop is to be the shepherd of the whole flock and thereby provide leadership toward the goal of understanding, reconciliation, and unity within the church — The United Methodist Church and the church universal."

With God's help, I intend to fulfill that calling.

## Employment

**Organist/Pianist:** Tulsa-Centenary UMC. Part-time. Email: coch50@icloud.com.

**Organist/Pianist:** Nowata First UMC. Also direct music. Part-time. Contact Cheryl Newton, 918-273-1562.

**Nursery Attendant:** Bartlesville-Oak Park UMC. Part-time. More information: Karen Distefano, 918-440-9213. For application, email: oakparkumc@cableone.net.

**Youth Director:** Jenks UMC. Part-time. Call church, 918-299-5462, or Dave Karges, 918-706-8406.

**Organ/piano accompanist:** Midwest City-St. Matthew UMC. Send resume to smumcsprc@gmail.com or call Barbara Wallace, 405-550-0852.

**Pianist:** Blanchard-First UMC. Email: mychurch@blanchardfumc.org. Call: 405-485-3579.

**Music Director:** Moore-First UMC. Part-time. Contact Rob Harris, 405-794-6671, pastor.rob@moorechurch.com.

**Youth Director:** OKC-Putnam City UMC. Part-time. Contact Bob Canary, bobcanary@sbcglobal.net.

**Youth Director:** Shattuck-First UMC. Full-time. Housing provided. Contact Rick Trobaugh, revtrobaugh@gmail.com.

**Assistant Youth Leader:** OKC-Chapel Hill UMC. Contact Jon Cunningham, 405-751-0755.

**Youth Minister:** OKC-Sunny Lane UMC. Part-time. Call 405-677-3347.



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— John Wesley

## Shopping online through UMCmarket can benefit your church

When you shop online and make a purchase through [www.UMCmarket.org](http://www.UMCmarket.org), your local church or a ministry of your choice receives a donation from the retailer.

This new online portal for fundraising has been vetted and proven as a safe shopping environment by the General Council on Finance & Administration (GCFA) and partner Zebraplace LLC, which operates the program.

The Oklahoma Conference Treasurer's Office has registered our local churches and Conference agencies to receive funds through UMCmarket.

Every store at UMCmarket has agreed to give a percentage of the purchase amount as a donation. The participating retailers are well known.

And there is no added cost for you, the shopper, or The United Methodist Church.

The 2014 holiday season nears. UMCmarket also can grow your Christmas goodwill. As you buy gifts online to fulfill holiday wishes for family and friends, you also are giving more to your church.



UMNS photo by Kats Berry

Here is how to use the program.

- Go to the UMCmarket website and click on the "Get Started" button.
- Sign up for free membership by entering your email address or Facebook account name, and create a password.
- Follow the prompts to find your church or UM agency.
- Search for a retailer by name or category, click on that page, and shop online as you regularly would.

Payment is secured through Vanco Services.

The program's unique transaction engine collects the vendor's commission amount every time a member makes a purchase from a participating store.

Commissions are converted into donations to the organizations within The United Methodist Church. Within 30-90 days, stores send out the contributions generated through UMCmarket.

Once your church (or ministry) reaches \$100 in total donations, a check will be mailed.

UMCmarket operates year-round.

## Mobile app makes donating easy on-the-go

Use a new mobile-device app to make donations to your church wherever you may be — sitting in a pew or traveling the world.

The app "Easy2Give" was developed by the United Methodist General Council on Finance & Administration, in partnership with Vanco Services.

Oklahoma Conference Treasurer Brian Bakeman recently provided information about this new giving tool.

It's available now as a free download for Android devices. An Apple iOS version is scheduled for release by year's end.

All churches with Vanco accounts are able to receive funds through "Easy2Give."

To donate, use the app to search for and find the local church of your choice. Using a debit or credit card, make a contribution of \$5 or more. You will receive email confirmation.

You can even specify a "home church," to make regular donations very convenient.

More information: <http://easy2give.net>.

## Mission board allots \$1 million to match #GivingTuesday donations

The General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) was among the nonprofit, corporate, and civic groups invited to a recent event at the White House to promote #GivingTuesday, which will be Dec. 2.

#GivingTuesday seeks to provide an alternative to traditional holiday shopping. On the Tuesday after Thanksgiving, people around the world donate to charitable causes.

The movement originated in 2012 from the United Nations Foundation, the 92nd Street Y in New York City, and the Microsoft corporation.

**Oklahoma missionaries and missions are supported through giving to The Advance. Find their names and project numbers at:**

[www.umcmmission.org/Give-to-Mission/Search-for-Projects](http://www.umcmmission.org/Give-to-Mission/Search-for-Projects)

In 2013, United Methodists gave \$6.5 million dollars to The Advance, a channel for second-mile, designated giving to numerous missions across the Church.

This year, GBGM will match up to \$1 million\* in gifts made online Dec. 2 through the link [www.umcmmission.org/give](http://www.umcmmission.org/give) for Advance projects.

And an Advance special award will go to the annual conference that raises the most Advance funds online that day.

"The United Methodist Church raised more money last year than any other organization," said Shawn Bakker, GBGM deputy general secretary.

"We were invited to the White House to share the story of how United Methodists were mobilized to give and the impact that

the generosity has had on mission throughout the world."

For promotional resources, go to [www.umcmmission.org/givingtuesday](http://www.umcmmission.org/givingtuesday).

(\*A maximum of \$2,500 per individual gift to a project will be dispersed as matching funds. A project may receive a maximum of \$25,000 in matching funds. GBGM will allocate matching amounts, dollar for dollar, to donations received online Dec. 2 between 12 a.m. and 11:59 p.m. EST.)

— United Methodist News Service

## Bishops:

Continued from page 1

spent two days studying "The Family and Morality."

They heard Gov. David Boren express concern about a growing divisiveness among people who didn't agree on issues.

"We have increased our technical ability, but have not come to grips with understanding one another," said the future president of the University of Oklahoma.

Family life. Technology. Polarization. Those subjects dominate today, too.

But the bishops' 1978 agenda — on file with the General Commission on Archives & History — and 1978 stories in *Contact* reveal nuances in the topics as well as issues specific to that time.

**On Nov. 1 in Oklahoma City, a panel discussion of human sexuality will include several bishops. To view the live stream, 8-10 a.m., go to <http://umc.org/connectional-table-webcast>.**

The seminar on family addressed divorce. "An accelerated rate of clergy family break-up" was of great concern, Bishop Dale White of New Jersey explained in a *Contact* interview.

"Until recent years many ministers were forced to hand in their credentials when the divorce took place," he noted. "Congregations are much more tolerant."

• The Council also reaffirmed the Gen-

eral Conference's support of the proposed Equal Rights Amendment in the United States. A call was issued to all levels of the Church for "a more adequate ministry with and for the aged."

• Reports of human rights violations in Turkey and South Africa had spurred letters expressing concern to government officials. News of evangelistic zeal in Latin America encouraged the Council.

• An unprecedented consultation with representatives of the African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, and Christian Methodist Episcopal denominations prompted celebration.

• Restoration was almost complete for Wesley's Chapel in London, dedicated in

1778 by the founder of Methodism. It was to be rededicated exactly 200 years later.

Opening worship in 1978 was in the Bishop Angie Smith Chapel at Oklahoma City University. The city's Chamber of Commerce hosted a luncheon forum. At least one Council session was at the Myriad (now the Cox Convention Center).

A total of 58 bishops' wives and widows also had traveled to Oklahoma City. They participated in the seminar about family life. (The first female bishop was elected in 1980.)

*Contact* reported on this special group of women. One always did the unexpected. If proceedings bored her, she exercised at the back of the room. She once climbed a tree to better view a parade.

[www.umc.org/news-and-media/the-church-responds-to-ebola](http://www.umc.org/news-and-media/the-church-responds-to-ebola)

## Ebola: grief flows in worship services

“We come in expecting a celebration, a day of worship, but it always turns into a funeral,” said Emmanuel Shanka Morris, pastor of Spencer Memorial UMC, Charlotte, N.C.

Rev. Morris is Liberian, as is the associate pastor there. So are nearly nine out of 10 members of his church; another 10 percent are from Sierra Leone.

Since the Ebola outbreak began, every Sunday at least one member reports the death of another relative in the two West African countries hit hardest by the deadly virus.

The congregation prayed and fasted every Wednesday this month. Using 2 Chronicles 7:11-22 and Ezra 8:23 as guiding scriptures, the church interceded for the people of Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea.

Across the United States, UM churches with native Liberians and Sierra Leoneans tell similar stories of grief and suffering, while trying to rally support for medical relief.

Albert Travell, a member of First UMC, Arlington, Texas, said seven of his family members in Liberia died in July. Now the remaining family is having trouble getting food.

“I am trying to send them some money so they can buy food. I am praying by the grace of God, everything will be all right soon,” Travell said.

Liberians living in the U.S. are stepping up contributions to family and friends in their homeland because many people there are unable to work and are not getting paid, said Richard Stryker of the North Alabama Conference and a native of Liberia.

His wife lost a high school classmate to Ebola. Four out of eight people in that classmate’s family also died, after waiting days for an ambulance to arrive to take them to the hospital.

“Sanitation, communication, lack of facilities remain major problems for the prevention of this disease,” he said. “I believe people from the West that are going to help assume a certain level of basic care. That is nonexistent.”

Melvin Morgan of Dallas, a Heart of Africa Fellowship member, recently lost his sister and two nieces to Ebola in Liberia.

“As a human, I weep, because Jesus himself wept,” Morgan said. “But as a Christian, I also put on my faith, because the Bible says with God all things are possible.”

— *United Methodist News Service, Oct. 21*



UMNS photo by Phileas Jusu

People in Mongere, Sierra Leone, gather at the village hut to hear an educational message about Ebola from The UMC.

## Ebola: life-saving text messages go out

The United Methodist Church is sending out hope and life-saving information to Africa twice daily – in 160 characters or less.

FrontlineSMS, a free texting service, doesn’t rely on Internet connection and can send messages to groups. It is being used by the Church, especially to reach pastors and members in remote places.

Mixed with prayers and scrip-

tures are informative messages, such as “Ignore rumors such as ‘Simply saying Ebola’ aloud transmits the disease. That is false!”

By having trusted clergy leaders relay the messages, the Church aims to counter misinformation still swirling about Ebola.

There are 324 churches in Sierra Leone, and 609 in Liberia.

— *UMNS, Sept. 23*

## Commission can provide help to apply for historical designation

If your church wants to apply for United Methodist Historic Site status, you will find enthusiastic, practical help offered by the Conference’s Commission on Archives & History and archivist Christina Wolf.

Wolf summarized the process. Church trustees send a letter of intent, including historical rationale, to Commission Chairperson John Beckman, a Lawton-First member. A team performs a site visit. Throughout, documentation is crucial.

When the commission votes to approve a request, a resolution is drafted and presented to Annual Conference delegates. If passed, the resolution is signed by the bishop and annual conference secretary. It then goes to the General Commission on Archives & History, housed in New Jersey.

That commission holds the authority to grant historical status and send an official plaque to the church.

Wolf said designation as a Historic Site

is based on a church’s significance in an annual conference or jurisdiction.

“This is a first step. Then you can apply for United Methodist Heritage Landmark designation,” she said. That conveys “national or international significance and requires General Conference approval.”

Only one Heritage Landmark has been recognized in Oklahoma.

Jerry Gill of Stillwater-First, a Conference commission member, noted Historic

Site status does involve “extensive research and historical documentation.”

He also said that effort is invaluable to tell the ongoing story of the United Methodist witness for Christ in the world.

The Oklahoma commission is updating its online information at [www.okumc.org](http://www.okumc.org). The General Commission website is [www.gcuh.org](http://www.gcuh.org).

To contact Wolf: 405-208-5919, [cwolf@okcu.edu](mailto:cwolf@okcu.edu).



Gladeen Allred, left, and Linda Greenshields tell a fashion story Oct. 6 at Stillwater-First UMC. Greenshields’ costume evokes styling in the late 1800s.

## Historical:

Continued from page 1

He gave three reasons for seeking Historic Site recognition.

- To lift up First UMC for its historic ’89er church status and for its 125-year legacy of mission and ministry to the local community and beyond Stillwater.

- To encourage other UM churches organized in the Land Run era to share their stories.

- To help document the collective influence of those early Methodist churches on the founding values and early history of Oklahoma.

Before 1889, the Indian Mission Conference of The Methodist Episcopal Church was already ministering in the territory. But opening the Unassigned Lands to white settlement spurred “explosive growth” for the Methodist movement, according to materials distributed at the recent ceremony.

“The presence and influence of Methodism was so pervasive that it was said where 10 people gathered, one of them was a Methodist preacher,” Gill said. The Stillwater church “was in the forefront of this movement.”

## Spiritual signposts:

### 4 UM Historic Sites in Oklahoma =

Mount Scott Kiowa UMC, No. 345  
Epworth University (OKC-Epworth UMC), No. 415  
Newtown UMC, No. 465  
Stillwater-First UMC, No. 489

### UM Heritage Landmark in Oklahoma =

Newtown UMC, near Okmulgee

First Methodist Episcopal Church, so named in 1889, was the first church of any denomination officially organized in Stillwater, according to the research.

To charter, a group of 25 people gathered upstairs in the town’s first large building, at Ninth Avenue and Main Street.

Today membership totals 2,218; worship attendance averages 572. Ministry continues in expansive structures at Seventh and Duck, the church’s third location.

Member Gladeen Allred attended the plaque dedication. She is the fourth generation in her family active at First Church. Her parents married there in 1926.

Jim and Ann Enix agreed the recognition is a milestone for their church. And church historian Will Paine spoke of the challenges



Pastor Mike Chaffin, left, and Mayor John Bartley, also a Stillwater-First member, stand beside the commemorative wall display on Oct. 6.

for people settling in the territory – even for preachers.

“Some stuck it out, and that’s why we are here today,” he said.

Two books by Paine track this story of faith across more than a century. They are “So great a cloud of witnesses” and “How Firm a Foundation.”

“This church has ... helped ‘spread scriptural holiness’ across the Oklahoma frontier, and ... has been continuously recognized ... since its founding,” states a resolution approved by the Annual Conference this year.

# Philippines journey

## Young delegates weather storm and debates

Oklahomans said their experience was eye-opening when they attended the Global Young People's Convocation and Legislative Assembly in the Philippines in July.

Enduring a typhoon was not the sole reason for that description, although the storm did force a change of venue.

The seven-member delegation counted among 300 youths and adult leaders from 34 countries. They worshipped together, adopted five petitions to the 2016 General Conference as well as a call for unity, and assembled 600 packets of locally produced food for distribution in that nation by UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief).

Katie Shewey of Enid wrote, "It was the most proud and the most disappointed I have ever been to be a United Methodist."

She explained, "I loved coming together with other Methodists from around the world and worshipping God together, no matter what language we spoke.

"I also liked our statement of unity, stating that, no matter what happens with legislation, the Church will stay united.

"I was incredibly disappointed, however, when it came to legislation. I thought that holy conferencing would look like gentle words and calm tempers. Instead it looked like rage, hateful words, and arguing to make a point.

"That should never be the case. No matter how big our differences in beliefs are, we should never act like that," Shewey said.

The UMCOR project remind-



**In the Philippines, delegates from the South Central Jurisdiction in the U.S. pray for Miranda Luster of Stillwater.**

ed her of the Church's purpose "to love and help the people who need it most."

Morgan Ross of Oklahoma City said the event "was an amazing time of growth in my own beliefs. It made me question and really re-evaluate everything I believe and why."

One of the most meaningful moments for her was attending worship at a church in Manila.

"The hospitality shown to us was amazing, and I loved getting to teach the children and youth songs that we sing in America and also assisting new friends from Africa in teaching the children an African song/dance," Ross wrote.

For the first time, Jay Williams of Wewoka traveled beyond the United States.

"GYPLCA changed my life in many ways!" he declared. "I really had a great time learning and being

involved with all the voting rules and procedures.

"Although typhoon Glenda threw everything off schedule, it was fun improvising and managing with what we could. It was an experience that you wouldn't want to miss, especially a person going into ministry."

Adult sponsor Matt Franks said the event "showed me the complexities of a worldwide United Methodist connection." He is pastor at Locust Grove UMC.

"I had a great conversation with people from the German delegation ... about how some of the issues they deal with ... differ from those that we deal with in the United States."

Also attending from the Oklahoma Conference were Kirsten Schiska of Fairview, Miranda Luster of Stillwater, and Drew Walker of Calumet.

## District realignment work

# Youth coordinators discuss transitioning

District youth coordinators recently met together about their roles as Oklahoma shifts from 12 to eight districts, to become effective June 1.

The realignment plan was approved by Annual Conference delegates in May.

The meeting for the coordinators, paid and volunteer, was at the United Methodist Ministry Center.

One result of the Sept. 16 session: suggestions for both the District Transition Teams and the five district superintendents present that day.

- The youth leaders agreed that Missional Areas will be crucial to network groups of churches within each district.

- Their desire for better communication, at all levels, was voiced again and again.

- They explored how to assist the teams.

- And they reminded everyone of the overarching goal for all ministry: the Church's mission to make disciples.

"Always continue to look outward, look for others outside your local youth group. That facilitates us going out into the world," said one coordinator.

For transition teams, the leaders urged that meetings have specific purpose. They declared: Don't just call a meeting because it's something you can do. And they long for clarity in terminology, noting the numerous layers of infrastructure as well as the acronyms used in The United

Methodist Church but not familiar to everyone.

Leading the discussion were Adam Brinson, who co-chairs the Conference Council on Youth Ministry, and Diana Northcutt, whose Conference staff duties include youth coordinator.

Brinson told the superintendents, "We want to do what we can as youth directors. A lot of us are excited, and, equally, youth."

Another director remarked to Cabinet members, "The youth are not only our future but also are the church of today."

Stillwater District Superintendent Tish Malloy reported that each transition team includes a youth ministry representative.

On Jan. 9-10 at Camp Egan, a weekend retreat will be open to both adult volunteers and paid staff who work with youth, said Bartlesville District Superintendent George Warren.

Two existing youth ministry efforts got the group's attention as potential models.

Scott Spencer described how the four Ponca City churches pooled funds to hire a youth director in that city. And Rev. Dr. Warren explained multiple communication tools are used to connect every youth pastor in his district. No one tool reaches all, the group concurred.

Brinson concluded, "There's a passion for youth ministry in this room that I haven't seen for eight years."

— Holly McCray

## Briefly

### Order your 2015 calendars online

Order online now to receive a 2015 Oklahoma Conference Calendar. Cost is \$10.

**All calendar orders must be placed online.**

Oklahoma camp dates, special meetings, event dates, the lectionary, and colors for the Christian year are included on this calendar—a helpful tool in local church planning.

Each appointed clergyperson receives a free calendar. Clergy do not need to place an order, unless more than one calendar is wanted.

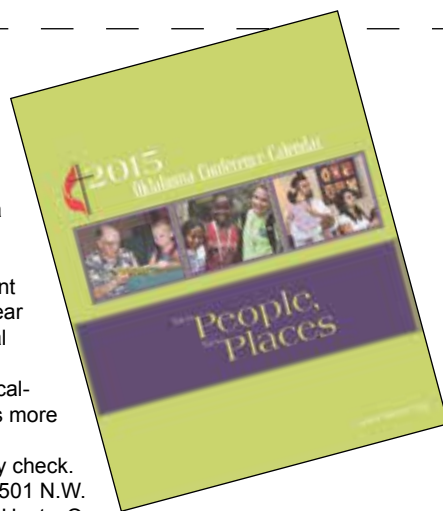
You have the option to pay by credit card or by check. Mail checks to: United Methodist Ministry Center, 1501 N.W. 24th St., Oklahoma City, OK 73106, attn: Rebekah Hasty. On the memo line write: Conference Calendars.

The 2015 calendars will be available mid-November.

**Important: Calendars will not be mailed until payment is received.**

For questions, contact 405-530-2019, rhasty@okumc.org.

To order: [www.okumc.org](http://www.okumc.org)



### Make mission possible

**Nov. 14-15**

Sign up for a major mission learning event, packed with workshops and speakers.

The Conference's Office of Mission will host the program Nov. 14-15 at OKC-Church of the Servant.

Sign up at: <https://okumc-reg.brapp.com/Equipping>. Registration is \$40 per person; there is a discounted group rate.

### Freshmen rate OCU high

College Choice recently ranked Oklahoma City University as No. 31 among the best universities in the western United States.

The college rankings website publishes the list to help students in their college search efforts. The standings are based on surveys of college freshmen by the Higher Education Research Institute at the Univer-

sity of California, Los Angeles.

OCU's "unique learning initiatives" were cited, including its honors program, OCULEads, and the Center for Interpersonal Studies through Film and Literature.

### Grants for rural churches

Deadline is Dec. 15 to apply for a grant of up to \$5,000 through the Van Sickle Small Rural Church Fund.

Complete the simple application form online at [www.okumc.org/forms](http://www.okumc.org/forms), or email Claudean Harrison, who is a Conference associate lay leader, at [clharrison@aol.com](mailto:clharrison@aol.com).

A Board of Laity subcommittee will review applicants and forward selections to the Cabinet and bishop for approval. Awards will be announced by early February.

The 2015 recipients were Enid-Bethany and Fairfax-First Churches.



Conference UMW leaders gather around President Cindy Hull, center front, in Ada on Oct. 4.

## UMW Annual Meeting

# Women ages 25 to 92 celebrate missions

Ada-First UMC hosted 266 people Oct. 3-4 for the Annual Meeting of Oklahoma Conference United Methodist Women.

Among those present were six women who have led as Conference UMW president. They included keynote speaker Judy Benson and Mona Mae Waymire, who officiated for the 2015 officer installation.

The youngest attendee was 25; the oldest, age 92. For 23 women, Annual Meeting was a new experience.

Providing mission updates were:

- Donna Pewo, who ministers among Native American children in Clinton;
- Fuxia Wang, who leads Wesley International Chinese Fellowship in Norman;
- Meri Whitaker, director of Cookson Hills Center;
- Stacey Ninness, director of Neighborhood Services Organization (NSO) in Oklahoma City; and
- Derrek Belase, dean of Mission U and pastor at Prague and Arlington churches.

During the year, UMW members had collected gift cards for Cookson Hills and NSO. Their donations were dedicated by Donna Dodson, Enid District superintendent. Each mission received more than \$8,000 in cards.

On Friday evening, Ardmore District President Jackie Matthews and Ada-First President Anna Faye Nanney welcomed the women and guests. Entertainment included a comical fashion show and music by Conference UMW Musician Judy Horne, Ann Clayton, Janet Wilburn, Rozzie Purdy, and Jane Johnston.

The meeting concluded Saturday afternoon with Communion, led by Bishop Robert Hayes Jr. and assisted by David Daniel and Roberto Escamilla, Ada-First pastors; Revs. Whitaker and Belase; and deaconesses Jerrie

Lindsey and Elaine Parrent.

### Plan for district changes

Conference President Cindy Hull recently explained the UMW strategy for the Oklahoma Annual Conference's missional realignment of all districts.

On June 1, Oklahoma's churches will officially transition from 12 to eight districts. However, all UMW groups operate on a calendar year, Hull said, even the national leadership.

Throughout 2015, Oklahoma's UMW will continue with leadership in 12 districts. The change to eight districts will apply to the 2016 calendar year, Hull said.

Theme for 2015 is *F.R.O.G.* (Fully Relying on God: Leaping Into UMW's Future). The women pledged \$290,000 for mission. Next year's Annual Meeting will be in Woodward.

In 2016, Oklahoma City will host the South Central Jurisdiction Quadrennial Meeting of United Methodist Women.

### 2015 leadership

The Conference UMW leadership team for 2015 includes: President Cindy Hull, Secretary Ramona Paine, Treasurer Sue Helms; and chairpersons Jacci Freno (programming), Glenda Gilpin (membership), Joyce Alfred (missions), and Marilyn Quinn (nominations). The Committee on Racial Justice consists of Sue Helms, Eursey Lenoir, Jerrie Lindsey, Marsha Lyons, Shirley Franklin, Jo Ellen Reed, Hull, Helms, and Quinn. Other Nominating Committee members are Phyllis Hallett, Carla Garrison, Marlene Jones, Betty Prentice, Helen Reid, Janice Bryan, and Moylene Davis. Appointees are: Nancy Koplowitz (program resources), Kelly McKindley (newspaper editor), Donna Roberts (Standing Rules), Judy Horne (musician), and Lenoir (historian).

*Photo, above; not all team members are pictured.*



Current and former Conference UMW presidents pose at the 2014 Annual Meeting. From left are Cindy Hull, Kathy Caldron, Ann Needham Bower, Mona Mae Waymire, and Donna Roberts. Judy Benson, also a past president, was keynote speaker.

## Passages

**KENNEDY** – Rev. Kay Karen Kennedy, 66, of Wynnewood died Oct. 1, 2014. She was serving Paoli UMC at the time of her death.

Kay Karen was born Oct. 22, 1947, in Oklahoma City. She earned a law degree from Oklahoma City University. She married Frank W. James on April 19, 1983, in Edmond.

Her legal career included the post of assistant attorney general of the Criminal Division and as a workman's compensation judge. At the time of her death, she also was managing attorney for three offices of Legal Aid of Western Oklahoma.

As a pastor, she helped to build a new home for Paoli UMC, where she began serving in 2000.

Survivors include son Dale James, daughter Mary Sparks, and five grandchildren. She was predeceased by her husband.

Services were Oct. 4 at Paoli-First UMC, with interment at Elmore City Cemetery.

**SHORT** – Rev. Arnold Lee Short, 81, of Oklahoma City died Sept. 26, 2014.

Arnold was born Oct. 3, 1932, in Weatherford. He played professional basketball and coached multiple sports. An Oklahoma City University graduate, he later served as its athletic director. In 2001, he was named to the Jim Thorpe Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame.

He served as a missionary in China and pastored at OKC-Putnam City, Turley, and OKC-Ridgecrest before retiring in 1998. He was pastor emeritus at OKC-St. Mark's.

Survivors include his wife of 52 years, Cecille Phillips Short; daughters Lisa Carlile and Melinda Clonts; five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Service was Sept. 30 at Chapel Hill Funeral Home, Oklahoma City.

**HIMES** – Lilly Cox Roberson Himes, 88, of Yukon died Oct. 13, 2014. She was the widow of Rev. Harold Himes, who died in 2013.

Lilly was born Jan. 12, 1926, in Crawford County, Ind. She had a career in teaching and held a master's degree in Special Education. She married Rev. Himes on July 1, 1967.

In retirement, she had been active at OKC-St. Mark's UMC.

Survivors include daughters, Rev. Jeannie Himes of Norman-St. Stephen's UMC, Angie Hildenbrand, and Pam Roberson; son David Himes; seven grandchildren, including Andrew Himes, a Communications staff member in the United Methodist Ministry Center; and five great-grandchildren. She also was predeceased by her first husband, Wayne Roberson.

Service was Oct. 22 at St. Mark's.

**GRIFFIN** – Helen Estella Chandler Griffin, 99, of Muskogee died Oct. 5, 2014. She was the widow of Rev. Leland Gardner Griffin Sr., who died in 2004.

She was born March 26, 1915, in Sarcovie, Mo. Her career as an educator included Special Education teaching. In October 1934, she married Rev. Griffin in Sycamore Chapel Methodist Protestant Church.

Survivors include two sons who are retired Oklahoma UM pastors: Revs. Raymond and Leland Griffin Jr. She also was predeceased by son Gerald Maxwell.

Service was Oct. 9 at Muskogee-St. Paul UMC.

**PATTERSON** – L. Rena Vaughn Hall Patterson, 100, of Fort Smith, Ark., died Sept. 20, 2014. She was the widow of Rev. Ralph Patterson, who died in 2009.

Rena was born Sept. 3, 1914, in Bates. She lived in Heavener more than 75 years and was a lifelong United Methodist. She married Rev. Patterson in 2003.

Survivors include sons Joe and James Hall, 16 grandchildren, 31 great-grandchildren, and nine great-great-grandchildren. She was predeceased by husbands Ray Hall and Rev. Patterson and three children.

Service was at Heavener-First UMC on Sept. 23.



# There was a vote: **it was unanimous**

The Oklahoma Conference has an incredible opportunity to make a difference in the lives of people for generations to come. Our church needs to cultivate pastors now to fortify the future of the Oklahoma Conference.

If someone in your congregation felt the calling to become a pastor in an Oklahoma United Methodist Church but was discouraged by the financial commitment, would you want to help that person succeed?

Thanks to the generosity of two of our Foundation trustees, the Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation can offer a 2-for-1 match for every gift to the **Oklahoma United Methodist Pastor Education Fund**. We have until December 31, 2014, to secure a total match of \$2 million. **Every dollar given becomes \$3.**

The First United Methodist Church of Alva gave \$50,000 to the Pastor Education Fund (PEF). Edward Sutter is an attorney, rancher, and farmer. He is also a Foundation trustee.

*“We have approximately 200 in attendance each Sunday morning. We had a meeting in the sanctuary and talked about how much money should we give, what is a fair amount, what would be right. Two figures were thrown out – \$25,000 and \$50,000. We decided to reflect upon that for about a week and we’d come back and make a decision. About a week later, we met again in the sanctuary. We voted and it was unanimous. Our church wanted to give \$50,000 to the PEF.”*

The church’s sacrificial gift of \$50,000 will result in \$150,000 toward the goal of providing scholarships to seminary for bright and talented Oklahoma clergy candidates.

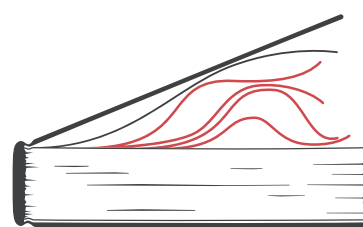
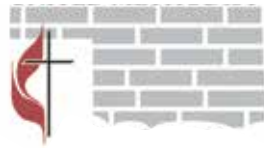
To obtain a Master of Divinity degree in The United Methodist Church, a candidate must complete 90 hours of theological education in addition to the undergraduate degree. Often clergy are graduating with substantial student loan debt! It is very difficult for a young pastor to raise a family and deal with debt from

seminary. The Pastor Education Fund will eliminate the need for debt.

Please prayerfully consider how you can support this important effort and help the Foundation reach the \$3 million goal.

*You may complete the form and mail it with your check to:*

THE OKLAHOMA UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION  
4201 N Classen Blvd • Oklahoma City, OK 73118  
800-259-6863 • [www.okumf.org](http://www.okumf.org)



## Pastor Education Fund

*Your donation will be **TRIPLED** by two generous matching grants.*

YES, I want my contribution **tripled!** My gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed.

I am unable to contribute at this time, but will pray for the success of this fund and for future pastors of our Church.

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