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A bus load of Oklahoma Conference clergy and spouses joined me on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in January. Many of the clergy had been ordained in recent years. About half of the group had never been to the land of the Bible prior to this trip. It was a great trip.

I want to express my appreciation to Educational Opportunities, our guide for their service and financial support of our travelers, to the Oklahoma Methodist Foundation for its generous scholarship support of our recently ordained, and to our organizational guru, Derrek Belase for his organization and management of the trip.

There are many things I am still processing about this trip, but one of those concepts is especially timely as we near the called session of General Conference this month. The reflection centers on entering the door of a famous church. I’ve included a closeup photo of it, with our guide, Jimmy, giving us instructions. Jimmy stands just a little over five feet in stature. He towers over the door, which comes to almost the height of his shoulders.

You may recognize the church, just by the door. But many of us will wonder what church this is. Indeed, this is the front door. We were preparing to enter it.

Entering this place required special preparations. I had to bend myself almost in half and keep my head low to enter. The door does not allow those who walk upright to pass. It requires a humble position, a bowed head, and a trust that an enemy is not on the other side waiting to rob you or worse.

Some call the door the “eye of the needle.” We have heard the saying of Jesus, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God.” Some believe the saying refers to the fact that even a camel can pass through this door. However, it can carry nothing on its back, it must get on its knees, lower its head and inch its way in. The point: only those who humble themselves can enter. Perhaps that is how we should approach the coming General Conference in St. Louis this month. Perhaps we should remove our loads (agendas), assume a posture of humility, and inch our way into the gathering. Only the humble will connect with God.

Have you figured our where the church is located? It is the main entrance to the Church of the Nativity, “where the humble Christ was born.”

What posture are we assuming as we enter our churches? What attitude do we take with us when we leave them?
Oklahomans in the Holy Land

BY MEAGAN EWTON

The river. The garden. The desert. The sea.
This January, 40 United Methodist clergy, spouses, and conference staff, including Bishop Jimmy Nunn, traveled from Oklahoma to Palestine and Israel to journey through the Holy Land.

Participants boarded their respective planes on January 8, arriving in Israel at what would be the middle of the night in Oklahoma. Victoria Lee, pastor of Charis Alive, felt like the tour was a reaffirmation of her call to ministry.

“The Holy Land tour has been a dream come true for me, a dream that was birthed more than 10 years ago,” Lee said.

Jay Smith, associate pastor at Edmond-New Covenant, said part of what drew him to the trip was the knowledge that many people who go find their faith enriched.

“I wanted to attend this trip because I know that it is a once in a life experience,” Smith said. “Through the conference and the Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation, the cost was too good to pass up.”

Shannon Rodenberg, pastor at Fairland, said she had never been to the Holy Land, but now she wants to go back again.

“I had never been out of the country before, and it seemed like an amazing way to have my first international trip,” Rodenberg said. “I especially like the fact that I got to see so many things with my colleagues and to learn with and from them.”

The learning tour started with a visit to one of three possible sites where Jesus appeared to his disciples on the road to Emmaus after his resurrection. Over the next several days, participants also visited historic and holy sites such as the Herodium, Qumran, Jericho, the Mount of Beatitudes, the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum, Magdala, Bethlehem, Nazareth, the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane, Yad Vashem (the Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem), Mount Zion, the Pool of Bethesda, the Western Wall and the Dead Sea.

One of the tour’s most notable stops was the Jordan River, site of the baptism of Jesus. Bishop Nunn led a Remember Your Baptism service, and the following day, he preached during worship at the Church

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Holy Land, cont.

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of Scotland. For Derrek Belase, these experiences were made all the more significant because they took place so close to the liturgical Baptism of the Lord Sunday.

“When you walk where Jesus walked and imagine what it must have been like for the people around him in those days, it is not hard for the scriptures to come alive,” Belase said. “I think that is what I always experience when I am there. The Bible that I’ve read, preached about and taught just looks and feels different after being where it happened.”

During the trip, participants toured several churches built on sites commemorating holy encounters, including the Church of the Nativity, the Church of the Primacy, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Church of St. Anne, the Church of the Multiplication of Loaves and Fishes, and the Basilica of the Annunciation.

Smith said he didn’t realize how many holy sites had been enshrined.

“Most every place of significance has a place of worship built upon it,” Smith said. “Once I realized that this was the experience, I was able to experience the power of the place and moments and the beauty, sometimes fractured beauty, of our church history.”

One aspect of the journey Rodenberg was thankful for was the number of female clergy who participated in the trip. She said she didn’t know how many female clergy were on the trip until the women gathered to take a picture with Kristen Brown, a United Methodist missionary from Tahlequah serving in Palestine. Realizing there were more women in the picture than people taking the picture was special moment for her.

“There are not always a lot of spaces in which clergywomen are the majority,” Rodenberg said. “Women were the first to proclaim the good news CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE
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of Jesus’ resurrection. They served with him and were discipled by him, and now we share in his ministry and carry on the important work of the sisters who have gone before us.”

Lee said she appreciated touring the holy land with female clergy. She said some things, such as being able to offer each other feminine hygiene products, helped make the experience memorable.

“It has been a great blessing to tour with other female clergy,” Lee said. “I treasure the moments when we shared about our home recipes, juggling ministry with family life, stress eating, beauty tips, telling some funny stories—we had a blast!”

On the final day of the tour, participants visited the Garden Tomb, and Bishop Nunn held a communion service. Smith said the service reminded him of God’s call on his own life.

“I think my experience to the Holy Land is still one that I am unraveling,” Smith said. “There’s a depth and a nearness in my heart to the story that is new.”

Rodenberg said she experienced a sense of being “bound together by cords of love” during the final communion service. Lee said having a communion service as a final act of faith was an appropriate way to end the tour.

“As we celebrate Eucharist and sang some hymns, I felt a deep sense of unity in our group as one body in Christ,” Lee said. “Christ’s open table to all nations is a calling for us to love others beyond race, age, and gender; for we love because He loved us first.”

Jay Smith stands in the Jordan River during the Remember Your Baptism service. Photo submitted by Derrek Belase.
Book Review: The Three Box Solution

The Contact will feature book reviews to encourage innovation in ministry and promote leadership development. We invite church and ministry leaders to submit their book review to editor@okumc.org.

BY REV. DR. JOSEPH HARRIS

Occasionally you run across a book that is not specifically written for the church but whose principles and context can be applied to the church. I have read such a book by Vijay Govindarajan called The Three Box Solution – A Strategy for Leading Innovation.

As with many business-focused books, you have to think creatively on how this could apply to the church. Not every business-centered principle is appropriate for or applicable to faith communities. However, Professor Govindarajan, a Coxe Distinguished Professor at Dartmouth’s Tuck School of Business, is one of the leading experts on strategy and innovation.

With many church growth and renewal experts stating the need for the church today to become more strategic in its planning and more innovative in its ministries, this book contains principles and a process that could help any church, religious organization, institution or committee in its efforts to reach beyond its walls into the larger world.

This book is practical enough to help most organizations balance competing activities while imagining and building new ones. The premise of the book: Keep your current operations that are effective and healthy; cut your losses on lagging or under-performing/no-longer-relevant operations, programs or ministries; and innovate for the future using separate groups and management principles.

The model is very compelling because it addresses three “wicked” and competing challenges leaders are often confronted by when leading innovation: managing the present, selectively forgetting the past, and creating the future.

If your church, organization or committee needs to stop doing what it’s already done and branch out in new and innovative ways, this is a book for you to read. This book can help in the development of long-term strategies and short-term solutions that could help you to build a preferred future.

The Three Box Solution is significantly relevant for innovation in the organizational context as well as personal context. The principles outlined by Govindarajan can be applied whether you are a strategist or operationalist, an executive or a manager, a Pastor or Board Chair, expert or generalist, working for profit or not for profit. This book provides easy to understand and practical tools for organizations stuck in the past or flying high, using tools adopted by GE, IBM, Mahindra & Mahindra and religious institutions.

Not everything in this book will be relevant for every situation. But there are enough real-life examples for most readers to glean new insights, be reminded of things they may have forgotten and become encouraged about the possibilities ahead. This is an important, easy-to-read book for those looking at long term planning and strategies as well as creative ways of reaching out to new people groups.

Do you have a favorite ministry or leadership book? Share it with the Oklahoma Conference! Submit a book review to editor@okumc.org.
Connectional Opportunities now called Mission and Ministry

During Annual Conference in May 2018, 14 ministries were removed from apportionment giving and given their own designation: Connectional Opportunities. Nearly nine months later, this collection of ministries has a new and more accurate name: Mission and Ministry.

Separating the ministries covered under Mission and Ministry from apportionment giving means these ministries are funded by the generosity of the churches of the Oklahoma Conference, not by apportionment dollars.

These ministries are an essential part of living out our United Methodist faith with actions that reveal Christ to the world around us. Learn more at www.okumc.org/missionandministry.

High school youth invited to OCU Events

Hundreds of high school youth from across Oklahoma will converge on the Oklahoma City University campus for a series of special events this spring.

Youth groups and youth sponsors who are interested in community service, worship and fellowship with fellow United Methodist youth are invited to Youth Service Day on March 1 at OCU, 2501 N. Blackwelder in Oklahoma City. For more information, or to register, visit www.okcu.edu/campus/religious-life/.

Stars Junior Day is set for April 5. High school juniors and their families are invited to a special college preview day where everyone will have the opportunity to meet faculty, staff, and current students, as well as learn about the university, student life, honors, study abroad, and valuable scholarship opportunities. Campus tours also will be offered. Register at www.okcu.edu/admissions/events.

OCU’s Wimberly School of Religion hosts a World Religion Expo each spring. The information fair highlights the beliefs of various world religions. The World Religion Expo is free to the public and will be held from 2 to 5 p.m., April 7, on the first floor of OCU’s Gold Star Building. No registration is required for the come-and-go event.
Several districts of the Oklahoma Conference are preparing people to engage in ministry whether or not they’re clergy.

In the coming months, many of the conference’s eight districts will host at least one event geared toward equipping lay members of the church to engage in ministry in their church and/or community. Church members are invited to attend and learn more about evangelism, discipleship, outreach and more.

A brief listing is available for each training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Event Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cimarron</strong></td>
<td>**The Gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 a.m. to 3 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1111 Downs Ave., Woodward, OK 73801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-registration required for lunch and nursery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Donations accepted for lunch, provided by Vida de Abundancia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Registration available online.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lake Country</strong></td>
<td>**Lay Servant Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>McAlester-First</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1501 S. 13th St., McAlester, OK 74501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Basic and advanced spiritual gifts course available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Includes lunch on Saturday. Lodging not provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Register online by March 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crossroads</strong></td>
<td>**The Gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Heartland</td>
<td>9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14343 N. Macarthur Blvd., OKC, OK 73142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lunch and materials provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northern Prairie</strong></td>
<td>**Lay Servant Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>524 W. Coolidge Ave., Blackwell, OK 74631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Courses offered: Basic, Lay Servants as Christian Transformation Leaders, and Worship Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cost: $45 by April 24, $50 after April 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Download the registration brochure at <a href="http://www.okumc.org/layservanttrainingdates">www.okumc.org/layservanttrainingdates</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green Country</strong></td>
<td>**The Gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 a.m. to 3 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1615 N. Hwy 88, Claremore, OK 74017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lunch and materials provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wichitas</strong></td>
<td>**The Gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 a.m. to 3 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2300 N. Country Club Rd., Duncan, OK 73533</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The smell of burning sage and cedar wafted through the air, its smoke quickly blending in against the gray-sky background.

The Rev. David Wilson, along with thousands of others, put one foot in front of the other. Even as the smoke dissipated, the smell remained, clinging to nostrils and clothes.

The United Methodist pastor and others moved forward. The first-ever Indigenous Peoples March was underway.

Burning sage and cedar is used for cleansing and ceremonial purposes, Wilson said. Several people held sticks or pots filled with the dried plants, burning slowly, chanting and drumming down Constitution Avenue and onto the National Mall. They were headed to the Lincoln Memorial.

Wilson serves as the conference superintendent for the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference, a position similar to a bishop. He works with 87 churches and fellowships across four states, representing more than 6,800 people and 39 different tribes.

The conference traces its roots back to the 1820s, when indigenous peoples were removed from their lands in the Southeast and sent to “Indian territory,” Wilson said. Methodist evangelists had already done their work, so many people were Christian when they arrived, he said.

“We are the mother church of Methodism for the state of Oklahoma,” he said. “We’re very proud of that.”

A widely watched video of an incident during the Jan. 18 march created a furor. The video showed an Omaha elder beating a drum in front of a Covington Catholic High School student wearing a Make America Great Again hat, National Public Radio reported. They were surrounded by a predominantly white crowd of the teen’s classmates who were laughing and jeering. The students’ Kentucky high school apologized, but other videos, narratives and news reports emerged later that gave more context about what happened.

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The Rev. Bryan Tener, the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference’s director of connectional ministries, came to the march to lift up the issues that affect the daily lives of indigenous communities.

Tener, a descendent of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes, said that access to health care and tribal rights to land, food and water and the need to raise a political voice were all important.

“Often, our political voice is silenced,” he said. “We’re here to let people know that we still exist.

“All over the world, indigenous peoples have had their cultures and voices wiped away,” he said. “Our identities have been stripped through colonialism. I think that God desires everyone to live into their full humanity, and when we deny someone’s humanity, we’re denying God.

“For us, as the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference, what we want to share is that God has created diverse people, beautiful people and that we stand with those who’ve been oppressed and marginalized.”

The Indigenous Peoples March was a grassroots effort to bring a rally to the nation’s capital and to educate people about the issues facing indigenous peoples around the world, organizers said.

“Indigenous people from North, Central and South America, Oceania, Asia, Africa and the Caribbean are a target of genocide,” event organizers said on their Facebook page. “Currently, many indigenous people are victims of voter suppression, divided families by walls and borders, an environmental holocaust, sex and human trafficking, and police/military brutality with little or no resources and awareness of this injustice.”

Wilson knows that concerns vary from tribe to tribe and from people to people. Some of the bigger issues for him include the environment and caring for “Mother Earth” and focusing attention on murdered and missing Native American women.

According to published reports, the National Crime Information Center found that in 2016 there were 5,712 reports of missing Native American women and girls.” NPR reported last year that “no federal agency has comprehensive data on how many indigenous women are murdered or missing.”

Wilson said the missing and murdered women are of particular concern. “It’s not quite epidemic, but it’s coming close. Not only do the women come up missing, but no one pays attention to their plight.”

This is especially notable in the northern tier states, such as Montana and North and South Dakota, he said, where a lot of human trafficking of Native American women takes place.

Wilson, a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, said that it was critical for Native American Christians to be represented at the Indigenous Peoples March, and to be speaking out on these and other issues.

Wilson said he was thankful for the United Methodist connection, which made the trip possible for the nine-person delegation from the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference.

Among those providing support were the Board
March, cont.

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of Church and Society, Commission on Religion and Race, United Methodist Committee on Relief and Oklahoma Conference.

“So many people offered support, not only financially but also through sending emails or messages saying, ‘We’re praying for you,’ and ‘thank you for representing the church.’ It’s the connection in action,” Wilson said.

Amy Fry, a member of Wallingford United Methodist Church in Seattle, was at the march to lend her voice and support to the movement.

“I feel strongly about the indigenous people’s movement,” she said, adding that she’s attended other such marches in Seattle. “I hope we can solve the missing and murdered indigenous women’s issue.”

Chelsea Spyres, from the Peninsula-Delaware Conference and a student at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, was marching, too.

“I’m marching with my indigenous friends, who have been on this land long before my ancestors arrived,” she said. “It’s important for me to be present to just show up and hear the voices of our indigenous brothers and sisters — to listen and learn more.”

Conference Announcements

Worship resources for GC 2020 now available

A writing team of OKUMC pastors have created outlines and suggestions for the Sundays before, of and after General Conference 2019 (Feb. 17 and 24, and March 3), including liturgical pieces, song suggestions and sermon notes. The overarching theme and guiding question of the work is “What is God saying to us today?” You can find the resources on the conference website at www.okumc.org/gcworshipresources.

Lay delegate self-nominations to GC 2020 open now through Mar. 10

Self-nominations for lay delegates to General Conference 2020 are open now through March 10. Read our previous coverage at okumc.org, or nominate yourself online at okumc.org/LayNominees2020.

Apportionment, health insurance information to be provided in April

In an effort to improve financial transparency, the Contact will begin to publish both Apportionment giving and Mission and Ministry–formerly known as Connectional Opportunities–giving by church each quarter starting in April. The data will come from the Council on Finance and Administration and the total for each church will be published as a percentage.

Total conference apportionment payout for 2018 are also available each church. View or download the document at www.okumc.org/ApportionmentPayout.

As mentioned in a joint video statement, the Board of Pension and Health Benefits and the Cabinet are working to address the cost of health coverage for full-time clergy. Part of this work is a commitment to keep the conference informed of the financial position every quarter in 2019. We will share more about this in coming issues.
The foundation of The United Methodist Church has always been to follow God’s call of making disciples of Jesus Christ. We do that in many ways and many places. Yesterday. Today. Forever.
Monday Meals ministry more than the sum of its parts

BY PAULETTE HENDERSON

The coffee’s on in the Landes Center in Anadarko every Monday from 7:00 to 9:00 a.m. In less than a year, over 6,000 meals have been served through Monday Meals, a lay ministry of Anadarko-First.

The first time the doors opened in April 2018, the church expected 10-20 people for breakfast; instead, around 40 people showed up. Today, the average is 80, though attendance can be as high as 114 people.

The miracle of Monday Meals is that no single person is responsible for the high attendance. People across the community come together on Monday mornings at the Landes, including volunteers from Anadarko-First, friends of church members, and members of other local churches.

Friends from several local churches show up hours before the doors open to spread peanut butter sandwiches and pack them into brown bags for people who will need lunch. One local resident who cannot physically participate on Monday donates five dozen muffins every week, and her husband delivers them. People have been known to check the refrigerator in the Center, and finding it spare, donate a ham. Guests carry out meals to shut-ins.

In November, Monday Meals became one of the most recent recipients of the “New People, New Places” grant, a Connectional Opportunity administered by the Oklahoma Conference of the Methodist Church. The grant is designed to encourage people to reach across their borders, comfort zones, and demographics. That description is real to the friends who share Monday Meals.

Monday meals has become more than the sum of its parts. The Indian Health Service provided flu shots on site at the Landes Center on two recent Monday mornings. When people heard that Monday Meals was interested in finding new and gently used cold-weather clothing, donations of coats, gloves, and socks began to show up. Dry socks are as popular as biscuits and gravy. The Anadarko High School Student Council built and gifted a Blessing Box, a place where people can leave and take non-perishables. It is installed beside the doors of the Landes Center.

Felecia Hensley, pastor of Anadarko-First, sums up the ministry this way: “The goal of this ministry is to be a safe place, to establish relationships across class, culture, and economic lines. If we cross those lines, then that opens the doors for God to meet people’s needs, through us.”

The two questions most asked about Monday Meals are “How does this work?” and “What do you have to do to get a plate?” The answer to both questions is, “Show up.” People who were once invisible to each other have made friends.

To share in Monday Meals, whether as a volunteer, guest, or both, call Hensley at 405-274-3175.

Biscuits, pancakes, or both? Louise Foster and Diane Powell greet guests at the counter during Monday Meals. Photo by Paulette Henderson.
Confirmation Camp heads to Canyon Camp on Feb. 22-23

BY MEAGAN EWTON

W what does it mean to be a United Methodist? Allen Carson, pastor of El Reno-Wesley, hopes to help youth answer that and other faith-related questions during a special 24-hour camp.

This year, Confirmation Camp will be held on Feb. 22-23 at Canyon Camp in Hinton. The overnight camp is geared toward youth who may be ready for or already attending confirmation class.

Founded by Carson in 2007, the camp gives students stations to rotate through such as Worship and the Church Year, Doctrine and Polity, Church History and What’s It Mean to Be a United Methodist. Through these stations, students learn about sacraments, salvation, the Wesleyan Quadrilateral, holy living, stewardship and elements of United Methodist membership vows.

For churches that have a confirmation class, the camp acts as a supplement; for churches that don’t, the camp acts as a way to provide some confirmation education. The camp also serves as a way to prepare students for summer camp.

“My hope is for kids to fall in love with camp,” Carson said.

Lynn Youngs, the children’s ministries superintendent for Claremore-First, said the church has sent its students to Confirmation Camp for several years. She said the camp’s curriculum reinforces what is taught through the church’s confirmation class, and that the experience helps students to bond with each other and grow in Christ.

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In 2018, NSO served over 100,000 individuals!

Keep an eye out for our 2018 Annual Report to see how we impact thousands of Oklahomans every year!
Circle of Care will host their 2019 Friends of Children Banquet on April 6 at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum. The keynote speaker will be Jason Johnson. Johnson and his wife became foster parents in 2012 and live in Texas with their four daughters.

After years of pastoral ministry and church planting experience, Johnson now serves as National Director of Church Ministry Initiatives with The Christian Alliance for Orphans (CAFO). He is the author of *Reframing Foster Care* and blogs regularly at [jasonjohnsonblog.com](http://jasonjohnsonblog.com).

Learn more about this event at [circleofcare.org](http://circleofcare.org) or visit [this link](http://thislink) to purchase tickets, tables or sponsorships.

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**Confirmation Camp, cont.**

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“I love taking students to the camp because I get to see their enthusiasm and share in an experience in their faith journey that they will hopefully remember always,” Youngs said. “It also provides an opportunity for those that have never been to church camp to get a taste of what church camp is like and encourages them to attend additional camps when they become youth.”

Carson believes the camp is an opportunity for students to connect with other United Methodists in the area and move together through the confirmation journey. He also thinks it’s a good way to initiate students to the United Methodist camp experience.

“Many folks who have received their call to ministry received it at camp,” Carson said. “My hope is if we can get kids to camp, then we can raise the next generation of leaders.”

The cost is $65 per camper. Sign-in starts at 6:15 on Friday, Feb. 22 with camp activities starting at 7 p.m. Camp ends at 7 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 23. Canyon Camp is located at 31600 Camp Rd. in Hinton.

Registration is available online at [okcamps.campbrainregistration.com](http://okcamps.campbrainregistration.com). Once signed in, follow instructions to register for Confirmation Camp. For questions or more details, contact Carson at [acarson@wesleyelreno.org](mailto:acarson@wesleyelreno.org) or call 405-262-3734.
A Future of Stability for Ministry
POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF ENDOWMENTS

The whole point of an endowment is to provide a steady, predictable source of income over time. Endowment funds can be fundamental to the financial stability of an organization. Endowment income can provide a cushion against unforeseen expenses or economic downturns.

An endowment fund can be established for anything which serves the mission and ministry needs of a church.

When members are given opportunities to give from accumulated assets as well as from current income, it can lead to increased generosity. It adds a completely separate income stream.

An endowment’s existence will encourage deferred gifts to the church that might otherwise have gone to an alternate charity. Endowments also provide opportunities for donors to give gifts in honor and in memory of family and friends.

Invest in Lasting Good
THE OKLAHOMA UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION

We are dedicated to empowering you to invest your resources to do long-lasting good in the world. Contact David Battles to begin a conversation and Invest in Lasting Good.

DBATTLES@OKUMF.ORG | 800-259-6863 | WWW.OKUMF.ORG
Camping ministry provides Oklahoma United Methodist churches the opportunity to engage in meaningful experiences, relationships, and ministry.

Three campsites around the state provide a beautiful and unique setting in which campers and adults can hear God’s voice and answer His call. Camping Ministry strives to make and strengthen disciples for ministry, service, and leadership in their local church.

Supporting OK Camps is one of the best, and most impactful, ministry investments a church can make. Your connectional gifts and separate tax-deductible gifts are needed and appreciated to support the future of camping ministry.

Visit okcamps.org to get the latest news, sign up for camps, and learn more about OK Camps.

Canyon Camp
The natural beauty of the red-rock walls, the seeming isolation of the setting from the outside world and the convenience of a major city all make Canyon the perfect place to gather your group.

Camp Egan
Egan Camp and Retreat Center is surrounded by the Ozark mountains; it is easy to feel God’s presence and enjoy the beauty of God’s creation.

Cross Point
You will enjoy the beauty and solitude of this special campsite, especially the serenity of the glowing cross at the amphitheater overlooking Lake Texoma. Our staff is here to serve Christ by serving your needs.

The Contact will feature one of 14 Connectional Opportunity ministries every month. A full list of OKUMC ministries is available at www.okumc.org/MissionAndMinistry.
BEGIN YOUR EXCITING JOURNEY TO EPWORTH VILLA WITH A 6-MONTH HEAD START ON US.

There’s never been a better time to move to Epworth Villa. That’s because we’re offering special incentives on selected apartments—if you act now.

Reserve your apartment by April 30 and pay no monthly fees for 6 months—it’s like living at Epworth for half a year for free. Plus, receive up to $2,500 to help you pack and move. To learn more, contact us soon for best selection. And get a great head start on your journey to carefree living, great amenities and peace of mind.

Contact us at (405) 752-1200 or epworthvilla.org/6months.
Save the Date

**OSU Wesley Gala Celebration | Feb. 22**
823 W. University Ave, Stillwater
Doors open at 7 p.m. | Seating begins at 7:30 p.m.
Cost: $60. RSVP by Feb. 15
Visit [okstatewesley.org/gala](http://okstatewesley.org/gala)

**COSROW 2019 Frances E. Willard Award Nominations Open | Deadline Feb. 18**
Award for distinguished contribution to the advancement of women in ministry in OKUMC
Visit [www.okumc.org/WillardAward](http://www.okumc.org/WillardAward)

Employment

- Director of Student Ministries. Chickasha-Epworth, full-time with benefits and parsonage.
  Contact Rev. Scott Keneda at pastor@epworth.info or call (405) 224-3320, ext. 101.
- Parent’s Day Out Teacher. Moore-First, part-time. For more information, please contact Audrey MacDonald at audrey.macdonald@moorechurch.com or call 405-794-6671.
- Director of Children’s Ministries, Goodrich, part-time (about 6 hours a week). Send resume to pastor.desisharp@gmail.com.
- Director of Volunteers in Mission & Disaster Response for the South Central Jurisdiction. Full-time with benefits. Experience leading DR/VIM teams strongly preferred. Email bbakeman@scjumc.org and lbrinkworth@scjumc.org for details.

Share your event or job opportunity in the Contact. For consideration, email your listing to editor@okumc.org. Deadline for the March issue is Feb. 14.

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STAR Alumni

Charlie Ludden, BSB ’09, enjoys leading a faith-driven life. In high school and college, he merged his passion for the ministry with his calling to work with children, a combination that led him to a full-time career.

Ludden is the associate director of young adult mission and service for the Oklahoma Conference of the United Methodist Church. He also serves as associate director of Project Transformation Oklahoma.

Ludden works with children in literacy programs and with youth at local church camps.

"I like the energy of it all," Ludden said. "I'm a kid at heart too."

He strives to give personal attention and encouragement to youth who are in his care, a trait that reminds him of his time at Oklahoma City University.