Apportionment update

Funding fulfills 88.5 percent of Oklahoma’s 2017 budget

BY HOLLY MCCRAY

Churches sent $12.8 million in Apportionments supporting ministries in and beyond the Oklahoma Conference in 2017. They funded 88.46 percent of the total budget of $14.5 million.

Soon after Treasurer Norma Quinn reported those numbers, Bishop Jimmy Nunn spent an evening signing thank-you letters to the 358 churches that paid 100 percent of their apportionments.

“I enjoyed reviewing the accomplishments, praying for the churches, and signing certificates,” Bishop Nunn said. “I greatly appreciate the large number of churches that are participating at 100 percent. I say thank you to those folks.”

He had a question for congregations that did not contribute fully: How can we help you? A total of 477 churches are assessed apportionments in the Conference.

“Are people responding as faithfully as they can?” the bishop asked. “The goal is still 100 percent. I look forward to signing more letters next year.”

His desire isn’t fantasy, doesn’t disregard an annual decline in the percentage of apportionment giving, charted since 2008. Oklahoma’s leadership is acting in concrete ways to turn around that statistic.

The bishop said that overall Conference ministries have been directed to reduce their expenses, toward a 2019 apportionment proposal at least 3 to 5 percent lower than this year’s total, which is $14.3 million.

The Council on Finance and Administration (CFA), chaired by Robert Gorrell of Lawton, will meet March 20 to consider finalizing a proposal for Annual Conference. In April and May, Rev. Dr. Quinn will lead “Unpacking the Budget” sessions at pre-conference meetings in all districts. Annual Conference delegates will vote in late May.

Fixed costs: General/Jurisdictional funds

Oklahoma’s annual budget includes fixed apportionments for denominational and jurisdictional (regional) ministries of the Church. There are six General Church funds and three jurisdictional funds, amounts set every four years by delegates at those respective conferences.

Those ranged from $43,000 to more than $2 million in 2017.

See Apportionments, Page 6

In Catoosa, all find seats at The Table

BY CHRIS SCHUTZ

CATOOSA, Okla. — Rectangles of brightly colored confetti burst from a cannon Feb. 11, in celebration of The Table, a resurrected United Methodist community in Catoosa.

The Table is a satellite of Owasso-First UMC. The name emphasizes the church’s plan to serve Holy Communion weekly, Campus Pastor Andy Henson said. Worship format will range from modern to the Church’s “rich history and tradition of music and liturgy.”

The Table has chosen “to gather together at the Communion table each and every week. It’s something we’ve chosen to lift up,” said Rev. Henson, a full-time Local Pastor who is an associate on the staff of Owasso-First.

Circle of Care breaks ground in Alva

BY CHRIS SCHUTZ

ALVA, Okla. — Bishop Jimmy Nunn stood in the dust and wind at the groundbreaking for a Circle of Care sibling foster home in Alva and declared with a smile and a Texas drawl, “Y’all are the Soonest!”

The house, named in honor of benefactress Vera Mae Eversole, is the first in a series of Circle of Care homes around the state that will accommodate sets of foster siblings.

Carol Cook Moore, pastor of Alva-First United Methodist Church, declared the site holy ground and said the idea for Vera Mae Home is proof that “visions are gifts from God.”
PALE GAS

BY BISHOP JIMMY NUNN

H e held the aerosol can upright and pressed its button. I heard the hiss of contents spewing through the tiny hole. He had carefully wrapped the can with a homemade sign that read “PALE GAS.”

As he sprayed the can intermittently during his presentation, this Catholic deacon talked about the “seven deadly sins,” behaviors long identified by Christians as the worst vices. Historically, the Church has referred to them as deadly because they are the taproots of sin.

The seven deadly sins are terminal to the soul because each one starts with placing yourself and your will at the center of everything. I have not forgotten the acronym I learned that day. PALE GAS is a shortcut for learning the names of those sins.

The point the deacon made was that we can be propelled by PALE GAS, not unlike that which spewed from the can he held — or we can be moved by the Wind of God, the Holy Spirit.

Over the past 20 years, I have spent time during Lent intermittently during his presentation, this Catholic deacon talked about the “seven deadly sins,” behaviors long identified by Christians as the worst vices. Historically, the Church has referred to them as deadly because they are the taproots of sin.

The seven deadly sins are terminal to the soul because each one starts with placing yourself and your will at the center of everything. I have not forgotten the acronym I learned that day. PALE GAS is a shortcut for learning the names of those sins.

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Over the years, I have developed a shorthand to increase my awareness of my blind spots that relate to the seven deadly sins. Here are a few of my ideas.

P is for pride. Pride declares: I want to be the ruler and center of my life. Pride’s opposite is humility. Gratitude nurtures humility, and humility slays pride.

L is for lust. Lust says: I want my way with you. Lust’s opposite is self-control. Self-control makes way for God’s way. “As lust awakens, reason is lulled to sleep and the habit becomes binding” (Bernard of Clairvaux, a French abbot, 1090-1135).

E is for envy. Envy says: I want what you have. Envy’s opposite is gratitude. Gratitude is the key to finding contentment.

G is for gluttony. Gluttony says: I want a lot. Gluttony’s opposite is moderation. The goal is to be filled, not full.

A is for avarice (or greed). Avarice says: I want a whole lot. Avarice’s opposite is generosity. Generosity forms the foundations of character; greed erodes humanity.

S is for sloth (or apathy). Sloth claims: I don’t want to care or to do anything anymore. Sloth’s opposite is service. “I assure you that when you have done it for one of the least of these, you have done it for me” (Matthew 25:40 CEV). Never miss an opportunity to do good.

PALE GAS can be daunting. Remember the Wind of the Spirit. “It is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for God’s good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13 NRSV).

The bishop recommends


Professor Oden teaches early church history and spirituality at Saint Paul School of Theology at Oklahoma City University. The bishop said “Right Here Right Now” is a good introduction to the history of Christian thought and, for him, calls upon the tradition of the desert fathers.

Don’t compare. Rather, think “complete my joy” (Philippians 2:2).

Gluttony’s opposite is moderation. The goal is to be filled, not full.

Avarice’s opposite is generosity. Generosity forms the foundations of character; greed erodes humanity.

The opposite of sloth is service. “I assure you that when you have done it for one of the least of these, you have done it for me” (Matthew 25:40 CEV). Never miss an opportunity to do good.

Students spend winter break on international missions

Winter break lasts three weeks for Oklahoma City University students and, since 2014, a distinctive purpose has emerged for those days: OCU’s winter break mission trip.

During the most recent break, over two dozen students, faculty, and staff members spent a week serving in mission in the village of Camalote, Belize.

OCU’s Kramer School of Nursing sent 12 students, under the guidance of professors Pam Boeck and Janice James. The nursing team staged free health fairs, volunteered at a pregnancy clinic, met with local healthcare professionals, toured hospitals and clinics, and performed house calls.

Charles Neff, vice-president for OCU’s University-Church Relations, along with Kelsey Ricks of the Oklahoma Conference’s Project Transformation staff, led a team of 11 students and one staff member in construction work and a literacy effort. The team worked mornings building shutters for a primary school and spent afternoons leading a literacy camp for children ages 3 to 11. The camp attracted 60-70 village children each day.

For several team members, this was a return trip. Leaders James and Ricks and nursing student Rachael Bachhofer had made previous trips as participants.

Rev. Dr. Neff said, “Belize has been a great destination for OCU students. It is a developing country with a lot of need, it is only five hours away (by plane), and they speak English. This creates low barriers for participation and allows students to receive a full immersion experience — no translators needed.”

Generous grants from the Woodworth Estate helped keep costs low for participants, he said.

OCU plans to return to Belize next January and continue the work in Camalote, which is just outside the capital city of Belmopan.

Top: Trey Trousdale reads “The Giving Tree” to village children against the backdrop of the Belizean rainforest. Left: OCU student nurses cuddle an infant.

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Partnering in mission for God

Delegation’s visit will bring news of Methodism in Chile

BY CHRIS SCHUTZ

A n upcoming visit to Annual Conference by Chile’s new Methodist bishop will spotlight Oklahoma United Methodists’ interest in a partnership with that South American country.

The Oklahoma Conference is looking forward to a visit from Jorge Merino, who assumed the position of bishop to the Church in Chile in early February, said Jeremy Basset, director of Oklahoma’s Office of Mission.

Bishop Merino is expected to bring three people with him as part of a visiting delegation, Rev. Basset said. The members of the delegation will visit various churches in Oklahoma to discuss the needs of Chile’s Evangelical Methodist Church.

Purpose of the visit is for the Chileans to tell Oklahomans “what their priorities are (and) what we can contribute,” Basset said.

What is being called the Chile/Oklahoma Encounter is an “emerging mission focus” for the Oklahoma Conference, Basset said. The hope is that a covenant partnership will develop, with specific priorities.

He expects plans for the partnership to include working with the indigenous Mapuche people, addressing needs of Haitian refugees in Chile, and repairing or rebuilding earthquake-damaged infrastructure.

“We will focus on what they ask us to focus on,” Basset said. He expects most of the need will arise between the northern side of the long, skinny country and its central-south region.

Priorities also probably will include working with the Chileans to develop Church leadership and make disciples of young people, he said.

“We are not going there to be the saviors — we’re going to go there to work with them,” said Karen Distefano, coordinator for the Chile/Oklahoma Encounter. She also is the Oklahoma Conference secretary of Global Ministries.

While at a meeting in Colombia about two years ago, Distefano and Basset met Bishop Pedro Correa, the Chilean Methodist Church’s episcopal leader at the time. Their conversations continued, resulting today in Oklahoma’s emerging covenant with the Church in Chile.

“Resources are limited, and they need help,” Distefano said.

The Church in Chile has about 8,000 members, a tiny fraction of the country’s population of 18 million, she said.

Many of Chile’s residents are Catholics.

The Chilean Methodists have focused on places that “needed most to hear The Word” — places beset by gang violence, drug activity, child abandonment, and economic difficulties for single parents, she said.

During an Oklahoma Volunteers In Mission scouting visit to Chile in 2017, Distefano and Lori Foster identified some key projects, including churches and parsonages that had sustained earthquake damage, Distefano said.

Foster is VIM coordinator in the Office of Mission.

They also learned of a congregation meeting in a building without a roof and requests from a school in Santiago that is focused on students who are differently abled — those with autism, cerebral palsy, and Down syndrome.

Oklahoma churches interested in participating in mission work in Chile or getting a visit from a member of the delegation during its visit in May should contact Distefano by phone at 918-440-9213 or by email at kdistefano@okumc.org.

Learn more on Facebook: Chile / Oklahoma Encounter.

Graphic, left: logo of the Iglesia Metodista de Chile.

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Keith Howard tapped to lead Circle of Care

Following an extensive search, Circle of Care has named Keith Howard of Tulsa as new president and CEO, effective April 2. He will succeed Don Batson, who is retiring.

Howard has worked in the field of children and family services since 2004. He has served as Circle of Care’s vice president of programs for the past two years.

He is passionate about engaging churches and the community to make a lasting impact for kids. He and his wife, Staci, have six children, four of whom are siblings adopted out of the foster care system in Texas.

Just last year, Oklahoma United Methodist Circle of Care celebrated its 100th anniversary of serving children and families in crisis. The agency launched a bold plan as it moves into its next century, seeking to further expand its services and meet the enormous need for placement options for Oklahoma siblings in foster care.

The Legacy of Care Capital Campaign is at the core of that effort.

That campaign already has raised over $2.5 million, and construction of the plan’s first foster home began last month in Alva.

As the agency’s executive leadership transitions, Batson will continue to supervise and direct the Capital Campaign project.

He has faithfully and adeptly led Circle of Care for over 12 years. He acknowledged, “I expected to retire at 66, which is only a little over one year from now. However, the culmination of the capital campaign’s rapid success, and a deep desire on the part of my wife and I to be part of our children and grandchildren’s lives in Tennessee, has accelerated that plan.”

Circle of Care’s programs include statewide Child SHARE foster care services, Pearl’s Hope Transitional Living program in Tulsa for single mothers and their children, and the Preparation for Adult Living program in Tahlequah and Gore for youth and young adults ages 16-24.

As he prepared for his new role, Howard asserted, “I’m honored to have been selected to lead the agency as we continue building on Circle of Care’s rich 100-year legacy and setting the groundwork for our next 100 years.”

Foster home:

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Bill Junk, president of the Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation, said Vera Mae would be pleased by the project that carries her name. The goal is to create “something that feels like home” for the foster children, he said.

“I can’t imagine she wouldn’t have been smiling in Heaven” as ground was broken, he said.

Currently in Oklahoma, three siblings in protective state custody have only a 65 percent chance of being placed together, according to Circle of Care officials. For four siblings, that possibility falls to 45 percent. There is only a 20 percent chance for five siblings to stay together.

To improve those odds, Circle of Care is building the home in Alva and plans others in Elk City, Enid, Shawnee, Woodward, and Coweta, according to Don Batson, president and CEO of Circle of Care.

Some sites will have two homes. The children will be nurtured by foster parents.

The 2,700-square-foot Vera Mae Home will have four bedrooms and four baths at a cost of $300,000. It will also have a storm shelter in the garage.

Bishop Nunn, who shared that he is an adopted child, said he can relate to the foster children who will live in the Alva residence. If he hadn’t been adopted, “what would have become of me otherwise?” he wondered.

He said the youngsters who live in the new home will be able to say, “This is the place where we’re loved and we’re cared for.”

“Look what God has done, working through us,” Nunn said Jan. 31. “Many generations of people will be affected for the good. We’re trying to hold together those family units.”

He commended those involved with the project for their “vision and commitment and partnership.”

During the groundbreaking ceremony, he prayed, “Bless this land given for the care of children. Bless the builders and workers preparing a home. Make it a safe haven where healing will come, hope will reside, and joy will rise up. Raise up foster parents equipped for this good work.”

Award will recognize Okla. advocate for women in ministry

Every year the Oklahoma Commission on the Status and Role of Women gives the Frances E. Willard Award to an individual who makes a distinguished contribution to the advancement of women in ministry in the Oklahoma Conference.

The deadline for nominations is Saturday, March 31. Please find the nomination form by clicking the “Forms” link on the Conference homepage, www.okumc.org.

In the 1800s, Willard was a "radical social progressive who stood out against gender inequality and fought to give a voice to society’s disenfranchised,” according to a description on the National Woman’s Christian Temperance Union website.

She garnered the imagination of her female supporters and mobilized a force of diverse women to create that organization, and she also worked in areas of women’s rights, social justice, and world peace.

Willard was an educator by trade, and she is noted as being a prototype for community organization and social reform. Her influence is still seen in modern social policy and practice.

Oklahoma’s 2018 recipient will be named at Annual Conference and the winner’s name will be listed on the Frances E. Willard plaque on display at the United Methodist Ministry Center in Oklahoma City.

For more information contact Jennifer Ahrens-Sims, who chairs COSROW, at edanjensims@yahoo.com.
A new approach to youth leadership camps begins this summer in the Oklahoma Conference. The change starts with their names: LEAD.

The redesigned camps will focus on creating young leaders with unique, measurable skills that will help them to directly serve in their churches, in camp ministry, and Conference-wide programs.

For many years, middle- and high-school students have had the opportunity to participate in leadership camps specifically tailored to their ages. Those events were called CYME and JEM.

“In the past few years, those acronyms have lost their meaning. Not many people could really say what either of them stood for,” said Derrek Belase, director of Discipleship.

Those camps have been a partnership between several Conference entities: Discipleship, Camp and Retreat Ministries, and the Council on Youth Ministry (CCYM).

The new name of LEAD for the two camps will include taglines related to grade level — senior high and middle school. That rebranding is not the only change.

According to Camps Director Ed Parker, “We are refocusing the curriculum and delivery system as well. The names alone are more descriptive and clear.” Another noticeable change will be the redesigned camps will focus on creating young leaders with unique, measurable skills that will help them to directly serve in their churches, in camp ministry, and Conference-wide programs.

“A roundtable discussion with Conference leaders last fall helped refocus the work of these two camps on what good leaders say and do, Belase explained.

“We want concrete outcomes that are measurable and observable.”

The leaders of CCYM have overwhelmingly approved the name change, according to Adam Brinson and Madison Boyle, who co-chair that organization.

One thing that will not change is the goal to create young leaders for Oklahoma’s churches, “and not just clergy leaders,” Belase emphasized, “but strong lay leaders who transform the world.”

Summer camps’ new names signify other changes too

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Looking back: Church building plans for $300

Some country churches look a lot alike. They are a catalog of Methodist church building plans first published in 1870, decades before the iconic Sears catalog.

In response to explosive growth at the turn of the 20th century, the Methodist Episcopal Board of Church Extension published plans created by architect Benjamin D. Price.

For $2.50, there were plans for a small, wood church costing $300 to $1,000 to build… all the way up to plans for $20,000

Birth

- Haven Collins was born Jan. 5, 2018. She is the daughter of Cassie and Rev. Barry Collins, pastor at Choctaw UMC.

- Barry Collins, pastor at Choctaw UMC.

- Benjamin D. Price.

- Troy Big Eagle, from not appointed to Foraker UMC, Feb. 1.

- Del Watkins, from not appointed to Fort Cobb UMC, Feb. 1.


- Lisa Crone, from First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Morgantown, W.Va., to personal leave, Feb. 1.

- Paula Tucker, from Shidler/Grainola/Foraker to not appointed, Jan. 15.

- Paula Tucker, from Shidler/Grainola/Foraker to not appointed, Jan. 15.

- Havens Collins was born Jan. 5, 2018. She is the daughter of Cassie and Rev. Barry Collins, pastor at Choctaw UMC.
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Among the General Church apportionments, Africa University received the highest percentage of funding support from Oklahomans: more than $42,000 (86.7 percent). The Interdenominational Cooperation Fund received the least: $34,000 (79.45 percent).

In the South Central Jurisdiction, Lydia Patterson Institute is a border school in El Paso, Texas. The mission received more than $58,000 (91.12 percent) from Oklahoma’s churches.

Oklahoma ministries

Among Oklahoma Conference ministries that are undergirded by apportionments, their 2017 budgets ranged from $5,007 to $1.4 million. Two received more than their apportioned totals:
Neighborhood Services Organization ($15,429) and Project Transformation ($5,789).

Funding for Cookson Hills Center and Skyline Urban Ministry reached 99.76 and 97.61 percent respectively.

New Faith Communities received $757,419, and New People New Places, $895,296.

Apportionment support by percentage for all other Oklahoma ministries ranged from 81.06 percent for Oklahoma City University ($557,528) to 90.69 percent for Circle of Care ($508,096). The apportionment concluded in 2017 for Saint Paul School of Theology at Oklahoma City University; the United Methodist seminary received $186,824 (86.86 percent).

Receipts for required ministerial support funds, including the Retired Clergy Health Fund ($1.5 million). totaled about 98 percent for each of those items.

These numbers do not include any district apportionments, which were not being tracked by the Conference. However, the bishop said those now are being integrated into the accounting system and will be reported at Annual Conference, for information.

Bishop proposes changes

The bishop directly addressed the ongoing slide in apportionments, since a record high 97.36 percent in 2007.

He explained by offering one possible scenario:

He explained by offering one possible scenario:

Based on the Conference’s 2018 budget total, which is a fixed number, reduce the overall 2019 budget total by 3 percent, and also reduce by 3 percent each church’s total apportionment in 2019 from that church’s 2018 total apportionment.

The bishop attended the Council on Finance and Administration meeting in late January, where he listed several general policies for review by that group. Here are some of those he named:

The practice of “cascading asks,” in which a ministry solicits funds at the Conference, district, local church, and individuals levels.

What is the relationship between Conference and district budgets?

Conference subsidies for activities rather than participants bearing the cost.

Conference subsidies for programming.

Conference personnel costs and fixed costs.

In a February interview, Nunn said, “I think that an intentional examination of everything and a measured approach to our budget is the way to go … People give to special initiatives, respond emotionally, and they’re generous. People generally don’t want to pay for infrastructure, but if you don’t have the infrastructure, you don’t have the ministry.

“Everything is valuable. What is vital? How do we fund what’s vital?”

Investment success

Treasurer Quinn said Oklahoma’s current apportionment system, which is decimal-based, hasn’t been revised since the 1980s. Systems vary among annual conferences, and success rates differ widely, she said.

A task force of the Council on Finance and Administration began meeting in August to review Oklahoma’s system.

Both Quinn and Nunn applauded a successful year for the Conference’s investment funds, which include the clergy pension fund and Woodworth Estate, among others.

“Interest that we received was a little over $6 million,” Quinn said. “In 2016, it was $3.8 million.”

The Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation and Wespath “do a great job of looking at the market and investing wisely,” she said.

Ultimately, that interest helped offset the shortfall in apportionments, with an additional $161,000 from the Conference’s contingency fund, Quinn said.

Tell the story of Christ

Nunn cautioned that statistics without context aren’t meaningful. “We’ve got a lot of people who are doing their very best, and we’re moving the Church forward.

“Twelve percent of the apportionment goal did not get paid in. Is our success or failure as a Church dependent on that one marker?” he asked. “If we’re about losing ourselves for the sake of bringing people to Christ (Matthew 10:39), for serving people who have no means to ever say thank you but somehow their lives are changed … it’s hard to put that in a statistical table.

“We have the obligation to look for the fruit of our investment, and we fund fruit.”

By the United Methodist News Service

The financial woes of 2017 are in the rearview mirror for the Yellowstone Conference. That annual conference in the western United States raised more than $100,000 in a special Harvest Time Legacy campaign and, for the first time in a long time, paid 100 percent of its general church apportionment in 2017.

Last summer, Jeremy Scott, who is vital congregations developer for the Mountain Sky Area, and Jeff Rainwater, Wyoming District superintendent, presented the report “Financial Crisis” during the 2017 annual conference.

The report stated, “Unprecedented financial challenges have emerged in the last five months, radically challenging our short-term sustainability.”

The report forecast a deficit of $303,356 by yearend 2017.

The conference has been aware of looming financial trouble for several years. In 2011, the General Council on Finance and Administration did an assessment and found Yellowstone’s future was uncertain.

“Individuals from as far away as Texas, Michigan, California, Oregon, Washington, D.C., and Florida sent gifts,” said David Burt, assistant to Bishop Karen Oliveto.

Yellowstone Conference continues financial challenges

Two small-membership churches — Hyattville UMC in Wyoming and Troy UMC in Montana — were highlighted in a letter and video of thanks.

“Hyattville doubled their mission share payment to the conference. So not only did they pay their apportionments in full, they were able to give the same amount over and above their apportionment,” said Rev. Burt.

He said Troy was able to give significantly from its endowment to the Harvest Time Campaign fund.

Yellowstone Conference will continue the Harvest Time Legacy Campaign into 2018.

— Feb. 5, UMNS
29 conferences give 100 percent to general church

BY UNITED METHODIST NEWS SERVICE

If the United Methodist Church had a “paid-in-full” stamp, it would be getting good use around the world.

A record 29 of the 56 U.S. United Methodist annual conferences — 52 percent — paid 100 percent of requested general-church apportionments in 2017, reported by the denomination’s General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA).

That’s the highest number in the 18 years that the Church has digital records, and marks the fourth consecutive year that a record number of U.S. annual conferences reached the milestone.

This also marks the first time GCFA is reporting on giving from central conferences — church regions in Africa, Europe, and the Philippines — under a new central conference apportionment formula. The 2016 General Conference, the denomination’s top lawmaking body, approved the formula as part of the 2017-20 general church budget.

Nine central conference episcopal areas — most of which contain multiple annual conferences — paid at least 100 percent apportionments. They are: Central and Southern Europe, East Congo, Eastern Angola, Eurasia, Germany, Liberia, Mozambique, Nordic-Baltic, and the Davao area in the Philippines.

All told, United Methodists across the world in 2017 gave about $133.2 million to support the general church’s national and international ministries — about $1.8 million more than the previous year.

The U.S. payout rate — the percentage of requested apportionments collected — was 91.9 percent, which is an increase from 91.4 percent in 2016. The central conferences’ payout rate was 65 percent overall — 298 percent from Europe, 36 percent from the Philippines, and 17 percent from Africa.

Under the new formula, conferences in Europe were actually asked to pay less than previously.

With that in mind, European United Methodists still pledged not to reduce giving. And last year, European United Methodists gave nearly three times that, respectively, support the work of bishops and the operations of denomination-wide administrative bodies, including the General Conference.

The central conferences’ new apportionment formula is:

- 36 percent from the U.S.
- 29 percent from the Philippines
- 26 percent from the Davao area
- 25 percent from Central and Southern Europe
- 15 percent from Eastern Europe
- 12 percent from Eastern Angola
- 9 percent from Mozambique
- 8 percent from Asia
- 5 percent from Germany
- 5 percent from Eurasia
- 2 percent from Baltic

The next step is for the new central conference apportionment formula to be implemented in the United States at the 2019 General Conference.

For more information on the new central conference apportionment formula, go to www.gcfa.org.

From left are Jeff Jaynes, executive director of Restore Hope Ministries in Tulsa, and Susan and Jim Linn, who chaired the United Methodist-affiliated agency’s 40th anniversary celebration on Feb. 9. Jim spoke of the joy he sees firsthand as he volunteers weekly at Restore Hope.

**Summer class digs into sustainability**

United Methodist college students have an innovative class option this summer through the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) and partners Oklahoma City University, Professor Mark Davies, and the Oklahoma Conference.

In Vermont in June, students will spend two weeks learning how to advance sustainability causes, using the best practices of Boston University and Green Mountain College.

Rev. Dr. Davies believes the institute “will provide students from across the United States and around the world an intensive and practical course addressing the pressing ecological challenges we are facing today, with an eye to developing systemic approaches for building more sustainable communities.”

He has been key in arranging the class and will lead. At

**Restore Hope gala raises $70,000**

TULSA, Okla. — Restore Hope welcomed over 300 guests and raised almost $70,000 at its Ruby Gala on Feb. 9, celebrating the United Methodist urban ministry’s 40th anniversary of helping Tulsa families in need.

The night of dinner, music, and looking back over four decades of generous outreach and support for the agency was held in Asbury United Methodist Church’s Venue 68.

Attendees also had the opportunity to tour Restore Hope’s new south satellite office, located in the Venue 68 building. According to tradition, a red ruby is the appropriate gift for celebrating a 40th anniversary. The jewel brings to mind love, energy, and vitality — perfect themes for Restore Hope Ministries’ big event.

Since February 1978, the ministry has helped hundreds of thousands of its Tulsa neighbors. Its mission continues: helping prevent homelessness, alleviate hunger, support education, and promote hope for families every day.

Here are highlights from the most recent year (2016-’17).

- 4,135 families received 191,345 pounds of healthy food to fill empty pantries — including fresh produce from local farmers and ground beef from local ranchers.

- 411 Bibles were shared with households that did not have one. Over 1,130 clients chose to attend one of Restore Hope’s chapel services, and 52 found new church homes with the ministry’s help.

- 852 neighbors were saved from homelessness — a 99.41 percent success rate in keeping families out of the shelter system. The U.S. success rate averages 70 percent.

- 2,809 students began school with the supplies they needed, in new backpacks, to help them succeed.

Jeff Jaynes, executive director of Restore Hope, said the gala was held “to celebrate all that we’ve accomplished in the last 40 years and what we hope to accomplish going forward.”

Initially called “Tulsa District Cooperative Ministries,” Restore Hope was formed in 1978 to help alleviate a growing issue of urban poverty in that city.

With a network of support from other nonprofits, United Methodist congregations, and a generous community, Restore Hope helped thousands of families that first year.

Bishop Jimmy Nunn, Council Oak District Superintendent Cindy Havlik, and former Restore Hope Executive Director Larry Johnson were special guests of the Ruby Gala.

Chairing the event were Jim and Susan Linn, who are members of Tulsa-Christ United Methodist Church and native Tulsans.

Jim described his work at Restore Hope as one of the most gratifying experiences of his lifetime: “As a weekly volunteer, board member, and supporter of Restore Hope, I get to see firsthand the joy and hope of families who are able to meet their needs while facing hardship and life transitions.”

All proceeds from the gala benefitted the ministry’s operations and programs.

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Jan. 31, UMNS

**Oklahoma United Methodist Contact**

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CULTIVATE GIVING

Your calling to pastor is a personal one. Overall, you have a passion to lead others in walking closer with Christ in every aspect of life. Stewardship is one part of that walk, and WE have a passion to develop stewardship with you.

We work with you to increase awareness and understanding of Legacy Giving and how to communicate with your congregation, committees, and councils. You aren’t alone in shepherding your community.

ENDOWMENT PROGRAMS

One of the most enduring and effective ways we can help your church is through the development of an endowment program.

Imagine having a consistent flow of support for a particular ministry. You no longer worry about being able to keep up, and you are able to do even more with the occasional one-time gift to that ministry.

There are many more ways an Endowment Program can be used to bless your ministries. Let us help you establish one today.

WE CAN HELP

It can be overwhelming to come up with more and more ways to provide information to encourage stewardship. We have experience and resources on tap to promote this message for you and alongside you.

Whether it is in a seminar, Sunday School class, or your worship service, our staff can bear some of this burden and help your congregation take steps to invest more into ministry.

FACE TO FACE

We value personal connection rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. Our passion is to help you develop something that works for your church. We are always available to support your ministries, so reach out to us!

Call our office at 800-259-6863 so we can connect with you. We are an organization that is helping you to invest in doing lasting good in this world.

The Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation
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The Table:

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During the February launch service, Chris Tiger noticed “a good spirit in the church.” He is the Oklahoma Conference’s director of New Faith Communities.

Rev. Tiger said Henson’s sermon focused on Luke 5:1-11, in which Jesus tells Peter, a fisherman, that he will be a fisher of men. “Jesus will see more in you than you see in yourself,” Tiger said.

Chuck Horton, senior pastor at Owasso-First, said he is “very pleased and excited about what I’ve heard regarding the launch service.”

Henson said he didn’t know what attendance to expect for that first weekly service. Bitter winter weather had moved into the greater Tulsa area, which likely affected turnout. He said about 60 people came for worship.

With the launch of The Table in Catoosa, Owasso-First is “one church in two locations,” Rev. Horton said. The cities are about 20 miles apart. The overall task to consider is “how do we start being ‘us’ and ‘we’?” he wondered.

The Table needs to consider theoretical and practical ideas as it starts out, he said. “How you welcome people. How you make yourself hospitable.”

The new faith family needs to be “very missional into the community,” he said.

The Table plans to open its doors to the wider community, such as offering space for student plays.

The satellite in Catoosa started holding monthly preview services last year, which is “the usual way we begin these new faith communities,” Tiger said. In addition, Henson has worked with a coach to advise the church on early steps.

The Table is the newest faith community undergirded by apportionments from all the churches of the Oklahoma Conference. Henson is known widely, too, for his lay service co-chairing the Conference’s Young Adult Ministries prior to his clergy career. He completed Local Pastors Licensing School in 2016.

So many folks in the community don’t have a church home” – Andy Henson

The start of a calendar year is a good time to launch a church, because of the buildup to Easter, Tiger said.

Before the launch, Henson said, he was “spending time out in the community, getting to know the community officials, building those relationships.” He wanted to “get a better sense of what’s happening in the community and introduce myself.”

Small teams of United Methodists also went out once a month and extended door-to-door invitations. Catoosa’s population is 7,151, according to the 2010 U.S. Census.

“So many folks in the community don’t have a church home,” Henson said. “There are people who don’t have a place where they’re finding meaningful connections. They can be a part of this from the very beginning.”

In Catoosa, The Table meets in a modern church facility, built in 2002 by the former Disciple UMC. There has been a Methodist church in that city for 135 years. Disciple was officially closed on Dec. 31, 2016, and on Jan. 1, 2017, the property was assigned to the Owasso church.

Although the building is newer, the sanctuary interior was unfinished. Completing it was a key part of renovation work that began in 2017 and was completed this year, Henson said.

Andy Henson shoots a confetti cannon Feb.11 in celebration of The Table’s grand opening in Catoosa.