Say So

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OUR BROTHER IN RED

THE OKLAHOMA INDIAN MISSIONARY CONFERENCE

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Communications Ministry Staff

Joe Harris
Director of Communications

Andrew Himes
Multimedia and Web Ministry

Meagan Ewton
Editor of Publications

Tabitha Beckman
Communications Specialist

Publication Credits

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Layout, photography, additional graphics and stories by Meagan Ewton, unless otherwise credited.

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Connection in the midst of uncertainty

A look at Mission & Ministry

Oklahoma Bishop Jimmy Nunn, left, dances with a woman in the Bolivian Conference. A delegation from the Oklahoma Conference traveled to the country in March 2019 to renew a covenant partnership between the two conferences. Mission opportunities in Bolivia are managed by the Office of Mission, one of the Oklahoma Conference’s Mission & Ministry programs. Photo by Tabitha Beckman.
Above: An AmeriCorps member helps students develop their literacy skills through Project Transformation, a program that brings college students, underserved children and community churches together in spiritual development and service. Photo by Tabitha Beckman. Below: Members of the Board of General Commission on Religion and Race attend an immersion with the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference on Oct. 31. Photo by Jeebye Pak.
The Methodist understanding of connection began as a way for the denomination’s founder, John Wesley, to make sure every community of believers could be connected to the church as a whole. That connection continues today in The United Methodist Church as local churches and annual conferences covenant to support one another in the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

One facet of that connection in the Oklahoma Conference is Mission & Ministry, a collection of 14 ministries supported by the conference. These ministries resource, educate and support people in communities that are often socioeconomically disadvantaged. Rev. Derrek Belase, director of connectional ministry for the Oklahoma Conference, said giving to Mission & Ministry is a way for congregations to “be involved in ministries well beyond their local borders and impact lives they will never know.”

“This is a way to live out Matthew 25, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and visit those in prison,” Belase said. “Our local churches do amazing work in their own communities, but for a few cents every week in the offering plate, they can extend their witness even further.”

Rev. Scott Rodgers, who leads Elk City UMC, said the congregation believes it can have a greater outreach in partnership with other churches through those ministries. “We recognize they can do ministries that we can’t do on our own,” said Rodgers. “It’s important to [the church] to pay those apportionments, those M&M apportionments, because we know the ministry done by those organizations.”

Rev. Adam Shahan believes the church he leads in Stillwater takes the idea of connection to heart. “At Lost Creek, we believe in shared ministry, and we also believe that we can do more together than we can do by ourselves,” Shahan said. “There are connectional, shared ministries in our conference that are better resourced and better trained to engage with the kinds of people that extension ministries serve, and we feel confident sharing our dollars with them.”

Christ UMC in Tulsa has a heritage of supporting connectional ministries through their giving, according to lead pastor Rev. Bob Feist. He said the church feels that “we need to give beyond ourselves.”

“I think that we just know that we’re in mission beyond ourselves,” said Feist. “It blesses the people we’re trying to bless, but it also comes back to our church.”

Mission & Ministry programs like Project Transformation, a summer outreach program that brings children, churches and college students together through literacy and leadership, impact both the residents and the church of the communities they serve.

“It’s a good way for them to get involved, it’s a good way for them to see the church beyond the local church, and it’s a good way for them to make contact with people in our community we might not normally make contact with,” said Rev. Greg Tener, pastor at First UMC in Bartlesville, which hosts a Project Transformation camp every summer. “It’s important to [the church] because they have a real desire to reach young people with the good news of Christ. They have a real desire to help support the larger church, and they have a real hope to make a difference in people’s lives.”

Rev. Sonja Tobey said the church she leads, St. Paul’s UMC in Lawton, has a strong connection with the Wesley Foundation at Cameron University, part of the conference’s Campus Ministries. She said the church takes mission trips through Volunteers in Mission, part of the conference’s Office of Mission, and is connected with the Redemption Church in Lawton, part of Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministries. Though Tobey couldn’t say whether anyone in her congregation was directly affected by any Mission & Ministry programs, she said several ministries have touched people’s hearts.

“Because [Mission & Ministry giving] supports ministries that are in Oklahoma, the way they see it, it’s in their backyard,” Tobey said.

Rev. Mark Jardine said Mission & Ministry opportunities like Project Transformation and Camps & Conference Programming have had a positive impact on children and youth at Chapel Hill UMC in Oklahoma City. He said the church feels the camps are transformational places where people are impacted by Christ, including receiving a call to ministry.

“We feel those are some of the impactful monies we give to the apportionment system,” Jardine said. “We just consider [Mission & Ministry] apportionments are part of our obligation. As far as we’re concerned, those are still apportionments, even if they’re under a different name.”

In 2018, the Oklahoma Annual Conference approved a two-tiered budget system that resulted in a 6.3 percent reduction in apportionments. In his Episcopal Address that year, Bishop Jimmy Nunn said the recommendation for a two-tiered system came after a long-term study by the conference Council on Finance and Administration revealed that rising costs and declining attendance could create an unworkable financial situation.

“When I came to Oklahoma, I listened to many conversations…and one theme emerged: beneath the surface of the reports, the conference is experiencing financial distress,” Nunn said in his address. “Without significant intervention, the financial assumptions of the conference are unsustainable.”

With the new budget, apportionments that supported work that could only be managed by the conference office—including CCLI and CVLI licensing, payroll and benefits, clergy development, conference-wide communications—made up the first tier of the new budget. Ministries such as Circle of Care, Cookson Hills Center, Restore Hope, the Skyline Urban Ministry and Hispanic/Latino Ministries made up the second budget tier, now known as Mission & Ministry.
First-tier apportionments would continue to be mandatory, but second-tier Mission & Ministry giving would be at the local church’s discretion.

“The idea behind it was to allow churches to give more locally to mission projects if they chose to do that and still participate in the connectional ministries at a rate that was sustainable for their own budgets,” Belase said.

The Oklahoma Annual Conference recently completed its first full calendar year of supporting Mission & Ministry work separately from apportionment giving. Conference apportionments were paid at 81.42 percent, but only 63.62 percent of Mission & Ministry funding was paid. Of the conference’s 469 churches asked to give to Mission & Ministry programs, 90 churches paid zero percent, 74 churches paid less than 50 percent, 40 churches paid more than 50 but less than 100 percent, and 265 churches paid 100 percent or more.

Tener believes Mission & Ministry programs like Campus Ministries provide vital spaces for high schoolers and young adults to connect more fully with the life of the church. He said the opportunities provided by these ministries need to continue to be presented to young people.

“These ministries would be in critical condition if they can’t hire staff or if they can’t expand their reach,” Tener said. “It’d be detrimental to our Methodist witness and detrimental to the witness of the universal church in our communities.”

Tobey said in 2019 she did a sermon series that invited representatives from each Mission & Ministry opportunity to speak to St. Paul’s, after which an offering would be collected for the ministry. She believes that some ministries might survive without giving from the churches, but others would be negatively impacted.

“Some of them would obviously suffer and close or not be able to do what they have been doing,” Tobey said. “Some of them would fundraise and be okay… Fundraising and training the directors is going to be critically important if they’re going to make it without people paying the apportionments.”

Rodgers said that Elk City UMC is working to finish raising money for Circle of Care to build a home for large sets of foster siblings on land the church donated for the project. He sympathizes with the struggle of trying to find money to fund ministry work.

“I know that it’s going to cause every ministry to do some refiguring, refocusing, and doing some things different, but we also do that in the local church,” Rodgers said. “We have to say, ‘this is where we are,’ and make adjustments accordingly.”

Jardine said he is concerned that a lack of funding will cause some Mission & Ministry programs to end.

“My concern would be that many of them would cease to exist or would face some radical, hard decisions that would lessen their impact,” Jardine said. “Some of the larger ones can go out and raise significant dollars, but some could never raise the type of money necessary to fund their ministry.”

Belase said Mission & Ministry staff have had to work harder to raise the same funds they’ve received in the past, even in places that have historically supported their work. He believes that financial support for extended ministries is vital as the denomination moves through a time of change.

“It’s akin to planting the tree that you know won’t provide shade in your own lifetime but you do it anyway,” Belase said. “This a great time of transition and upheaval, and that is all the more reason to participate in the connection and to focus locally at the same time. Our system of apportioning ministry allows us to do both and do it well.”

Shahan believes that communicating a ministry’s story will increase in importance not only for extension ministries, but for local churches as well.

“Our church has committed to paying 100 percent of Mission & Ministry giving, but I do see the need for all of us, not just our extension ministries, but our local churches to get better at telling their story and to be better at shaping a positive narrative of the impact that they’re all making as apportionment giving goes down and as churches close,” Shahan said.

Feist said he doesn’t know what the future holds for Mission & Ministry work, but he does believe seeking God’s provision and communicating with churches will be important.

“When I’ve seen the way some churches are responding to missional opportunities, I realize that it’s a challenging time for all of us,” Feist said. “I think that all of them have been aware that they’ve got to find sources, if they can, beyond giving from the local church, however, I just think that the local church and the connections that come when a congregation is providing support, there’s just nothing quite like that.”

Though Belase recognizes that some churches may feel uncertain about the future of the denomination, he said he chooses to focus on the work still needed in the present.

“One of my favorite quotes come from Abraham Davenport from the late 1700s as a storm was approaching during a meeting of the Connecticut House of Representatives: ‘The Day of Judgment is either approaching or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause for adjournment. If it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. Therefore, I wish that candles be brought,’” Belase said. “In this day, I wish the candles to be brought as we continue to do our common, connectional work.”
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How two women worked to keep a ministry alive

By Emily Robnett
If there is one universal truth about small towns, it is this: word travels fast.

For the Worth of a Child, a non-profit program that assists foster families in providing essentials to the foster children in their care, started with a phone call. The Department of Human Services (DHS) had picked up two small children who had only the clothes on their backs and needed assistance in providing their basic necessities—clothing, diapers and personal care products.

By the end of the day, the community had come together to aid these children in their time of need. The experience inspired those involved to reach out to some women at Perry-First, and For the Worth of a Child was born.

When the ministry was formed, Noble County had more children in foster care per capita than any other county in Oklahoma. Initially, the program started as a small backpack ministry. Many foster children move from place to place with nothing but a black garbage bag full of their belongings, and the program provided backpacks to use instead.

Eventually, the need for these backpacks and the essentials...
they provided grew, and the church obtained a $10,000 Petree Grant from the Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation to expand their project to include not just backpacks but also beds and mattresses for infants and toddlers.

Like many fledgling programs, For the Worth of a Child came close to dissolution. Right around the time the church began to receive clothing for foster children, the program's founders became unable to continue leading the ministry. The clothing went into storage.

Months later, lay members Linda Parham and Janet Shannon discovered the donations.

“We were cleaning out the church and came across the donated clothing,” said Parham. “We said to one another, ‘We have to do something with this; we cannot allow this program to die.’”

The two women began sorting clothes, and they organized the inaugural First Friday for Foster Families, an all-day shopping event.

From that first event grew an ever-expanding ministry. At first, Parham and Shannon were given a small, corner room in the church for their project, but within a few months, their clothing closet encompassed three rooms.

Today, For the Worth of a Child has separate rooms for summer and winter clothing as well as a storage room for overflow and personal hygiene items. Not only do they have clothing available at the church, the two women keep clothing of all sizes at DHS for emergency use.

A monthly shopping day is offered for DHS workers and families to come to the church and pick up whatever their children might need—clothing, shoes, toiletries, diapers—all free of charge.

“‘For the children who receive these much-needed essentials, it is a like Christmas every month,’” Shannon said.

For the Worth of a Child’s support extends far beyond the walls of Perry-First. The Perry community has come together to support this important ministry through a variety of fundraisers. The program has also brought awareness to the needs of foster children in Oklahoma and has inspired a number of organizations in Perry to get involved in the mission.

One such fundraiser was sponsored by the local Masons, who have raised a total of $16,000 for the organization.

Noble county churches of all denominations, as well as local businesses, overwhelmingly supported a foster children’s “shower” to ensure this program continued.

The women of Christ Lutheran Church of Perry purchased 50 pillows and sewed child-friendly pillow-cases.

After touring the facility and hearing about the needs of their peers, the youth of Christ Lutheran bought thirty hoodies for junior high and high school aged foster children and donated $150 to the cause.

Three women’s civic clubs – the Perry Study Club, the Tuesday Afternoon Study Club, and the Perry Progress Club – purchased shoes for foster children for an entire year.

In March, Perry High School students will be sponsoring a week-long drive to raise funds to benefit For the Worth of a Child.

The impact this program has had on the Perry community and the foster families of Noble County cannot be underestimated. In a statement, Noble County Child Welfare commended For the Worth of a Child in a statement.

“This [program] has been a great asset to foster families. Often times, foster parents are on a limited income and have many children placed in their home,” the statement said. “For the Worth of a Child eases financial stress of many foster parents.”

When asked why they were passionate about this ministry, Parham and Shannon pointed to Psalm 127:3: “Children are a heritage from the Lord.”

“We do this for two reasons: first, for the children, and second, because we hope to encourage families to take in foster children,” Shannon said. “So many families have the love needed to do this work, but not the finances. That’s where For the Worth of a Child comes in.”

Parham and Shannon are passionate about For the Worth of a Child and are willing to help other United Methodist Churches start programs in their area.

“We will gladly offer a tour of our facility and our guidance to anyone who is interested in starting a program like ours in their area,” Shannon said.

“Many churches have empty Sunday school rooms like ours,” Shannon said. “Why not utilize that space for something worthwhile? Every county in Oklahoma has foster children and children in crisis, so we know the need is there.”

The duo recommends reaching out to local DHS agencies to inquire about what foster children need.

For foster parents like Jamie Horner, the program has made a meaningful impact. Horner’s first foster child was placed with her at six days old in mid-winter, yet Horner only had infant clothes for spring and summer.

“Someone at work mentioned the organization to me and gave me Janet Shannon’s phone number. Although they are normally open one day a month, Janet met with me immediately, and I was able to get my little one all the essentials—from clothes to pacifiers to bottles.”

As her foster child has grown, Horner continues to pick-up necessities from the church.

“I honestly look forward to shopping days,” Horner said. “I feel like my little one has extra grandmas in her life.”

Sometimes, all it takes to make a difference is a simple phone call. Word travels fast, and at Perry-First, the response is even faster.

For more information, contact Perry-First at (580) 336-2776. §
Janet Shannon, left, and Linda Parham, right, have organized a large collection of infant essentials for foster families. Photo by Rev. Emily Robnett.
The Chickasaw Nation Dance Troupe demonstrates friendship songs and stomp dances during the annual Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference Gala. Photo by Ginny Underwood.
In Red

Indian Missionary Conference

By Ginny Underwood
Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference members holding a photo shoot at the First Americans Museum in Oklahoma City to promote Native American participation in the 2020 U.S. census. Courtesy of Ginny Underwood.
Before missionaries set foot on the continent, indigenous peoples in North America had a clear understanding of the principles of Christianity, according to the Rev. Donna Pewo, member of the Comanche Nation and director of the Clinton Indian Church and Community Center in the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference.

“I can remember my mom telling me a long time ago that we were spiritual before Christianity even came to our people because we already had a connection, a relationship with the Creator,” said Pewo. “We are a people of hospitality, we are a giving people, and we have much to offer to our communities and those outside of our realm.”

From the earliest origins of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference (OIMC) in the 1800s to today, Native United Methodists have endured and fought to maintain their culture, identity and traditions against horrific odds.

“The early missioners had three tasks: to teach English, to make Native folk civilized, and to make them Christian,” said the Rev. David Wilson, OIMC conference superintendent. He said early missioners from the American Board of Commissioners tended to lump Native folk together without understanding the many cultures.

“They began to impose their beliefs in terms of their identity on Native people and teaching our culture was bad, our rituals are bad, and that are ceremonies are bad,” Wilson said.

For most of the 19th century, Methodism grew quickly across Indian Territory due to strategic methods the Church used, according to Tash Smith, author of Capture These Indians for the Lord: Indians, Methodists, and Oklahomans, 1844-1939. Methodists incorporated Native ministers into mission work quicker than rival denominations. In addition, the Methodists avoided expensive mission facilities relying on preaching places and boarding schools. In 1873, the Indian Mission Conference, a precursor to the OIMC, reported more than four times as many local Native preachers than “preachers in charge.”

“Between 1844 to 1907, any church that was operating in Indian Territory belonged to the Indian Mission, and they were supplied often by Native pastors,” said Wilson. “I tell people often that OIMC is the mother church of Methodism in the state of Oklahoma.”

While the church contributed to the historic trauma experienced by many Native peoples, it also provided some of the only places allowing language and culture to be used on a regular basis. Services were conducted in Native languages; Bibles and hymns were translated; and events were scheduled in conjunction with traditional gatherings, which allowed Native peoples to control their interaction with Christianity, according to Smith. He said that reliance on Native clergy created a problem for church officials because elements of Indian culture did not die out as mainstream white society hoped. In the 1880s, Our Brother in Red, the official newspaper for the IMC, captured editorials challenging the authority that had been given to Native preachers. By the early 20th century, mainstream Christianity viewed the prospect of Indians having any authority over churches as counterproductive.

“Our culture, language, rituals and ceremonies are part of who we are as Native people,” said Clarence Yarholar, a member of OIMC and the Muscogee Creek Nation. “I don’t want to forget who I am because this is how God made me. I cannot deny that, I want to share that.”

Many Native United Methodist Churches today remain among the only places contemporary tribal people can hear and speak their languages. Wilson says communities are changing and small towns are disappearing; however, the one critical thing that remains constant in those areas are the OIMC local churches.

“Once a week we get to come back together to hear our language spoken, to sing our songs, to gather together as a
community and to reaffirm who we are as Native peoples, and then go back into the world to do what God calls us to do,” Wilson said.

Research from the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development shows that after decades of poverty and social distress, the more than 600 federally recognized tribes in the U.S. are amid a resurgence. In many communities, tribes are flexing sovereignty rights to break cycles of dependence; they are taking back control, setting new standards of performance, accountability and conceptions of what is possible. Wilson says he sees the effect of the resurgence within in the OIMC.

“For a long time, the Native narrative has been filled in by non-Native people,” said Wilson. “We are now a couple of generations from the boarding school era. The young people take pride in being Native in a way that the older generations were not allowed to do.”

He said due to historic trauma, some Native churches will not include any cultural or traditional ceremonies at all. Working with the youth to rediscover and recover what has been lost is a priority for the conference.

“Unfortunately, the trauma we have experienced from boarding school experiences tells us not to do this,” said Yarholar. “But now, the baby boomers, I see them stuck in between. I believe they want to share some culture, what they’ve learned.”

Yarholar is currently drafting a paper on Native theology and hopes to hold dialogues among Native leaders about revisioning Native ministries. He says Native people should no longer have to choose Christianity over cultural identity.

“Sitting in four walls of church is not for everybody. For so many people it may be sitting in a teepee, sitting in the sweat lodge, or sitting under the brush arbor to connect to the Creator,” he said.

Wilson agrees indigenizing Native ministry is key to growing Native churches. Since 1974, records from the General Council on Finance and Administration on Native American membership show an average steady decline of Native American members. At the height of membership there were 14,176 Native American United Methodist members; 2016 GCFA data shows a membership of 10,699. A total of 24 Native American churches have

A timeline of Native history in Oklahoma and beyond. Historic and contemporary photos courtesy Ginny Underwood.
closed since 1992 nationwide. Wilson says rethinking ministry for Native peoples and support from allies such as the Oklahoma Annual Conference and the larger church are key.

“The Oklahoma Annual Conference for years has been a great support in terms of their apportionments and now today’s second mile giving, which helps us to supplement our budget for pastor salaries,” Wilson said.

Wilson said the 2012 Act of Repentance to Heal Relationships with Indigenous Peoples was an important first step for the denomination. The experience has led to several annual conferences and agencies to start new partnerships with Native ministries and going so far as to returning land to tribes. However, the work is far from complete. He believes United Methodists could also play a stronger role in advocacy on contemporary critical issues facing Indian Country such as the epidemic of violence against Native women and children and stopping the use of detrimental stereotypes and mascots that negatively impact Native youth.

“We are a small voice and we need allies and advocates to help us be seen and heard for the well-being of our communities,” he said. “We do much with very little and have much to offer the church and the world.”

In 2019, the OIMC worked nationwide to reach out to Native communities in need sending school kits and flood relief support to members of the Yankton Sioux Tribe on the White Swan Reservation, the Oglala Lakota on the Pine Ridge reservation and the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in South Dakota.

Bishop Jimmy Nunn, episcopal leader of the OIMC and the Oklahoma Annual Conference, said his work with OIMC has reminded him to look deeper into ministry needs to find the spiritual values of the work.

“We measure so many things by sustainability,” Nunn said. “Instead of just asking is it sustainable, OIMC also asks how do we get the ministry done because the people are counting on us?”

With the United Methodist Church facing a possible schism at the 2020 General Conference in May, Pewo offers a Native perspective on unity. She describes the beauty of the round dance which is shared among many tribes. In the dance arena, the drum is considered the heartbeat. All people
are welcomed into the circle to dance side by side in a fluid movement around the drum. As people enter, the circle expands to include those joining the dance. The intention is to leave disputes, disagreements and negative feelings outside the circle and come together as one.

“That’s how it should be. We should all be able to come together and include each other and invite each other,” Pewo said. “We should be able to make room for one another to come in and share, to move together in the rhythm of the heartbeat.”

In 2016, the OIMC began offering Native immersion experiences to help United Methodists and allies to engage and better understand its work. Participants visit historic sites within a day trip of Oklahoma City, including the Washita “massacre” Battlefield, which is a continuation of the Cheyenne and Arapaho story after the 1864 Sand Creek Massacre. Participants also can engage with tribal members at local OIMC churches.

“We have had a wide variety of participants including both lay and clergy, volunteers, and United Methodists who just have a heart for Native ministries,” said Wilson. “Everyone is welcome to come and learn more about Native United Methodists and experience our culture and traditions.”

Wilson says no matter what happens at General Conference, the OIMC will continue to build bridges of understanding and work to meet the needs of Native communities.

For more information about the OIMC or to learn about the immersion experience, visit www.umc-oimc.org. §
Become an Ally and Support Indigenous Peoples

- Do your homework. Respectfully seek clarification and insights from indigenous people and organizations to determine what is or is not appropriate. Participate in the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference's Immersion Experience (www.umc-oimc.org).
- Interrupt and correct the myths, stereotypes or other false narratives.
- The most toxic myth is that Native Americans receive government benefits and get rich from casinos. This narrative has been played out over and over in popular TV shows, films and in the media, particularly over the last two decades. These portrayals have real consequences and negatively impact Native people daily.
- Use language carefully. Pay attention to the language you use in conversations among your friends and co-workers. Help remove offensive phrases from your own conversations.
- Make Native People Visible.
- Advocate for accurate Native history.
- Advocate for your state or local school board to adopt a policy to teach accurate Native American history and contemporary facts.
- Seek a variety of Native voices. Recognize that one Native America voice does not speak for all Native Americans. Approach conversations with several entities for diverse opinions and input.
- Say NO to mascots. Do not accept Native American-themed mascots or names in sports or commercial products. They are not honorific or respectful; they are derogatory and harmful.

1929 – A group of Native women organized a separate Indian Women's Missionary Society of Oklahoma to conduct work among Indians.
1935 – Presiding Bishop, A. Frank Smith, described camp meetings of the Indian Mission as “a world within a world” where Methodist Indian congregations found ways to protect, cultivate, and direct their own culture within a Christian context.
1988 – General Conference approved Native American Awareness Sunday to develop and strengthen Native American ministries within annual conferences and to educate Native American seminarians.
1988 – General Conference approves the Native American Comprehensive Plan to enrich United Methodist Native American ministries.
1989: Rev. Thomas Roughface, Sr., appointed as the first Native American General Superintendent in OIMC.
1992 – Lois V. Glory-Neal of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference became the first Native American woman to be ordained elder.

1972 – General Conference of The United Methodist Church created the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference.
1996 – General Conference acknowledges the denominations role in the 1864 Sand Creek Massacre, a violent attack against Cheyenne and Arapaho peoples which was led by a Methodist preacher. OIMC pastor, the Rev. Alvin Deer, submitted the petition because of the challenges he faced ministering the Cheyenne and Arapaho community in El Reno.

1989 – Lois V. Glory-Neal of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference becomes the first Native American woman to be ordained elder.

2000 – The Oklahoma Annual Conference held an Act of Repentance service with OIMC members.
2016 – The Oklahoma Annual Conference held an Act of Repentance toward Healing Relationships with Indigenous Peoples service.
2019 – The United Methodist Church returns land in Upper Sandusky, Ohio to the Wyandotte Nation of Oklahoma.
2020 – The Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference includes 83 churches, ministries and fellowships in Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas.
WHERE IS YOUR MISSION FIELD?

The Arise Program will open your doors
As a church, our mission is to go into the nations and make disciples. Sometimes, we can become excited on the first waves of outreach and new growth in our community, and we begin to only focus on those who have come in our doors.

Priorities like discipleship and fellowship are so good—but we can’t stop going back outside to be the church in the streets of our communities. We have something that will push your church to discover how you might better serve others.

Mike Wiley, here at the Foundation, has spent nearly a decade developing this program we call Arise. Bringing fresh vision to congregations, it is now evolving into a new format that includes short weekly videos and in-depth guidance for prayer and discussion.

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Coming soon, Arise will be available in a “Sunday school” format. Your church can intentionally walk through this life-changing program, still with the guidance from Mike and the Foundation. Sign up to stay tuned! Go to: okumf.org/services/arise

Does your church want to better reach your neighborhoods? Visit us online to stay tuned: okumf.org/services/arise
Friends of Children Banquet & Silent Auction
Saturday, April 4th, 2020 at 5 p.m.
National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum

Guest Speaker: Christina Meredith, Abuse & Homelessness Survivor, Youth Advocate & Author of CinderGirl

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OKLAHOMA UNITED METHODIST
Circle of Care
for CHILDREN and YOUTH
Say What?

Decoding the jargon around General Conference

General Conference will take place May 5-15. The Advance Daily Christian Advocate lists the petitions that will be considered by delegates during legislative committees, which will turn into calendar items and may change portions of the Book of Discipline. But what does that actually mean? Thankfully, UMC.org has a list of General Conference definitions to help decode the jargon around this important gathering. Find additional General Conference resources at www.resourceumc.org/en/churchwide/general-conference-2020.

A

Advance Daily Christian Advocate (Advance DCA or ADCA): A set of publications containing the agenda, rules, delegate listings, petitions, reports from the general agencies/commissions and study committees, information for delegates, and codes of conduct. The publications are sent to all General Conference delegates prior to the conference.

B

Book of Discipline: The fundamental book that outlines the law, doctrine, administration, organizational work and procedures of The United Methodist Church. Each General Conference amends The Book of Discipline and the actions of the General Conference are reflected in the quadrennial revision. Often referred to as The Discipline.

Book of Resolutions: This volume contains the pronouncements on issues approved by the General Conference and currently valid. The Book of Resolutions contains not only the resolutions and policy statements passed by the most recent General Conference, but also all such statements still considered to represent the position of The United Methodist Church. The text of any resolution is considered the official position of the denomination on that subject.

C

Calendar Items: Calendar Items are petitions that have been acted upon by a legislative committee and are ready to be voted on by the plenary.

CALMS (Conference and Legislative Management System): The online legislative tracking system used by the General Conference.

Commission on the General Conference: This commission comprised of lay and clergy members has oversight responsibility for all arrangements necessary for the meeting of the General Conference.

Committee on Agenda and Calendar: This committee is responsible for guiding the order of business of the Conference.

Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision: This committee works with the United Methodist Publishing House editorial staff to edit and publish The Book of Discipline and The Book of Resolutions.

Committee on Courtesies and Privileges: This committee considers matters of privilege and recommends to the Conference that they be heard. The committee also considers resolutions of commendation, courtesy and appreciation and extends courtesies of the Conference.

Committee on Credentials: This committee provides guidance to the secretary of General Conference regarding the approval of credentials of delegates.

Committee on Journal: This committee approves daily the record of proceedings of the General Conference prepared by the secretary of the General Conference and assistants.

Committee on Presiding Officers: This committee selects the bishops who serve as the presiding officers for each plenary session.
Committee on Reference: This committee reviews the assignment of petitions, reports, recommendations and resolutions to the legislative committees.

Committee on Central Conference Matters: This committee handles all petitions relating to the Central Conferences, Autonomous Methodist Churches, Affiliated Autonomous Methodist Churches, Affiliated United Churches and Concordat relationships.

Consent Calendar: In order to expedite the legislative process in the plenary session, committee items are grouped together, placed on a Consent Calendar and voted on in blocks. Any 20 delegates may have a Consent Calendar item removed by having such a request on file with the Secretary of the General Conference.

Daily Christian Advocate (DCA): The official journal of the General Conference. The DCA contains three sections: news and features, verbatim transcript of the conference proceedings and calendar items. A calendar item must be in the DCA for 24 hours before it can be voted on by the General Conference.

Discipline Paragraph: The basic unit in The Book of Discipline. Paragraphs are numbered consecutively within each chapter or section, but numbers are skipped between parts, chapters, and sections in order to allow for additions. Petitions to amend the Book of Discipline must refer to a specific Discipline paragraph.

General Conference Rules of Order: These are the rules of operation of the General Conference. General Conference rules deal with the number of delegates required to file minority reports, eligibility for the consent calendar, the number of delegates required to remove a calendar item from the consent calendar, etc. The rules are adopted by the General Conference as the first item of business. You can download a pdf of the proposed Rules of Order.

Legislative Committee: Each legislative committee meets during General Conference to review and make recommendations on petitions assigned to it. The General Conference Rules of Order set the number and name of each legislative committee and the Discipline paragraphs or topics assigned to each legislative committee.

Legislative Committee Referrals: If a legislative committee feels that a petition should be assigned to a different committee, it refers a petition to the Committee on Reference, which may assign it to another committee or refer it back to the original committee. The legislation tracking system facilitates the referral and re-referral of petitions.

Legislative Subcommittee: Each legislative committee may deem it necessary to divide into subcommittees which are assigned specific petitions to review. Each subcommittee elects a chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary.

Minority Report: A minority report allows for the expression of differing views held by a significant portion of a legislative committee.

Petition: Petitions are proposed legislation to be considered by a legislative committee and voted on during General Conference. Petitions propose changes to paragraphs of The Book of Discipline, The Book of Resolutions or general requests for the church. The Advance Daily Christian Advocate (ADCA) contains a complete listing of petitions. See also Petition Number and Petition Identification Code.

Petition Identification Code (PIC): This is the numbering system used for a petition. The PIC is used when information related to a petition is printed or displayed. The PIC is displayed in the online legislative tracking system adjacent to the name of the petition. See the PIC format.

Petition Number: Numbers are assigned sequentially to each petition submitted to General Conference. This number is assigned automatically by the petition tracking system when a petition is entered into the system. See also Petition and Petition Identification Code. The petition numbers for the 2020 General Conference will begin with 20001.

Petitions Secretary: The petitions secretary receives all petitions submitted and enters each petition into the tracking system. The petition tracking system assigns a petition number and assigns petitions to a legislative committee based on The Book of Discipline paragraph number and the rules of General Conference.

Plenary: The plenary comprises all delegates entitled to be seated within the bar of General Conference.

Verbatim: The verbatim is the complete transcript of the dialog from the General Conference. The conference verbatim is published in the Daily Christian Advocate (DCA) and is available online.
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