Outdoor adventures near and far

Campers ventured from the Red River to Colorado and Wyoming and points between this summer, through the programming and hospitality offered by Oklahoma Conference United Methodist Camps ministry.

Elementary-age Lexi, who attended Growin’ in Grace, presented Camps Director Ed Parker with a gift of $5 from her own pocket money on that camp’s last day. Lexi asked that it be used to help another child go to camp.

During June and July, 74 groups were welcomed at Cross Point, Egan, and Canyon Camps in Oklahoma. In addition to UM conference and district programs, the three camping facilities hosted 4-H’ers, family reunions, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and more.

The Camps ministry also directed mobile day camps in eight Oklahoma cities. Children and youths from 235 churches of the Conference went camping this summer, according to the ministry’s records.

On the final day of Trek I, the high school students backpacking in Colorado’s wilderness met a trail maintenance crew and helped the workers haul out a lot of equipment. Henry Kimble of Hinton is shown at trail’s end with a grateful crew member.

Churches shelter many as hurricane damage spreads

BY SAM HODGES
UNITED METHODIST NEWS SERVICE

With his rapidly flooding town needing an emergency shelter, the Rev. John Mooney of First United Methodist in Vidor, Texas, opened the church gym on the evening of Aug. 29. When that quickly filled, he kept going.

Letter from Oklahoma’s disaster response leader, page 3

“We had to open up the sanctuary and put them on the pews and everything,” Mooney said. “We’ve got about 150 people here, all walks of life, babies, toddlers. We’re depending on church members and the community for food. We don’t have any power.”

Hurricane Harvey’s devastation of Houston has captured the world’s attention, but smaller cities and towns to the east and southeast in Texas have been hit just as hard, and flooding rains began to reach Louisiana on Aug. 30.

Superintendent Alicia Coltzer sized up the devastation to the Texas Conference’s Southeast District. “It will turn out to be, percentagewise, the same as Houston as far as flooded homes. We have thousands.”

First United Methodist in Vidor is just
Choose faith over fear

BY BISHOP JIMMY NUNN

I t has been a year since I crossed the Red River and came to Oklahoma from northwest Texas. I quickly found that the greatest strength of the Church in Oklahoma is its people.

It has been a joy to work with highly competent leaders, visit vibrant churches, and experience creative ministries that serve people beyond the local churches. I continue to witness how we care for each other and reach out to others in mission and service.

In every encounter with the United Methodists of Oklahoma, I have been blessed.

Recently I opened and read the letter of the Apostle Paul to the church at Philippi. As I read, I was filled with deep gratitude for you who carry forward the work for Christ in Oklahoma. I echo what Paul wrote: “I am thankful for all of you every time I pray, and it’s always a prayer full of joy” (Philippians 1:4).

I could not function in this role without offering my prayer that is filled with gratitude for you.

Because of the faith and hope in Christ that I see shining out through your life, I am strengthened in mine. That truly blesses my efforts to serve in such a time as this.

Like you, I wrestle with U.S. society’s shift away from cultural norms that were friendlier to the church, even centered in religious community life. The rift between church and secular culture increases. Our apprehension grows as that gap widens. We are alarmed as our churches experience chronic declines in regular attendance. That comes as no surprise—but with our anxiety also comes a deadly, hidden virus (to borrow a computer term).

Fear acts like a virus secreted in an email attachment. It’s a genuine emotion that evokes valid responses. But it provides a horrible context within which to live out a calling.

In her TED Talk, Karen Thompson Walker observes that fear is a subconscious form of storytelling. The stories have characters, and the characters are us. The stories have suspense and ask, “What will happen next?”

Fears increase when suspense builds. In growing distress, we wonder, “What will happen to us?”

Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians from a prison cell.

He surely had something to fear.

Yet as he lived that experience he encouraged his audience to “adopt the attitude that was in Christ Jesus ... who emptied himself by taking the form of a servant ... and humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death” (Philippians 2:5, 7, 8).

Rather than live in fear of what might be, I choose to be faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The ministry of a Christian is not my ministry; it is a gift given by God to each of us for others. The ministry of a Christian is not a program, but a practice of serving others as the hands and feet of Jesus.

We serve—and serve without expectations of reward or status.

In the words of the Apostle Paul: “It’s not that I have already reached this goal or have already been perfected, but I pursue it, so that I may grab hold of it because Christ grabbed hold of me for just this purpose. The goal I pursue is the prize of God’s upward call in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:12,14).

Live not in the fear of what might happen; rather, live in the faith and hope that Jesus gives.

Willson Lecture Series welcomes
Nadia Bolz-Weber
Speaking 3 times Oct. 19 in Smith Chapel at OCU

Oklahoma City University has partnered with Mainstream United Methodists to feature Nadia Bolz-Weber, the founding pastor of House for All Sinners and Saints, in Denver, Colo., for this year’s Willson Lecture Series at the university.

Rev. Bolz-Weber is the author of several best-selling books, including “Accidental Saints: Finding God in All the Wrong People,” “Salvation on the Small Screen? 24 Hours of Christian Television,” and “Pastrix: the Cranky, Beautiful Faith of a Sinner & Saint.” She is an ordained pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Her writing and ministry have been spotlighted by the BBC World Service, The Washington Post, NPR’s Morning Edition, Fresh Air, The Daily Beast, and CNN.

Her three lectures will take place Oct. 19 at 1, 2:30, and 7 p.m. in the Bishop W. Angie Smith Chapel on the OCU campus. The Thursday events are free and open to the public.

Thompson to speak on digital life

Oklahoma City University will host technology writer and philosopher Clive Thompson on Sept. 19 for the Martha Jean Lemon Distinguished Speaker Series.

Thompson will speak at 7 p.m. that Tuesday in the Bass Music Center’s Petree Recital Hall. The presentation is free to the public.

Thompson is a contributing writer for The New York Times Magazine and a columnist for Wired. He writes about how technology affects everyday life, “from the linguistic style of emoji to the culture of screenshots.”

“In an age where we are constantly consuming information, it is instructive to examine how the ‘round-the-clock flow of data affects our daily lives,” said Amy Cataldi, dean of OCU’s Petree College of Arts and Sciences. “This presentation promises to be thought-provoking.”

OCU takes studies to churches

A gain this academic year, members of Oklahoma City University’s faculty and staff are offering to travel throughout the Oklahoma Conference to teach Sunday School classes and provide special studies on a wide range of topics. Those include: books and themes of the Bible, church history, Wesleyan studies, apocalyptic literature, Christian spirituality, and the life and teaching of Jesus.

Depending on distance and availability, presenters can lead up to three sessions.

OCU offers the service free of charge to churches in the Oklahoma and Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conferences.

To request a study at your church, contact Charles Neff in the University-Church Relations Office, 405-208-5060 or cneff@okcu.edu. Rev. Dr. Neff is the vice president leading that office and dean of the chapel.
Dear Oklahoma United Methodists,

In the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, the Oklahoma United Methodist Disaster Response Ministry (OKUMC-DR) wants to keep you updated on what is requested of us so that we provide the most effective assistance. I know you are wondering: What can I do? What can my church do? What is our Conference doing?

Thus this update from me as the OKUMC-DR coordinator.

Be assured that trained personnel who are part of official aid processes are addressing needs as best they can in very difficult circumstances.

Do not self-deploy

The State of Texas is asking unofficial volunteers to not self-deploy. Showing up unexpectedly in any of the communities impacted by this weather disaster will create an additional burden.

The National VOAD also has made note that environmental hazards exist, and uninvited volunteers may find themselves turned away by law enforcement.

To ensure volunteer safety, as well as the safety of disaster survivors, volunteers should go only into affected areas when they receive a specific volunteer assignment, have proper safety gear, and carry valid identification.

Potential volunteers are being asked to register with a voluntary or charitable organization of their choice. The National and Texas VOAD websites have links for people who wish to register to volunteer with community- and faith-based organizations working in the field.

Most importantly, please be patient. Although the need is great and our desire to help strong, it also is important to avoid committing material goods until communities are safe and public officials and disaster relief organizations have assessed damage and identified what the specific needs are.

Thank you

Many of you are participating in our UMCOR kit collection drive and donating financially to the Hurricane Harvey relief efforts. We thank you!

Please go to our website for ongoing news — www.OKUMC-DR.org — or contact us at the United Methodist Ministry Center in Oklahoma City if you have other questions.
Justice retreat focuses on issue of ingrained racism

BY HOLLY MCCRAY

Walled in by beauty at Canyon Camp, 90 people recently covenant to tear down ugly walls of institutional racism in the Church.

A 24-hour retreat culminated with agreement on specific “next steps” of action, according to Jeni Markham Clewell of the Oklahoma Conference’s Board of Church & Society.
The Board and the Peace With Justice Task Force sponsored “Tearing Down the Walls — Dismantling Systemic Racism,” led by two facilitators from Crossings Inc. They were Derrick Dawson of Chicago and Lori Adams of Indianapolis.

Jeni Markham Clewell of the Board of Church & Society lights candles on behalf of people who suffer because of racism.

Among the plans that participants made are these three steps.

1. Provide training about racism to Oklahoma’s clergy, ongoing, like the sexual harassment training now required of all clergy.
2. Extend such training to lay people, and schedule it regionally.
3. Meet with top Conference leaders to urge more diversity among leadership and in the ministry center and offer help creating a plan to achieve that.

The event in late August began as the mostly white participants listened — without interrupting, without questioning — as four non-white people talked about experiencing racism.

“I’m so sad when other churches are playing their volleyball teams and my church is having a retreat on how not to get shot.”

“A sister of the church told me not to speak Spanish in front of her ever again.”

“You’re pretty for a black girl.” Why can’t I just be pretty?”

“Knowing someone doesn’t like me for things I can’t control breaks me.”

“You could get slapped when you turn the other cheek.”

“Removing mascots: we don’t have to justify it.”

“I can’t watch cartoon violence, but I pay for all my

kids to have weapons training.”

“I’m brown, strike one. I have an accent, strike two. I’m an immigrant, strike three.”

“The stories of injustice and violence against (Native) people are the same no matter where” in the world.

“I am always aware that I cannot just be.”

“I’m not the first person to talk; this isn’t the first conference on racism to take place. But here we are! It’s not rocket science. The things we are doing that harm each other: Stop!”

“I burden you with this not to say feel sorry for me or make you feel guilty. Feel empowered! Minorities can’t change the balance of power because we don’t have the power. You do. It rests on you if you want to fix it or not.”

Both facilitators, Dawson and Adams, pressed the group to focus on identifying racism embedded within the Conference structures and ways to address it.

They reminded Oklahomans that conversations on race often are limited to “black vs. white,” overlooking people who are Latino, Asian, Native American, or mixed race.

“We have to be very intentional that there are other folks in the room,” Dawson said.

A documentary video underscored their point. It told the stories of two men, one Japanese and one from India, whose petitions for U.S. citizenship were rejected by the Supreme Court.

Dawson admitted work for racial justice is challenging, with elusive outcomes.

“We won’t solve systemic racism by 4:30 today.”

But they urged those attending to persist. Dawson spoke about receiving an organ transplant. The race of the donor had no importance for him. “I just needed O-positive blood!”

The Board of Church & Society, chaired by Mark Davies, provided handouts of “The Social Community: Rights of Racial and Ethnic Persons” (paragraph 162.A, Book of Discipline) and a statement issued by Bishop Jimmy Nunn after recent deadly racial violence in Charlottesville, Va.

Derrick Dawson and Lori Adams prepare to teach about racism.

Churches can take a number of steps to reduce their impact on the environment, according to the Environmental Coalition of the Conference’s Board of Church and Society.

The proposals comply with a resolution on the environment passed this year by the Environmental Coalition of the Church.

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Chapel Hill adds ‘missing piece’: a portico

BY MICHELE PITT

OKLAHOMA CITY — “A vision is when God tells you to do something and you let it happen.” These words from a middle school student are an apt description for a project just completed at OKC-Chapel Hill United Methodist Church.

In the 1970s, Chapel Hill expanded its building. The plans included a “porte cochere” – a fancy name for a covered entry. A sanctuary was built, but no “portico.” Then, in 1982, the sanctuary was expanded. Again, a new entry was in the plans but never made it off the drawing board.

“I believe vision can only come from God, from diligence in prayer, and open minds and hearts to receive,” said Mark Jardine, senior pastor at Chapel Hill. Marvin Chiles, a longtime member who chaired the 1982 Building Committee, is delighted to see the covered entry is finally reality.

The portico “was always part of the vision. Even back then we considered it a missing link, a physical invitation for people to come into Chapel Hill,” he said.

“I spent years involved in the building stuff. When you work on something like this, it never really leaves you. Just a simple thing like having a covered entry and automatic doors, making it easier for the elderly, for guests to walk through our doors ... well, for me it’s like finishing a project the way we wanted it to be,” Chiles said.

Rev. Jardine noted that the force of a shared vision was clear in the recent fundraising drive for the portico. “Our goal was to raise $150,000, and within two weeks $200,000 had been pledged. “After 40 years, it happened very quickly.” Committee members tasked with these building projects became, and remain, deeply connected to the church.

Chiles said the entry isn’t just a past project completed but part of a vital future. “This is the piece that’s always been missing. It is a deep thing for me. It’s great to see it up and open.”

A project such as this is a reminder about the nature of community in a church. We move forward, often thanks to the vision of people we never knew.

Telling our stories:
Couple works to provide safe environment for Native youths

BY GINNY UNDERWOOD

NORMAN — Balancing faith and culture is at the heart of youth ministry for Jason and Lynnetta Eyachabbe. The married couple, lifelong United Methodists, grew up attending youth events in the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference (OIMC). Today, they work to provide a safe community for Native youth in the annual conference that spans Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas.

“We want to celebrate what God gave us as Native people,” said Jason Eyachabbe, OIMC youth leader from the Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole tribes. “We try to incorporate traditional games, stickball, social dances, and arts such as basket weaving to help kids connect with each other and their traditions.”

“I am fortunate that my parents allowed me to participate in both church and traditional ways,” said Lynnetta Eyachabbe, OIMC Central Region coordinator for the Muscogee (Creek) and Yuchi tribes. “Whether we are at church or participating in traditional ceremonies, we don’t feel like we’re worshipping anything other than Jesus.”

The goal of the couple, married 18 years, is to help Native young people have a strong sense of identity and camaraderie. Nearly a dozen tribes are represented among the 30 or more youths who participate in OIMC events. Regionally, the youths meet the second Saturday of each month.

“We want our youth to be themselves, to share things that they may not feel comfortable sharing anywhere else,” said Lynnetta.

“Often, our Native kids are having to grow up way too fast,” said Jason. “Many of the young people are being raised by their grandparents. Across our Native communities, we face issues of addiction, domestic violence, and extreme suicide rates.”

Between 2004 and 2008, Native Americans ages 10-24 committed suicide at a 78 percent higher rate than their non-Native American peers, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data. In 2016, a series of suicides in the small southwest Oklahoma town of Anadarko deeply affected youths in OIMC’s Central Region.

“None of them were our kids, but our kids knew them or their families. We were able to provide a place for them to come and talk,” said Lynnetta.

The Eyachabbes enlist pastors to attend youth events, assist with counseling, and help identify young people interested in ordained ministry.

“Jason and Lynnetta do a great job of mentoring and providing guidance and support for youth,” said David Wilson, OIMC conference superintendent. “We need more young persons like them to help lead and guide our youth.”

Monthly gatherings start with games. After a devotion, the young people often compete to navigate the Bible and look up scriptures. In the winter, they collect donations for a local charity. Conference-wide events include a day at Oklahoma City University, a summer camp, and winter/spring retreats.

“We have been excited to see our numbers increase for the summer camp,” said Lynnetta. “We want them to act like kids, so we have a lot of goofy fun stuff that they end up loving.”

For young people in OIMC, the adage “it takes a village” could not be more relevant, said Jason. He and Lynnetta hope their leadership and contributions will make a difference. “If we come together as a community, as a people in Christ, we can accomplish more for our youth and young adults and help them be a part of something greater than themselves.”

The Eyachabbes encourage the broader United Methodist Church to hold Native pastors and adult leaders in prayer as they continue to work with young people. They also encourage United Methodists to support efforts dealing with mental health issues within and beyond Native communities.

(United Methodist News Service, June 7)
Older adults living strong

BY CHRIS SCHUTZ

Blaine Jackson wants to make health and fitness a way of life for the older adults who call Epworth Villa their home.

He’s on his way to that goal, with the recent completion of Epworth’s 100 Days of Fitness. Epworth Villa, in north Oklahoma City, is one of several United Methodist-affiliated retirement facilities in Oklahoma.

Sixty-three people signed up for the fitness program, which ran from May 13 to Aug. 23. Participants kept track of their activity by marking wall posters in Epworth’s gym every time they took classes, swam, or worked out on fitness machines.

The program spurred some friendly competition among the older adults, who were encouraged by leaders on their residential floors to participate.

“It’s been good to see everybody take it and really go with it,” said Jackson, 26, Epworth’s wellness coordinator. A former personal trainer, he holds a degree in health and exercise science.

He leads a range of classes from Monday through Saturday, including “Flex and Stretch,” water aerobics, Tai Chi, line dancing, chair yoga, and balance and fall prevention.

He wants Epworth Villa residents to adopt the motto “Exercise May Be for Me.” Among those taking advantage of the fitness programming is resident Jeanene Carver, 83, who has undergone surgery to her back, knees, and shoulders.

Before she started exercising twice a day, “I had a pretty high level of pain,” the retired nurse said. That has declined since she began to exercise.

“I have to go to feel good,” said Carver, a United Methodist who worships at Epworth. She also has noticed improvement in range of motion for her arms.

Carver and her neighbors will have a chance to move even more when a new program starts this month. “Golden Swans,” a ballet exercise program, is being offered at Epworth Villa through Ballet Oklahoma. The class should help older adults keep their bodies nimble and improve overall mobility. No prior dance experience is required.

Jackson also plans a “Blackout Bingo” exercise promotion, aimed at getting every resident to try every fitness class at least once.

A related effort for healthy living at Epworth Villa emphasizes good nutrition. Residents cultivate a community garden with flowers, melons, and vegetables. Produce not used by the gardeners is free for the taking from a basket in Epworth’s coffee shop, said Beth Case, the Community Outreach Coordinator.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Epworth Villa, Oklahoma Methodist Manor in Tulsa, and The Commons in Clinton are the beneficiaries of an offering taken annually by Oklahoma’s churches. Senior Living Ministries Sunday is next scheduled for May 13, 2018.

Quilt project cheers homebound member

BY CAROL GRIMM

TULSA — Doris Fenn’s birthday was Oct. 15, but she started talking about it in early September. It occurred to me that what Doris really wanted was someone to fuss over her. After all, it was her 85th birthday.

Doris, this wonderful, outgoing lady, a member of our Boston Avenue United Methodist Church, had been homebound for three or four years.

Doris, the Girl Scout leader who let my troop camp out in her back yard. The Red Cross volunteer who stood at parades as the first responder in case something happened. Doris, the UMW leader who gave book reports on social injustice.

Quilting for Others, one of Boston Avenue’s mission service projects, made a quilt to give Doris. Several women worked on the quilt. We all added to its beauty, Jackie Reichman and I delivered it, and Doris loved it.

Jackie and I also took a cake, a plastic crown, and many strings of beads, to make that birthday a real celebration. Along with her husband George, we sang, we laughed, and we took pictures.

Doris died the following March, surrounded by her family. When I visited her in the hospital those last days, I held her hand and told her she was beautiful. Of course, she denied it.

Much to my surprise, that quilt was draped across her casket at the funeral. The flowers on the casket matched it exactly.

“Mom wanted the quilt for her funeral,” her daughter told me.

As we go through life, we do our own little missions.

Sometimes we do not get to see the impact of our actions. I’m glad that I got to know Doris. I’m glad that we were able to give her a quilt that was with her in her final days. Doris makes me smile and makes me want to keep making quilts.

(Reprinted from The Word, Boston Avenue’s newspaper.)
Youths step out of comfort zones

BY EVAN HOLMES
YOUTH DIRECTOR, EAST CROSS UMC

BARTLESVILLE — God moved in the lives of those in Costa Rica, but I saw Him move in the lives of our East Cross students as well when our Volunteers In Mission team served there this summer.

Our VIM team of 25 people included 11 students.

We flew into San Jose on July 8, arriving on a sunny afternoon. We had no idea what was in store for us that week, but we were trusting God would bless our mission.

We were exhausted from waking up at 3 a.m., yet our students were wide-eyed looking at the Costa Rican landscape.

We partnered with Rice and Beans Ministries to serve in and around San Jose, helping teach kids about God and handing out bags of food to people in need.

Each of our students served in a different group, with adults and students from other churches around the world.

Most seemed a little uneasy at first about working with strangers, but they were willing to step out of their comfort zones for the Kingdom of God.

I watched as the students from our Oklahoma church interacted with the children of Costa Rica and learned the kids were just like children from our part of the world. They just wanted someone to care about them and to live life with them.

The living conditions astounded us in the communities where we handed out food. Most homes didn’t have actual front doors. Instead, boards covered door openings, and the residents slid them aside when they left their houses.

The girls in our Bartlesville-East Cross group were forever changed by the faces of the people to whom they gave food. The people were in such need, and our missioners got to pray with them, helping them not only with their physical needs but also their spiritual needs.

I know this because of our students’ stories about their encounters. I could fill this page with stories of the missioners’ experiences; come to East Cross and talk to them. I encourage you to find a way to serve God’s mission.

Seeking to serve? Explore opportunities through Volunteers In Mission:
www.okumc.org/VIM

EUROPEAN WITNESS — Missionary George Miller, who serves in Germany, visits the United Methodist Ministry Center in Oklahoma City on Aug. 7. He discussed his work with international and migrant ministries. He talked about the large number of migrants trying to learn the German language and adapt to life in Germany after fleeing their home countries. His missionary support code through the General Board of Global Ministries is 3021966. Learn more about him and other UM missionaries serving internationally by contacting Karen Distefano, the Oklahoma Conference’s secretary of Global Ministries, kdistefano@okumc.org.

CORRECTION — The representatives of Rush Springs United Methodist Church were identified incorrectly in this photo published Aug. 18. From left are Bishop Jimmy Nunn, Rush Springs church member D.K. Thompson, and Pastor Matt Hester. In the Wichitas District, the Rush Springs church received a One Matters Award and $1,000 from Discipleship Ministries.
Arise is ministry of the Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation. It is presented in a one-day format with multiple churches attending. A church should bring its pastor and as many lay leaders as possible. If a church has further interest, a Foundation representative will be available to coach as needed when you implement Arise.

The basic format for Arise contains material that Mike has taught for years at various levels. However, it has not been compiled into one presentation until now. With a rough outline, no concept of a logical order, and no name, we decided to spend time in prayer. In fact we used the basic questions you will find in the 7 Days of Prayer section and later adapted them for Arise. Once we finished our time of prayer: the name Arise became clear, the sequence fell into place, and we began to share the idea with pastors and leaders in our conference. Their support and excitement confirmed that we were on a good path.

Today, Arise is being shared with Oklahoma churches as well as other conferences and church leaders. Our hope and prayer is that any church facing declining trends in generosity and age of members consider Arise.

CALL OR EMAIL MIKE WILEY AT 800-259-6863 OR MWILEY@OKUMF.ORG TO SIGN UP FOR THE UPCOMING ARISE SEMINAR AT THE FOUNDATION OFFICE. YOU’LL WANT TO HEAR THIS INCREDIBLE WISDOM ON REACHING YOUR COMMUNITY OFFICE.

Scaper named new benefits director

Kate Scaper of Oklahoma City has joined the United Methodist Ministry Center as the Oklahoma Conference’s director of personnel and health benefits, announced by Treasurer Norma Gravley-Quinn.

She began her new job in August.

She formerly held various corporate jobs, working at executive levels in human resources and health benefits administration, including for IBM and Express Personnel Services. She is the wife of Matt Scaper, pastor of OKC-Southern Hills.

She replaces Stephen Mitchell, who was director for eight years. He has accepted the post of business administrator at Norman-McFarlin UMC.

Tulsa salutes Frances Willard Home

TULSA — Mayor G.T. Bynum has issued a proclamation declaring Sept. 9 as The Frances E. Willard Home for Girls centennial anniversary day.

Its 40-acre campus is home to Child SHARE foster care and Pearl’s Hope transitional living program, both operated by the Oklahoma United Methodist Circle of Care.

The facility was established in 1917 to serve as a place for abandoned, orphaned, or neglected girls who had no place to stay other than the county jail.

Between 1917 and 2003, the home served over 4,000 girls.

“Today, Arise is being shared with Oklahoma churches as well as other conferences and church leaders. Our hope and prayer is that any church facing declining trends in generosity and age of members consider Arise.”

Ada invites John Holbert to lecture

ADA — First UMC will host distinguished speaker John Holbert on Sept. 24-25 for the Ada church’s annual lecture series, which will include a special luncheon program for interested clergy.

Rev. Dr. Holbert is widely known for his outstanding career as a professor of preaching and an author. He retired from Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas.

Here is the lecture schedule.

■ Sunday morning: “Will the Real God Please Stand Up?” (Job 42:1-6)
■ Sunday evening: “With Friends Like These...” (Job 1,4,8,9,16)
■ Monday morning women’s study: “The Problem of God”
■ Monday noon event with clergy: “What Not to Say: Preaching for Today”
■ Monday evening: “The Very Surprising God” (Job 38:42)

Clergy are asked to make reservations now for the complimentary luncheon by calling 580-332-1398.

Publishing house launches kit for kids

The United Methodist Publishing House announces a new resource, Love In A Big World, that focuses on the character development of kids in grades K-8. The material, ideal for weekday groups, gives leaders ways to cultivate 24 important character traits.

Find out more at www.umph.org.

Got a question? Ask InfoServ

InfoServ, a ministry of United Methodist Communications (UMCom), is the denomination’s official information service. Ask any question about The United Methodist Church.

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