The front door seldom opens at the Wesley Foundation for the University of Oklahoma. Students ignore it; they walk around the building to its back doors to enter. That’s about to change. A capital campaign will fund five major upgrades to the United Methodist building that sits at a key gateway to the OU campus: the Lindsey Street/Elm Avenue intersection.

The plan includes an impressive redesign of the front entry. The Wesley’s welcome to all will be distinctive. People won’t overlook the new configuration, with patio seating and a pergola-shaded walkway.

Beckoned inside, they’ll find more changes.

“A refurbished, spacious common area”

An international office suite

Repurposed office space with multiple work stations

And, literally topping off the projects, a new roof.

Chaplain encounters the unexpected on mission

BY HOLLY MCCRAY

Creighton Alexander hesitated when the letter arrived recruiting chaplains for the 2017 National Scout Jamboree. That 10-day event in July drew 30,000 people.

He feared his adult Scouting resume wasn’t sufficient.

He’d only been involved two years. He’s an assistant Scoutmaster in Ada, where his two sons are Scouts.

He could have tossed that letter. After all, the addressee was “Pastor”; the solicitation wasn’t personal. And he was newly appointed, mid-term, to Harrah United Methodist Church and the Oklahoma Conference.

Rev. Alexander submitted his application. He’d camped with his sons almost 50 times. During 18 years of campus ministry, he’d built up experience on mission trips with college students.

“I thought: I can help with that.”

Then he was assigned to minister to the adult volunteers staffing the event. One man turned 91 during the July jamboree.

Alexander’s 11-member team of chaplains related to 5,500 staff.

“One of the toughest mission trips I’ve ever been on,” he remarked after returning to Oklahoma and his newest appointment, associate pastor at Edmond-Acts 2 UMC.

He voiced deepest gratitude to Acts 2 for allowing him to fulfill the chaplaincy commitment he had made before the move.

At Jamboree, he ministered to adults who had given two weeks of their time and paid their own way to support the Scouts, “but they’re still people. You have life or circumstances of the Spirit pressing on you. Things come up. Life doesn’t leave you alone when you go on vacation, when you go to serve somewhere.”

Alexander walked a lot on the sprawling 11,000-acre property where the jamboree is held every four years. He counseled adults in failing marriages, grieving loved ones, and those homesick; mediated staff disputes; gave comfort amid medical crises, from dehydration to broken bones; “and another 100 incidents.”

“For some reason, dusk to dawn was when we were the busiest as Scouts and Scouters found their way back to their tents.”

He said, “My team took it upon ourselves pretty quickly to look staffers in the eye and ask how are you doing. I feel God kept putting us in places where we were able to be pastors.”

The 11 chaplains at Echo Base Camp met together as each day began. A total of 76 chaplains served, from various faith groups. Alexander said the United Methodist chaplains, 15 in all, were the second-largest group.

He recalled the welcomes when he’d arrive at programming sites. Chaplains wore

Then: What innovative ministry is your church dreaming? An NPNP grant can help fund it. Apply by Aug. 31.

New Day Camp kids built a prayer circle for all campers at Cross Point. Story, page 4.
Ask, seek, knock

BY BISHOP JIMMY NUNN

Sometimes it is so hard to pray. For the hard times, Jesus offers this wisdom in Luke 11:9: “Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.”

The middle part of this insightful nugget says “seek, and you will find.” Have you ever wondered why this is part of Jesus’ saying? If all we need to do is ask or knock, why should we also need to seek?

Human beings are wired to take the more difficult path, especially when it comes to our spiritual lives. The idea that we can ask and receive or knock and a door open seems too easy.

We tell ourselves, “It can’t be this easy.” And we proceed to make it much more difficult.

We create blockages that keep us from asking or hearing God’s answer. And when we do not think God is listening to us, we decide God is hiding from us.

When God seems far away, we no longer “seek.” Rather, we have two different and opposite responses. First, we simply “wish.” But when we only wish, we will not find God.

Wishing for God is simply an attempt to hide from God by engaging in fantasy. We are afraid of reality and want to escape.

Our second response is to pursue God in the same way we would pursue a promotion at work or an advanced degree in school. We go and fight to earn it. But that is based on our work and our merit. When we try to drive our own lives, we hide from God, just as surely as we hide from God by wishing for something. Ironically, when we hide from God, we must become the ones who are seeking.

God already knows where we are. The book of Genesis is filled with hide-and-seek stories. After Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, they tried to hide from God and from each other.

Bushes and fig leaves may have looked like good places to hide, but they irritate the skin and spirit. Imagine the agitation you feel when hiding from your skin of a bush or a fig leaf with a texture like sandpaper.

What better image to describe the agitation you feel when hiding from God than a bush or a rough plant close to your skin?

The choice to hide in a bush or wear a fig leaf is a painful one. You feel it in both your body and your spirit.

When you try to hide from God, you deceive yourself instead of really seeking. It is far too easy to substitute a wish list or a “do-it-yourself” attitude for truly seeking God when it comes to prayer.

Start looking. God loves a good hunter. As the prophet Jeremiah said, “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” (Jeremiah 29:13)

Sky named School of Religion’s distinguished alum

Oklahoma City University (OCU) annually recognizes alumni from each school within the university for their outstanding contributions in their chosen fields. During OCU’s All Alumni Weekend in the spring, Brittany Sky was one of eight honored as 2017 Distinguished Alumni.

Sky is the editor of several popular publications, including Deep Blue Large Group/Small Group, Deep Blue Rotation Stations, All Hands on Deck, Deep Blue Basics, Deep Blue Family Devotional, and the Deep Blue Bible Storybook.

Also honored as 2017 Distinguished Alumni were the Busey family (Phil, Cathy, Heather, and Philip), Maxim Sytych, Danielle DuFore-Garcia, and Patrick McGough.

‘Fast Forward’ provides fast-track to seminary

Oklahoma City University’s President Robert Henry and Saint Paul seminary’s President Neil Blair signed a historic agreement in 2016. Initially called “3+3,” the agreement allowed undergraduate students in the OCU Wimberly School of Religion in their fourth year to concurrently begin their first year of seminary study, thereby shortening the total time required to attain a master’s degree as well as reducing associated costs.

The new program, now called “Fast Forward,” debuts this academic year with a tailor-made “Pre-Seminary Track” for religion majors who plan to go on for a Master of Divinity degree. OCU and Saint Paul School of Theology are also in talks to expand the program to allow students from other majors to participate in “Fast Forward” and to allow participation by other religion majors who are interested in pursuing other seminary degrees like Christian education or theological studies.

Students must apply for admission to “Fast Forward” in their sophomore year and meet certain eligibility requirements from Saint Paul.

OCU and SPST have been in close partnership since 2008. Both the university and seminary are United Methodist-affiliated institutions of higher education.

The bishop recommends

An enthusiastic reader, Bishop Jimmy Nunn agreed to suggest books he finds influential.

■ That includes audiobooks, podcasts, and e-books. Among those he recommends is “Lead With A Story,” by Paul Smith.

■ The bishop and Extended Cabinet are reading the book “Doing the Math of Mission (Fruits, Faithfulness, and Metrics),” by Gil Rendle, prior to a training event in Dallas.

Brittany Sky, UMPH editor
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The goal is to raise $500,000 by year’s end.

For 90 years, this campus ministry in Norman has been operating. Since 1926, it has connected with 27,000 students, according to its recent Impact Report.

The Wesley’s life in the past academic year included numerous student missions, retreats — and Communion served 3,000 times. Participants come from 18 countries.

The existing building is 60 years old. Campus minister Daniel Dennison and David Patterson, who chairs the Board of Directors, talked about piecemeal improvements to that facility over the years.

Restrooms, among the areas most recently updated, “look better than anywhere else in the building,” said Rev. Dennison.

Patterson said the capital campaign, “Building the Future,” will undergird the Board’s comprehensive plan to make all the building “more relevant to today’s students” as well as those who will come in the future.

“We literally impact the world,” he said.

At the Wesley Foundation, missionary Fuxia Wang and assistant Gloria Ajinomisanghan lead international student ministry that has grown to 175 people, including families. The two women are from China and Nigeria, respectively.

The United Methodist campus ministry in Norman surely reflects “what the kingdom of heaven looks like,” Dennison said. “We have a diverse staff that opens doors to reach different cultures. The OU Wesley is one of only a few campus ministries that offer childcare. We have probably 20 kids in the nursery on Tuesday nights, when worship is held, and there are Africans in the leadership; Thursday night worship is in Mandarin Chinese.

“Testimonies in worship are pretty regular here.”

On many Sunday mornings, too. A praise band and several student speakers as well as Dennison travel to churches across the state.

“We were in 21 churches on the Sunday after Easter.”

He contemplated the potential disciples among new students who arrive on college campuses at least every four years.

This major building renovation is “for the 10-year-olds here in Oklahoma now and for the 10-year-olds growing up in an atheist family in China,” he said. “When they come here, they will benefit from the changes we’re making.”

The facility changes are realistic, both men pointed out. Young adults expect excellence and functionality in a building’s design as well as its spiritual programming.

“If they don’t get it here, they’l go somewhere else,” Patterson said.

The capital campaign officially kicks off in September. A design preview and building tours are scheduled Sept. 2, when OU hosts its first home game of the football season; a big celebration is planned for evening worship on Sept. 5.

On Aug. 7, Dennison reported $150,000 already pledged.

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An apartment pool in Norman makes possible a baptism by immersion performed by missionary Fuxia Wang, right, who serves at the Wesley Foundation for OU.

Orders Meeting with panelists on Sept. 19

All clergy under appointment will gather at OKC-St. Luke’s from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sept. 19 for the fall Orders Meeting.

The day will start with worship led by Bishop Jimmy Nunn, said one of the planners, Nancy Johnson, chairperson of the Order of Deacons.

In the afternoon, two panel discussions will take place, examining:

- the benefits of partnerships between churches and schools;
- the value of ongoing education that stretches pastors to maximize their gifts other than those specific to religion work, even to the point of seeking an additional academic degree in another field (for example, business).

Also scheduled is time for the Deacons, Elders and Fellowship of Local Pastors & Associate Members to meet separately.

Oklahoma’s clergy attend the Orders meetings in September and January for worship, fellowship, and continuing education, Rev. Johnson said.

Save the date

Oct. 6-7 — Annual Meeting, Oklahoma Conference United Methodist Women, Tulsa-Boston Avenue UMC

Oct. 9 — Retired Clergy Retreat begins, Canyon Camp

Oct. 24 — “What Every Church Member Should Know About Poverty,” hosted at OKC-First

Appointments

- Phil Hodson, from Elgin-Community UMC to Discontinued, effective Aug. 1.
- Darrel Maddox, from Vici/lenora to medical leave, effective Aug. 1.
- Furan Jackson, from Not Appointed to South Coffeyville/Lenapah, effective July 15.
- Jerry Coldren, from South Coffeyville/Lenapah to Retired, effective July 15.
- Ayrika Watson, from NA to Altus-Highland Heights, effective July 15.
- Don Hosier, from Altus-Highland Heights to NA, effective July 1.
- Linda Lusnia, from Anadarko—First associate to the Pacific Northwest

Orders Meeting will undergird the Board’s comprehensive plan to make all the building “more relevant to today’s students” as well as those who will come in the future.

The reconfigured north entrance to the Wesley Foundation at OU will include patio seating and distinctive signage.

Campus ministry at OU:
Campers on a mission

New Day youngsters circle up for prayer project

BY CHRIS SCHUTZ

A prayer circle with benches, flowers in planters, and a fire pit overlooking Lake Texoma now greets campers at Cross Point Camp.

The serene spot to pray and meditate was built this summer by children attending New Day Camp I, a program related to the Conference’s Criminal Justice & Mercy Ministries (CJAMM).

New Day is offered to Oklahoma children who have at least one incarcerated parent. Pre-teens attend New Day I, and youths ages 12-14 attend New Day Too.

During camp, participants enjoy swimming, fishing, and other recreation, and they also perform a service project to “give back,” said Kristen Harlin, director of CJAMM.

Jeff Hiller, Cross Point’s director, suggested this year that the camp could use a prayer area, said Debi Self, one of the deans for New Day I.

Rev. Hiller helped secure donated materials for the project, and 69 campers, ages 8 to 11, were divided into teams to do the work. Lifeguards, who are a permanent part of Cross Point’s staff, supervised the project.

The result was a circle of benches, constructed of concrete blocks and wooden timbers, near a fire pit built of rocks. The prayer circle is available to “everybody that comes to camp that wants to take advantage of it,” Debi said.

The site, with its view of the lake, is “the perfect place,” said Carleta Denison, also a New Day I dean.

The work took about a week, with each group of youngsters working a couple of hours a day.

Building something like the prayer circle teaches the campers “to learn to serve others as well as to receive nurture,” Debi said. Doing a project to help others allows the campers “to feel that sense of servanthood.”

“Everybody got to participate,” Carleta said.

The young campers were especially excited that they got to wear work gloves, and adult volunteers were thankful the gloves protected hands from possible wood splinters and the roughness of concrete blocks.

When New Day campers return in subsequent summers, it will be “very fulfilling for them to see the fruits of their labor over time,” said Debi. She has volunteered with New Day Camp for 22 years. From Moore, she is a retired speech therapist.

She is proud to see the progress over time of New Day Camp participants who have become young adults even as their parents remain behind bars. Some of the campers have returned to give leadership in the program; working with adult leaders, some have completed paperwork for applying to college.

“I think we’ve broken the cycle for some kids,” Debi said.

The service projects have varied over the years. One time the campers assembled personal hygiene kits to be distributed by the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) to disaster victims, Harlin said. Another summer, the group prepared baby blankets to be given to an infant crisis center.

CJAMM is supported by Apportionment giving.

‘One Matters’ – Be inspired by 8 churches’ stories

WHAT IS GOD UP TO? New professions of faith, baptisms, growing attendance, new roles for youth.

All of these have been reported by churches in the eight districts of the Oklahoma Conference. One church per district has been honored with a new award, “One Matters,” which came with a $1,000 check. They learned of their district has been honored with a new award, “One Matters,” which came with a $1,000 check. They learned of their

Below are summaries from the eight honored churches.

Fairland UMC, Green Country District

The church is active in community life — operating a cement block as they help build a prayer circle at Cross Point Camp beside Lake Texoma.

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CJAMM is supported by Apportionment giving.

From left: Bishop Nunn with member Becky Walker and Pastor Steve Littrell of Konawa’s First UMC.

Starting new things is important to Braman. Pastor Trish Harris initiated a pre-teen youth group that was very active through the school year and has infused the worship services with new life.

Konawa-First, Lake Country District

At Konawa-First, a 17-year-old high school student named Royce, a faithful member of the church and youth group, is recognized as “one who matters.”

Pastor Steve Littrell asked him who was most instrumental in guiding him to profess his faith, receive holy baptism, and join the church.

Royce’s response: “It was everyone, loving me and welcoming me, and making me feel like I belonged.”

Konawa-First has a ministry on Wednesday evenings for children and youths. Church members share a meal and the love of Christ with as many as 75 young people. Many of them don’t otherwise attend a church; this ministry has become their church. Program volunteers include local teachers, and thus the ministry bridges school and church.
3 big Tulsa churches eyeing satellites

BY BILL SHERMAN
TULSA WORLD

Tulsa’s three biggest United Methodist churches are all pursuing a method of church growth that is becoming increasingly popular.

The First United Methodist Church and Boston Avenue United Methodist Church, both downtown, and Asbury United Methodist Church, in the Woodland Hills area, are all developing satellite campuses.

Life Church in Edmond pioneered the satellite campus concept and now has 27 campuses, including six in the Tulsa area.

The Rev. Tom Harrison, pastor of Asbury, said there are several ways to start a new congregation.

Least effective, he said, is what could be called the “parachute drop,” in which church planters are given some financial support and dropped into an area cold to start a new church.

In the “mother-daughter” model, he said, the planting church watches and offers assistance, but the new church is independent.

The satellite model, he said, retains the DNA of the sending church, which stays in partnership and relationship with the new church. He said that model gives the new church the opportunity to pursue its mission without the burden of handling administrative matters such as human resources, payroll and boards of trustees, which remain with the sending church.

Harrison said Asbury is in negotiations now to establish a satellite campus and will have more information this summer once details have been worked out.

“We’re Methodists,” he said. “We don’t do anything quickly. We’re methodical.”

First UMC starts with park

The First United Methodist Church was the first large United Methodist congregation in Tulsa to pursue a satellite campus.

The church was charged with developing a plan for the use of the Trinity United Methodist Church property, 3737 S. Peoria Ave. in Brookside, which closed in May 2015.

After extensive studies, the church determined that renovation of the existing Trinity building was not practical, and it was bulldozed.

The Rev. Matt Morgan, Brookside lead pastor at First United Methodist Church, said the short-term goal is to build a park and bandstand on the property this summer that will be open to the public.

The downtown church will hold events there as it begins to develop a presence in Brookside.

Morgan said the long-term goal will be to put a church building on that site as a community of worshipers is established, he said.

Sod and trees have been planted on the site. The church leased part of the property to the Pop House, a private business that built a small building to sell a gourmet frozen dessert on a stick.

Negotiations are under way with another private vendor, he said, and playground equipment has been installed.

District supports efforts

The Rev. David Wiggs, pastor of Boston Avenue United Methodist Church, said the impetus to launch satellite campuses came from the Council Oak District of The United Methodist Church, which oversees churches in the greater Tulsa area.

He said the district’s Mission Strategy Team is exploring “how we can use our strongest churches to reach more people for Christ.”

“They’ve asked Boston Avenue to investigate and evaluate and see if we can discern where God might be leading us to create a new ministry in north Tulsa.”

Wiggs said Boston Avenue formed a task force several months ago to explore how it can serve the north Tulsa community.

“I’m not sure that will be another traditional church offering worship services,” he said.

“We’re trying to identify unmet needs, things we do well and have a heart for, spreading the love of God.”

The Rev. Dan Peil, former district superintendent of the Council Oak District, now pastoring in Norman, said: “For several years we have been encouraging our strong, vital churches to extend their presence, witness and resources into satellite locations around the metropolitan area.

“With district realignment a few years ago, we developed a District Mission Strategy Team to lead the Council Oak District efforts for growth and revitalization. Satellite campuses are one of our emphases.”

Peil said the council also developed a ministry through Owasso’s First United Methodist Church and a satellite campus in Catoosa.

(Reprinted with permission, July 21, 2017, Tulsa World)

of making disciples for Christ one person at a time

From left: Turkley’s Lay Leader Carol Bunch, Pastor Lisa Hines, and Jeff Campbell from Discipleship Ministries, Nashville.

Rush Springs, Wichitas District

In Rush Springs, “one matters,” and her name is Marry. The church recognized poverty is prevalent in the town and responded by creating a food bank.

For over a year, Marry Randal came for food assistance. The pastor realized Marry also had a heavy heart. Most conversations with her at the Food Bank concluded with prayer and a promise to come to worship. Month after month, Marry promised but didn’t turn up.

All that changed one Sunday morning. Marry arrived, dressed in her best. After the service, she asked to be baptized the next week. She wanted to follow Christ with her whole life. Perseverance was the lesson, according to Pastor Matt Hester.

OKC-Selecmans, Heartland District

When Pastor Matt Morgan, Brooklyn lead pastor at First United Methodist Church, said the short-term goal is to build a park and bandstand on the property this summer that will be open to the public.

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The school helped the church recruit children, and 21 youngsters were enrolled in the four-week program.

Then people started joining the church. First, a volunteer with her two daughters. Then the church pianist professed her faith. A couple and their daughter joined; three others followed. Five people were baptized in September 2016.

Selecmans UMC also started a new Sunday School class and prayer ministry, and opened a prayer room.

Catesby UMC, Cimarron District

Catesby may be the smallest townsite in Oklahoma (officially, two residents). The United Methodist Church is one of few buildings there. After four years of zero professions of faith, Selecmans UMC was blessed to celebrate five professions and baptisms in 2016.

All five professions of faith grew from seeds of faith planted years ago, Rev. Mike Mahaffey said, referencing 1 Corinthians 3:6. “All five had been watered by us these past four years, and before that by various pastors and faithful pew mates in both The United Methodist Church and other denominations. But God gave the increase as each one merely told the pastor, ‘It is time.’ What a joy it is for us here at Catesby to continue to water and watch them grow!”

Guthrie-First, Crossroads District

A years-long decline in attendance at Guthrie-First UMC had led to more decline: in morale, finances, and programming. The church resolved to reverse that trend.

They began by thanking people and recognizing contributions to the ministries of the church. Then they started Bible studies. By this year, almost half of the adults contributed to the ministries of the church. Then they started Bible studies. By this year, almost half of the adults contributed to the ministries of the church.

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Mission studies encourage justice work

The stories told at Mission u teach “that God is making a way, sometimes unseen and unheralded,” a liturgist declared in July.

She was speaking about climate justice, one of three topics relevant to today that engaged 140 participants, including 26 youths and children, at the educational event in Oklahoma City. Also studied were the Church’s three missionary conferences — of which the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference (OIMC) is one — and the biblical call to live in covenant.

Christians are assured the liturgist’s declaration is true for those subjects, too. And Mission u programming “enticed us to join in the mighty work” of the Creator “all over the earth.”

Here are a few reports of climate justice work by people of faith, shared at Mission u.

Despite cancerous lesions on fish in a specific river, destitute people were catching them to feed their families in a part of Washington, D.C. Moved to action upon learning about this tragedy involving 17,000 people, one woman led an effort that now includes safe fish farms and community gardens. “It was the Holy Spirit leading the way all the time,” said the woman in a video interview.

Villagers in Zimbabwe walk two hours to cut trees for crucial firewood. The deforestation caused a fourth-grader to wonder: Where is tomorrow’s supply? As an adult, she initiated an “environmental buddies” program of replanting. Even the children eagerly help collect seeds.

A member of United Methodist Women traveled to the Standing Rock Sioux reservation in North Dakota to stand with people protesting an oil pipeline project. The confrontation has involved not only the issue of climate justice (potential water pollution) but also Native American sovereignty. Standing Rock is “emblematic of how indigenous people have been treated,” the UMW member said on the video.

In each jurisdiction, trained UMW guides encourage sustainable efforts through the “Be Just. Be Green” initiative. And since the two-year climate justice study launched nationally, more than 800 youths and thousands of adults have been educated, according to Glenda Gilpin, Oklahoma UMW president.

OIMC members gave special leadership at Mission u. Pastor and retired missionary Meri Whitaker taught the study on missionary conferences. Dallas Parker, a descendant of Comanche Chief Quanah Parker, was a guest speaker.

Parker twice has been to Standing Rock, delivering OIMC donations and documenting activities there. He stressed how the protest began: Sioux youths literally walked from the reservation to Washington, D.C., to deliver a petition to the U.S. Corps of Engineers.

The plenary session with Parker included this reading:

“Stop the Chaos: How to Make Recovery.”

A member of United Methodist Women traveled to the United Methodist Ministry Center in Oklahoma City.

“All of them are available for loan. Some of the titles are:

- “I’m Dancing as Fast as I Can,”
- “Crystal Darkness: Meth’s Deadly Assault on Our Families,”
- “Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Other Drug Use During Pregnancy,” and
- “Stop the Chaos: How to Make Lifestyle Changes to Strengthen Recovery.”

To browse these — and the many other titles on a wide range of topics available in the library — go to www.okumc.org/ dvd_library and click “Find DVD Resources” on the right side of that webpage.

DVs may be picked up at the ministry center, 1501 NW 24th St. in Oklahoma City. Alternatively, they can be mailed to you. Contact Chris Schutz, 405-530-2075 or cschutz@okumc.org.

Resources to extend learning from Mission u

Free DV resources related to the Mission u studies are available through the Conference’s DVD Library, which is housed at the United Methodist Ministry Center in Oklahoma City.

To order, contact Chris Schutz, 405-530-2075.

- “Through the Corridors of Mission”
- “Mission Giving — United Methodist Women Changing Lives”
- “United Methodist Women — Faith, Hope, Love in Action”
- “I Believe You: Faith’s Response to Intimate Partner Violence”
- “Can’t Stop the Water”
- “Missiory Conferences: Together in Mission”

Two more videos are available for download from YouTube: “Doctrine of Discovery in the Name of Christ” and “The Last Mountain.”
Some Oklahomans are facing their third winter of living in their storm-damaged homes or in temporary housing because their homes still remain uninhabitable after weather disasters in 2015.

With 358 families in great need of recovery help as of Aug. 1, the Conference’s Disaster Response Ministry is appealing for volunteers to work before year’s end.

As of Aug. 1, OKUMC-DR reported, only two such groups were scheduled. Major grant funding will end Dec. 31.

According to Chad Detwiler of the Disaster Response staff, dozens of the home repair projects already have been funded, but the extent of the work will require volunteers as well as professionals.

He said 27 teams have helped this year through OKUMC-DR, Oklahoma United Methodists comprised eight of those.

Statistics list 111 tornadoes and record rainfall of 53.71 inches in Oklahoma in spring 2015, with damages in 66 counties.

“The challenge comes for us in keeping people aware of the continued need long after a disaster,” Detwiler stated.

The commitment to long-term recovery help is part of United Methodism’s DNA. “Staying Until Recovery Is Complete … That’s Church!” is the rally call.

“Jesus challenges us to live a life of service, to help those who are in need,” Detwiler wrote in an e-newsletter. “We therefore continue.”

Volunteers are most needed for four types of projects: roofing, drywall, flooring, and siding.

“Many of you have volunteered with us already, some multiple times, and for your service we are grateful. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 says, ‘Two are better than one, share the work...’ We know we cannot accomplish all that is needed in recovery without you.”

Bartlesville United Methodist volunteers find themselves sitting down on the job for a flooring project.

Find out more:
- Website www.okumc-dr.org/project-recruitment-report
- Call 405-802-0904
- Email volunteer@okumc-dr.org

RACING THROUGH LIFE?

Sidelined in the pits? Perhaps you are watching from the stands.

Serving in North Carolina’s NASCAR country, Pastor Rob Fuquay developed a book, “Take the Flag: Following God’s Signals in the Race of Your Life.” He later adapted it to Indy car racing when he was appointed to Indianapolis-St. Luke’s, which recently hosted the 12th National Gathering of United Methodist Men.

Fuquay sees a parallel between the flags used in auto racing and “the signals God sends us in our fast-paced lives.” By looking at the meanings of the flags, we can become “stronger disciples of Jesus Christ by paying attention to the signals God gives us each day.” (United Methodist News Service, Aug. 4)

HAPPY 100th BIRTHDAY — In Memphis, Tenn., the United Methodist-supported Golden Cross Senior Residents Fund made sure three women were able to celebrate their 100th birthdays in style this year. The women are all residents of Wesley Living Centers in the Memphis Conference.

Ms. Gates celebrated with a requested Mardi Gras-themed party, complete with live band. Ms. Deal enjoyed a Roaring ’20s-themed party. She recalled going whitewater rafting for the first time in her 80s. Ms. Armstrong chose a luau theme.

Each received a commemorative blanket and bear. (UMNS, Aug. 4)

FOR LAY SERVANTS — Some 20 deaf and hard-of-hearing people just completed a 10-hour, basic class toward certified lay servant status.

Never before has the denomination offered lay servant instruction tailored to the deaf. The high-profile class was part of the Global Methodist Missions Conference of the Deaf, held in Waxahachie, Texas. Five forms of sign language were in use, presenting an inspiring display of finger fluency. (UMNS, Aug. 3)

KIDS + SOCCER — The Fugees Family is a soccer team of refugee kids from some of the world’s most troubled spots. Their coach, Luma Mufleh, an immigrant from Jordan, also created a school, at First UMC, Clarkston, Ga.

“They are one great family. No one is left behind. They know all too well what it feels like to be left behind,” said Pastor Karen Lyon. Refugees from 50 countries have made Clarkston their first American home. (UMNS, July 28)

DIGITAL LIBRARY — The Global Digital Library on Theology and Ecumenism (GlobeTheoLib) has been growing steadily under the auspices of the World Council of Churches and Globethics.net. It is a free resource and currently holds over two million documents. You are invited to explore this free, community-driven resource. (World Methodist Council’s August e-newsletter)
There are four basic steps in the estate planning process. Take a moment to read through and see how simple it is to get started.

1. Write down what you own

   As a Christian, you naturally want to be a “good and faithful servant” with your property. An important first step is to understand what property you own and what property will be transferred through your estate. Even though in Job 41:11 the Lord says that, “Everything under heaven belongs to me (NIV),” you have been given responsibility to manage and decide how it will be used.

2. Work with an attorney

   There are many knowledgeable estate planning attorneys. You can bring your completed Planning Your Legacy guide to them so they can prepare the necessary estate planning documents. Feel free to ask the attorney questions and to talk about your goals.

3. Know how property is transferred

   Some property is transferred by will and some is transferred by a beneficiary designation or other form. You need to know how your property will be transferred in order to avoid an accidental disinheritance. With a good plan, your property may be transferred as you desire. Your attorney can help you with this process.

4. Sign your will and medical directives

   Finally, it is important to sign the documents that correctly express your will and desires, both for your property and for your potential future personal care.

Get your free guide and find out more

We have designed the Planning Your Legacy guide for your benefit. Feel free to take the time to move through the different sections. You may, however, need to come back later and fill in more detailed information. Most of this information you will know or have readily available.

In addition to the explanations within our free guide, we have a wealth of online estate planning information on our website. Feel free to visit our website and learn about wills at www.okumf.org.

Contact David Battles at 800-259-6863 or send an email to dbattles@okumf.org to get a FREE COPY of the Planning Your Legacy guide.

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distinctive clothing. A patient in a medical tent was joyful: “I was hoping I could pray with a chaplain.”

Alexander said, “It was two weeks of John 5:19. (… the Son cannot do anything on his own. He can do only what he sees the Father doing, and he does exactly what he sees the Father do.)” With mission trips, there’s always a chance of learning about yourself in service.”

Jamboree was a father-son experience on another level, too. Alexander’s oldest son, Canon, age 15, also attended.

But they only saw each other twice. Canon needed help to get a sleeping bag.

Then on July 23, standing side by side, father and son served Holy Communion on another level, too. Alexander’s oldest son, Canon, age 15, also attended.

“I was hoping I could pray with a chaplain.”

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Photos by Mike Dubose, UMNS

Above, Creighton Alexander patches up his feet for a day of walking ministry. At right, he visits and prays with Kevin Cordray.