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THE OKLAHOMA UNITED METHODIST

Join in timely conversation about racism and justice at this event in Tulsa.
6 p.m. March 24 — 3 p.m. March 26
Featuring:
• Keynote by Hannibal Johnson, author of “Black Wall Street — From Riot to Renaissance in Tulsa’s Historic Greenwood District”
• Workshops at Tulsa-Centenary United Methodist Church
• Tours of Reconciliation Park, which memorializes the Tulsa Race Riot
• Worship in African-American churches
• Housing at Postoak Lodge

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Contacts:
• Valerie Steele, 405-550-4516, vjonessteele@icloud.com
• Shelly Daigle, 918-453-3503, shellydaigle11@gmail.com

Apportionments drop $1.6 million

BY HOLLY MCCRAY

Apportionment giving fell by $1.6 million (3.2 percent) in the Oklahoma Conference in 2016, compared to the previous year.

Churches sent forward $13,292,544 in Apportionment contributions last year, according to Treasurer Norma Quinn, for our shared work in the conference, jurisdiction, and denomination.

That amount fulfilled 89.3 percent of the overall budget, which was $14,882,701 for those three levels of ministry.

Bishop Jimmy Nunn said, “We thank you for sending over $13 million to the Oklahoma Conference. That represents sacrifice. It’s also an expression of compassion, and it signifies our hope in Jesus Christ.

Every dollar that’s given by any person is a dollar that we seek to invest in the Kingdom in order to make a lasting impact.”

A total of 364 churches paid 100 percent of their Apportionment assessments.

Rev. Dr. Quinn saw firsthand how strongly churches “felt that desire to participate fully in the ministry” of stewardship. “I literally had churches calling to see if they could walk their checks in the last day,” she said, “in January to accept funds at Conference headquarters for the 2016 tally. Several did, and they were not nearby churches, she said.

Among the eight districts, Green Country repeated with the highest percentage of Apportionment giving: 97.5 percent. The Wichitas District increased its total by 3 percentage points over the previous year.

However, an overall decline in contributions continues to be evident.

In 2015, Apportionment giving was $14,227,210, or 92.5 percent, toward a budget of $15,374,713, lower than the previous year.

Annual Conference delegates voted to lower the budget again in 2016 and 2017. Find the figures on pages 239-240 of the 2016 Oklahoma Conference Journal.

“The final results for 2016 have presented a picture of challenging times,” said Quinn. “Thank you to all the churches that paid 100 percent of their Apportionments in 2016. Thank you also to those churches that tried their best to reach that goal.”

Neither treasurer nor bishop identified any single reason for the decline in revenue.

Quinn described how even the number of Sundays in a year can affect giving outcomes. In 2016, there were 52 Sundays; this year will have 53.

Quinn said, “I think it’s episodic, not symptomatic.”

“It’s so important to tell our story. You forget the human story is behind the Apportionments; you just see that figure. Some Apportionments pay out better because people can relate to their story. (But) when you talk about equitable comp or health benefits and pensions…”

So she gave context for the equitable compensation fund, which assists qualifying churches with pastoral support. “How many people have accepted Christ because the Conference

SEE APPORTIONMENTS, PAGE 7

SCOUTING SALUTE — More than 50 boys, girls, and adult leaders from various scouting programs helped lead in all the facets of worship Feb. 12 on Scout Sunday at Lawton-First UMC. The religious award was presented to 27 youths and an adult. Above: Pastor Randy Scraper baptizes Jayme Chapman. Her family includes James, Emily, Richell, and Symon. Top left: Dylan Todd prepares for the flag ceremony. Lower left: Edan McLean and Symon Chapman provide music. Scouts have been active at Lawton-First since 1934. See page 4 for related story and photo.

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Let’s Talk About Race

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Life in mission

From Bartlesville, Ed Ririe and daughter Karen Distefano served together on many United Methodist volunteer missions. Train enthusiast Ririe also got to explore on side trips. The daughter pays tribute to her dad on page 3.
Havlik named to lead Council Oak District

The Council Oak District is a region of strategic importance in the Oklahoma Conference. For the past six years, Rev. Dan Peil has effectively served that district as its superintendent and took forward its pivotal role to support local church growth, and express deep gratitude to Dan for his leadership and counsel. It is a great pleasure to have served with him on the Cabinet in Bartlesville.

I encourage all who are planning the 2017 Lenten reflection with Rev. Mike Havlik, as he is the new superintendent serving the Council Oak District, which is the Tulsa area, for at least one more year of leadership.

In her service to the local church and Oklahoma Conference, Rev. Peil has demonstrated effective strategic leadership and an unfailing commitment to do that which is necessary, to keep the faith and life of the church moving forward.

I invite us to celebrate the ministry and year-round work of the outgoing and incoming superintendents.

— Bishop Jimmy Nunn

From left: sisters Karen Distefano and Katherine Yanczy and their dad, Ed Ririe, serve together on a United Methodist board.

Father’s mission legacy continues

Ed Ririe

BY HOLLY MCCRAY

abing in 1993, Ed Ririe of Bartlesville served on 27 United Methodist volunteer mission teams. He was serving on a team in southern Oklahoma helping flood survivors, when he died suddenly Jan. 24.

Ed loved helping people as an expression of his faith, his obituary states simply. The extent of that emerges in the rich remembrances of daughter Katherine Distefano, who is Oklahoma Conference’s secretary of Global Missions. And daughter Karen Ririe, like her father, daughter’s request

The Oklahoma United Methodist Contact

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“A little while ago, we received a call from Ed,” said Katherine. “We have tiled churches in Dominican Republic and Honduras together, worked floral design, worked in Mexico, Guatemala, and Chile. We are always able to help those in need to believe in close or even internationally. The Mayesville mission was the first time Kevin Walker served Ed alongside, but he learned a lot about the team. Walker is the Oklahoma Conference Disaster Response Team staff member. During a break Jan. 24, they realized they were sharing stories that had belonged to Ed’s parents, and that sparked conversations. "It was a nice day,” Walker said. "He died wearing a VIM denim shirt.”

"He was the title cutter for our pretty well known tile firm in Oklahoma City,” Karen said. "We always made sure our girls were in church,” Karen said. "She recalled growing up alongside the children of Vietnamese refugees, whom her parents welcomed in 1975 in Oklahoma City. They will keep in touch.

A daughter’s request

"If even for just one day, just past Kiamichi, unkind words and actions, and just people and places as part of God’s creation,” Karen has requested when people have inquired how to help since her dad’s death. "The open to new experiences, open to opportunities, open to help others, seeing all people as children of God, and therefore worthy of respect and dignity. That’s what I’ll remember most about my dad.”

("The Smothers Brothers became famous as a comedy duo in the 1960s.")
in scouting programs  
Church sees growth  
Larry Coppock, director of scouting ministries for the "Duty to God and Country" UMC Youth-Serving Ministries coordinator, was pleased with about 2,700 boys and girls. That's a national increase of youths were involved in Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops, and Venturing crews. That's a national increase of 2,700 boys and girls. Some 2,700 boys and girls are between ages 13 and 21.)  

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By Holly McCray

Jean Key, above right, and Jim Key, on bike, annually volunteer for CJAMM's New Day Camp Too, where they mentor 14-year-olds. They have served at least 10 years at New Day Camps, for children whose parents are UMC in Stillwater.

"We believe very strongly if we reflect Christ's love and forgiveness that the Holy Spirit will do the changing," she said of God's loving. Small wounds no one are offered at Camp weekends, but participants don't have to accept them. One woman asked for a close 8 hours after her 1st weekend experience. Some participants come only for the "food, for the cooking," Jim said, "but once they're there, then the Holy Spirit gets to work on them." He spoke about the dramatic change for one man that first weekend in McAlester. When the man was transferred to another prison, Jim and other CJAMM leaders promised him he would stay there, too. They got approval for the program at that site, and the turnout was large, Jim recalled. Most participants said the man who transferred had remained involved.

The program now operates in 13 states and nine other countries, according to Jim. "We hear tales from prisoners who are very humble. They see them at the closing, hugging and supporting one another at the mic, singing how Jesus Christ has changed their heart."

Staff writer for the Oklahoma United Methodist Contact

Stillswater couple gets CJAMM award for service

BY HOLLY McCRAY

V olunteers Jim Key made his first trip inside prison walls in 1979, at McAlester. He met with him food that Jim Key had helped prepare. As a local Methadone program team created a Christian- oriented weekend program for men incarcerated at Oklahoma State Penitentiary.

Called Kathy, the director of creative community outreach for the prison the next year, at Mahl Baptist Correctional Center: Contact Kathy at 405-262-3734.

On Feb. 11, the couple from Stillwater received recognition for their continuing generosity to the Oklahoma Conference's Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministry (CJAMM). They were named outstanding volunteers.

CJAMM leaders keep secret the award recipients until a presentation session a surprise for accepted for them both. Jean was visiting at prison that day.

The Keys are longtime members of Highland Park UMC in Stillwater.

calling CJAMM’s programs, they’ve volunteered for 10 years at New Day Camps, for children whose parents are incarcerated. And Katao noori live in six medium- and small-sized facilities in the state. Jean has served on 43 Katau teams.

"It’s the most transforming ministry I’ve ever been a part of," she said.

They explained that Katau parallels the Walk to Emmaus ministry, adapted for the prison environment. The six-month cycle begins with a weekend event and includes more frequent meetings. Volunteers must be present.

Jean attended Wednesdays 10-24. "Not urgent to meet to together or encourage another," she said.

She said the couple had gone on the Walk to Emmaus and were looking for "a place where we felt we could make a difference" when Katau organizers wanted to expand into Oklahoma prisons.

We’re not going there to convert. The participants are told at the beginning that we are happy they have chosen to attend. We aren’t going to ask them to make any changes," said Jim.

"We believe very strongly if we reflect Christ’s love and forgiveness that the Holy Spirit will do the changing," she said of God’s loving. Small wounds no one are offered at Katau weekends, but participants don’t have to accept them. One woman asked for a close 8 hours after her 1st Katau experience. Some participants come only for the “food, for the cooking,” Jim said, “but once they’re there, then the Holy Spirit gets to work on them.”

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The program now operates in 15 states and nine other countries, according to Jim. “We hear tales from prisoners who are very humble. They see them at the closing, hugging and supporting one another at the mic, singing how Jesus Christ has changed their heart.”

Director of Youth Ministries: Dan Shearer, pastor, 405-324-1867 or dan@stmarksbethany.com

-York’s first campaign was held last year.

Financial planning. A successful capital campaign was held last year.

Director of Student Ministries: Tony Dyer, pastor, 405-732-0356.

In the church’s lay delegate to Annual Conference, she began presenting “we’re all in ministry beyond just what we do for our church.”

She told about Apportionments a lot — to committees, to Sunday School, stewardship training offered by the church. The verse also started to get bigger.”

The congregation also is committed to 100 percent in Apportionment giving. The pastor also said he attends every Apportionments meeting. "It upset folks that we didn't get them what they wanted," Rev. Faubion said.

When she began her new appointment to the church, the pastor also said he attended every Apportionments meeting. “It upset folks that we didn’t get them what they wanted,” Rev. Faubion said.

As contributions “steamrolled,” the congregation also is committed to 100 percent in Apportionment giving. “It upset folks that we didn’t get them what they wanted,” Rev. Faubion said.

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Make Your Giving Go Further

Technology has made all of our lives easier. Just by using a smartphone, you can talk to people all over the world, check the weather forecast, or reserve a seat on a plane. The true power of the smartphone is how it combines a myriad of tools in a single, sleek device.

As you support your church or favorite ministry, you might be interested in ways to increase your impact. By combining giving tools together, you can multiply the difference you make.

You may already be making annual gifts to the Foundation, your church, or a ministry. Your support is so appreciated! Here are some ways your annual gifts may be combined with other opportunities to make your support for Methodist causes go even further:

**A Gift in Your Will**
- You can make a gift through your will or trust, which will continue your annual giving to the church forever.

**Charitable Gift Annuity**
- In addition to your annual gifts, you can make a single gift to fund a charitable gift annuity. You will receive lifetime fixed payments and tax savings.

**Charitable Life Estate**
- Another way to help a ministry or your church beyond your regular annual giving is with a charitable life estate. You can convey your home to your church or favorite ministry, remain living there, and receive tax benefits.

When you think about all of the tools available to you, you can do more than you might have thought possible. By adding an estate or life income gift to your annual giving, you can benefit from lifetime payments and tax savings.

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5 constitutional amendments head to vote

**BY HEATHER HAHN**
**UNITED METHODIST NEWS SERVICE**

General Conference delegates had their say in May 2016. Now, it’s up to annual conference voters to determine whether five amendments will become part of The United Methodist Church’s constitution, found in the *Book of Discipline*.

In the coming months, the voters will consider changes that address matters of gender equality, inclusiveness in membership, delegate and bishop elections, as well as bishop accountability.

Oklahoma churches’ delegates will vote on the items during the 2017 Annual Conference, set for May 29-June 1 in Oklahoma City.

To be ratified, a constitutional amendment must win at least a two-thirds majority of the total votes cast at annual conferences around the world.

The voting started at the Liberia Annual Conference, which was Feb. 13-19, and likely will continue through early next year.

Here is an overview.

1 **Gender equality**

This amendment declares, “Men and women are of equal value in the eyes of God.” It also asserts that the Church will “seek to eliminate discrimination against women and girls, whether in organizations or in individuals, in every facet of its life and in society at large.”

The amendment, if ratified, would become the new Paragraph 6 in the *Book of Discipline*. General Conference approved the measure by a vote of 746 to 56.

Carol Napier, a Sunday School teacher for 17 years in the North Georgia Conference, submitted the amendment. “I hope that this amendment will help churches remember that girls and women are of equal worth to boys and men because everyone is made in the image of God,” she said. “I believe that when churches remember and live out this truth in all of their ministries, then villages, cities, and even nations will be transformed to reflect Jesus’ perfect love for all of us.”

2 **Membership**

If adopted, this amendment would add gender, ability, age, and marital status to the list of characteristics that do not bar people from membership in the Church. Specifically, the amended Paragraph 4 would say that no member shall be “denied access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church because of race, color, gender, national origin, ability, age, marital status, or economic condition.”

The vote at General Conference was 509 to 242.

The United Methodist Commission on the Status and Role of Women submitted the amendment and put together a website seeking to answer frequently asked questions about the changes. The amendment also has the support of United Methodist Women, Discipleship Ministries, and the DiAbility Ministries Committee.

3 **Delegate elections**

This amendment to Paragraph 34 specifies that elections of delegates to General Conference as well as jurisdictional and central conference meetings will include open nominations from the floor at annual conference sessions. The measure also calls for the election of delegates “by a minimum of a simple majority of the ballots cast.” Central conferences are church regions in Africa, Asia, and Europe.

General Conference supported it by a vote of 767 to 22.

4 **Bishop elections**

This amendment to Paragraph 46 states that central conferences are to elect bishops in a regular, not extra, session “except where an unexpected vacancy must be filled.”

General Conference voted for the change by 621 to 15.

Lonnie Brooks of the Alaska Conference said the amendment aims to treat bishop elections in the central conferences much the same as in U.S. jurisdictions.

When bishops are elected in a special session, he said, “some of the delegates who would be present at the regular session will either not be present at a special session or will be placed in a hardship condition by the call of a session for the purpose of electing bishops.”

5 **Bishop accountability**

Under this amendment to Paragraph 50, General Conference can adopt provisions for the Council of Bishops to hold individual bishops accountable.

General Conference approved this by 715 to 79.

The Western Pennsylvania Conference submitted the proposal. Currently, any complaints against bishops are handled in the jurisdictions or central conference processes, not by the Council.

Robert Zilhaver, a church pastor in Pennsylvania, wrote the legislation. He said the goal is to create a mechanism for the Council to step in for global accountability if needed.

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