New room to have a ball

BY HOLLY MCCRAY

The ribbon cut, the children rushed to the balls inside the big new building when Edmond-Chinese International United Methodist Church (EIC UMC) officially opened the multipurpose space. Two tables of treats didn’t slow them.

“Food is unimportant when you can run and play,” said the trustees chairperson, Dana Zerger.

Two months later, more people are playing — basketball, volleyball, even badminton — as well as worshipping and fellowshipping all together in the Agape Family Center, 11,500-plus square feet.

Emphasis on all together.

Almost as soon as the congregation in 2009 purchased the property at 321 W. Eighth, they outgrew a small church building already on site. Connecting as one church family is more difficult when walls disrupt building friendships.

“I think of the space,” said Pastor Puong Ong Lau. “At meal times, parents would go sit with their children in the little bitty chairs in those small rooms because we were in every room eating, every room.”

A thriving ministry with international students from Edmond’s University of Central Oklahoma began to shrink. That outreach was how EIC UMC had begun!

The church resolved to raise funds and build the existing facility. The cost was $1.5 million.

The funding strategy was creative.

For example, a 10-year-old boy chose to donate his video game money to “Save Your Seat.”

The Agape Family Center was consecrated on April 30. Craig Stinson, Oklahoma Conference’s director of Connectional Ministries, preached from Ephesians 1:15-19 to an audience of about 200. The meal that followed included specialty foods such as Malaysian desserts and Korean pancakes.

“For the first time in our ministry in so many years, we feel like we can use (our) ministry more,” said Rev. Lau about his calling. “I feel it is a grace from God — more opportunity, more

SEE NEW BUILDING, PAGE 7

Circle of Care champions Oklahoma children

Donors with hearts of gold gave $160,000 to Circle of Care as the ministry for children and youths marked its golden anniversary with a gala event April 29.

Even the keynote speech was pure gold. Olympic champion Jackie Joyner-Kersee told her story to some 450 guests at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City.

“I am living witness to the difference that can be made in the life of a child,” she said.

She was born to parents

SEE GALA, PAGE 6

Road trip ahead for summer day camps

BY HOLLY MCCRAY

A team of young adults is packing for an inaugural Voyage: a two-month summer road trip, crisscrossing Oklahoma, directing a mobile day camp at eight host churches — from Heaven to Duncan, Blackwell to Ada, and more.

This new venture by the Conference’s Camps ministry will “engage with new people in new places, create disciples who continue to be involved in the church and grow and become followers in a deeper way,” said Ed Parker, Camps director.

“That’s what drives us.”

SEE MOBILE, PAGE 3
Core question surpasses who-what-when-where for every Christian

“I ask the Lord in charge of the harvest to send out workers to bring it in.”
(Matthew 9:38)

By Bishop Jimmy Nunn

It is time to revisit our underlying assumptions and expectations as people of faith. Let’s begin with a one-word question: WHY? That seemingly simple question is the theme for Oklahoma’s Annual Conference.

I hope each of you will be challenged by it to reflect on your personal reasons for being a Christian and a United Methodist. I put the question before all of us, not only the delegates and guests at the gathering that opens May 29 in Oklahoma City.

I’m not asking this question to point out shortcomings, gaps, or inconsistencies. I ask because the question of why points to purpose. Awareness of purpose is critical for any healthy organization.

In his book “Start with Why,” Simon Sinek tells the story of the railroad industry in the late 1800s. The railroads were the largest companies in America at the time. They had changed the landscape of the country.

But remembering why stopped being important to them. Instead, they became obsessed with what they did. Then technological advances brought the airplane. Transportation changed, and those early companies went out of business.

Paraphrasing Simon Sinek: We must know WHY we do WHAT we do. If we don’t know WHY, how will anyone else?

Our WHY must never stop being primary to us as Christians. If we lose sight of why, we will run off the rails like those early railroads.

It is easy to be critical of them in hindsight. Their narrow perspective blinded them to the possibilities of aviation. They were so focused on what they did, rather than why they did it.

Yet many of us in The United Methodist Church have done the same thing.

We have embraced the mission statement of the Church, which is “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” But when we follow up with questions such as these: WHAT is a disciple? WHAT is transformation? We engage in circular debates and divide into factions based on our answers.

We need to ask ourselves the WHY questions. WHY questions probe our sense of identity.

They help us to know one another. Since coming to the Oklahoma Area, I have invited a few leaders in both annual conferences to meet in small groups to share their faith journeys and calls to ministry. Something about our stories of faith puts us in touch with our personal WHY. Sharing stories with people empowers us to belong. It helps us claim our deep beliefs and values. Through storytelling and listening, we identify our common heritage.

One of the foundational WHY stories of Methodism is John Wesley’s account of his spiritual experience on Aldersgate Street. He did not want to attend the meeting, but he went anyway, out of a sense of duty.

Wesley described that encounter this way: “I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.”

A clear sense of WHY challenges assumptions, sets expectations, and fuels actions.

What is your WHY story?

OCU lowers tuition for doctorate in nursing

National shortage of educators in this field

In an ongoing commitment to address the nationwide shortage of nurses and nursing faculty, Oklahoma City University’s Kramer School of Nursing has announced a lower tuition rate for those pursuing the Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing.

Tuition for that Ph.D. program will be reduced by 40 percent, to $590 per credit hour.

Liz Diener, assistant dean and professor at OCU’s Kramer School of Nursing, said the reduction in tuition is motivated by efforts to overcome financial barriers to earning a doctorate.

In addition, the School of Nursing offers a B.S.N.-Ph.D. program, which allows nurses who earn the bachelor’s degree to move directly to the doctoral track and enables graduates to be competitive for faculty positions nationwide.

Since 2015, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing has reported that tens of thousands of qualified nursing program applicants have been denied entry annually due to a shortage of faculty at schools nationwide. Also, an increase in retiring faculty is predicted for the next few years. Compounding these issues is research that shows higher salaries in clinical and private-sector settings often attract potential nurse educators away from teaching.

Diener stated, “Our programs, coupled with the new tuition rate, make earning a doctoral degree more affordable for more people.” She also noted that OCU doctoral alumni already can be found teaching in institutions worldwide, and such portability shows the potential to attract potential nurse educators away from teaching.

For more information about Kramer School of Nursing and its programs, visit okcu.edu/nursing or call 405-208-5960.

Doctoral program in psychology added

Next spring, OCU will offer a new doctoral program in clinical psychology.

The program prepares students to provide psychological services in a variety of settings to address client mental health needs, including rural areas and with underserved populations.

“It is the continued mental health needs, lack of mental health providers, and the push to integrate mental health professionals within primary care that prompted the creation of this program to address those needs,” said Melissa Hakman. She is an associate professor, chair of the department of psychology, and directs the child advocacy training program at OCU.

The 120-hour program consists of four years of coursework in theory, evidence-based practice of psychology, and practicum-based experiences. It includes a full-time, year-long pre-doctoral internship in the fifth year. The program fulfills accreditation guidelines of the American Psychological Association.

“Students who come through our program will receive a significant amount of attention and mentoring from faculty, given the low student-faculty ratio,” said Hakman. “While there are required courses, students will also be able to select coursework that matches their interests and allows them to prepare for their future career path.”

Courses are required in three core areas: General Psychology Core, Research Core, and Clinical Core. Students also choose from a variety of elective courses to gain additional skills in specific areas of focus. They gain clinical experience through practicums both in-house in the psychology training clinic as well as at external sites in the community.

For more information visit okcu.edu/admissions/graduate or contact Michael Harrington, maharrington@okcu.edu or 405-208-5094.
Newest superintendent shares her story

BY CINDY HAVLIK

I've always found the passage in Matthew 4:19 a pretty amazing call story. “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” I wish that I could visit with those disciples so I could understand how, on the basis of less than a dozen words spoken to them by Jesus, they leave everything and follow him.

My own calling goes back to the years right after college. I was in the midst of a successful career, although success meant something completely different to me at that time.

And then we moved out of state, away from everything we knew.

I volunteered at a nearby church. I enrolled in Disciple Bible Study, and somewhere along the way I was asked to start a Saturday evening worship service.

Honestly, I don’t have a clue how it all happened. But something — someone — reached down, took hold of my heart, and didn’t let go!

The church, and everything about it, became my life. God used the church to open my heart to the call.

Today I look back. What if I had never moved to Corning, New York? I never would have met the man who became my husband. He encouraged me to become all that God wanted me to be.

What if I had not attended a certain United Methodist church in Lake Charles, Louisiana? I would not have met the senior pastor who first saw something in me that I couldn’t see in myself.

If I hadn’t taken that first step of reading scripture in worship one Sunday morning and then another step, to start and lead a Saturday service, I would not have found myself sitting and talking with a district superintendent. I never would have had the courage to go home and call Perkins School of Theology that same day, learning in that phone call about a dinner Perkins was hosting the very next week for potential seminary students. I never would have felt led to work on the staff at a church north of Houston while enrolled in seminary classes — and still trying to figure out what in the world I was doing there.

Now I am both humbled and blessed most of all by the leading of God’s hand into this new journey in serving Christ. With the encouragement of my family, friends, and colleagues in ministry, I look forward to walking alongside the clergy and laity of the Council Oak District and the Cabinet of the Oklahoma Conference as we serve Him in the work of the kingdom here in our midst.

The church, and everything about it, became my life. God used the church to open my heart to the call.

—Cindy Havlik

Mobile day camp:

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Youngsters ages 7-12 will start each day learning about a fearless Bible character. They’ll learn archery and tie-dyeing. Inflatable water slides, bounce houses, and bumper balls await their enjoyment.

“We’d love to see 80-100 children at each of our sites,” said Neil Tate, Camps program director.

They’ll be welcomed by 14 trained young-adult counselors with lots of equipment, presenting a professional camping program. The team’s leader is Dossanna Miller.

She’s from Fairview, grew up actively engaged in the life of First UMC there, regularly went to church camps, and graduated this month with an education degree from Southwestern Oklahoma State University.

Tate said that Miller initially planned to volunteer for a week at one of Oklahoma’s camping facilities. Then she saw the call for paid mobile day camp staff. According to Tate, her reaction was: I could do this the entire summer!

The first camp is June 5-9 at Ada-Asbury UMC, and the Voyage concludes at OKC-Grace UMC on July 24-28.

Commitment by the host churches is key. That includes promotion, scholarship funds for campers, volunteers, and providing room and board for the team members.

“Our vision is not for the circus to come to town for a week and have a big splash,” Parker explained. Camps and Discipleship Ministries have partnered to give even more support to local churches.

Discipleship Director Derrek Belase will help the hosts evaluate their facilities and develop further outreach using Mission InSite.

“What kind of followup can we do after day camp has left so that we have an annual plan for how we continue to engage, to attract these new people?” Parker asked. “Day camp is the cornerstone, part of a larger strategy that fits with where they’re already going or gives them a kickoff.”

The Apportionments from every church make possible this New People New Places initiative. An NPNP grant provided startup and development money for the Voyage mobile day camps.

“We are extremely grateful. We can’t do it without Apportionment giving,” Parker said. “New People New Places provides the opportunity to try something new, intentionally try it out in a way that we feel is going to impact new children, new families, especially economically deprived folks, whether it be in rural or urban settings.

“This is a way to introduce them to the good news of Jesus Christ and to a faith community which is uniquely Methodist, and give them opportunities to continue their faith journey in a way that will have eternal consequences.”

He noted that scholarship support for youngsters also has been received through several foundations, including a Petree Grant. To build a sustainable program, the cost is $100 per camper, but the additional funds will assist families that are economically disadvantaged.

“That’s when the church steps in,” he said.

Parents understand there are costs commonly associated with professionally-run summertime programs, Tate explained, pointing to sports and arts camps.

Parker said West Tulsa UMC has secured extra funds to provide free breakfast and lunch for each camper at its site.

“It’s all of us working together to create a customized situation that meets the needs of that particular church or community.”

Here’s the mobile day camp summer schedule. Hours will be 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday-Friday.

- June 5-9, Ada-Asbury
- June 12-16, Oak Park Retreat Center, Perkins (partner churches Lost Creek, Eden Chapel, and Perkins-First)
- June 19-23, Heavener-Faithbridge
- June 26-30, West Tulsa (partner churches West Tulsa, Tulsa-First, Tulsa-Grace, and Tulsa-St. Paul’s)
- July 3-7, Blackwell-First (partner churches Blackwell-First, Tonkawa, and Braman)
- July 10-14, Duncan-First
- July 17-21, Owasso-First
- July 24-28, OKC-Grace

www.okumc.org/annual_conference

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You’ll find OKUMC in the App Store or Google Play.

This free software application, launched by your Communications Ministry, enables you to quickly access on your mobile device all the information you need for your annual conference experience.

If you need help downloading or navigating the app, volunteers will be available at the registration tables during Annual Conference.

Watch the action from wherever you are

Choose “Live Stream” in the listings on the right side of the webpage, above.

- “Unpacking the Budget,” a one-hour informational session, will be aired live at 1:30 p.m. Monday, then posted online later for viewing during the conference.
- The stream will resume at 7 p.m. that day for the opening worship and memorial service.
- Tuesday, streaming will be 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
- Streaming Wednesday starts at 8:30 a.m. and includes the 7 p.m. commissioning/ordination worship service.
- Streaming begins at 8:30 a.m. on the final day.
Son’s tribute reflects our gratitude to 2017 retiring clergy

BY MATTHEW SCRAPER
PASTOR, OKC-SOUTHERN HILLS UMC

An open letter to my father, Randy Scraper, on the Sunday of his retirement:

There is only one window in my office. I find myself looking toward that window often from my corner desk, probably because it is nice to see the sunlight streak between the blinds. The sunlight has always reminded me of the ever-present warmth of God’s love.

The rays of light that sneak through are partially obscured by a hanging bar that supports the many robes I have collected throughout my time in ministry. I wear them, or one of them, every Sunday morning as I step into the pulpit in a role that has been fulfilled by many before me throughout the Methodist connection. I reflect on those others, conscious that each of us who is ordained represents only one link in a chain forged long before us and extending long after we are gone.

Today I am immediately conscious of one robe worn Sunday after Sunday, of one link in the chain that has forever influenced the man I have become.

My father had this gray robe with black velvet doctoral panels and bars. So often did my father wear this robe that I remember being surprised the first time I saw a minister wearing a robe of another color.

Week after week, year after year, and decade after decade I have watched my father, sunlight gracing the folds of that gray robe, as he cared enough to teach the world what it means to know God.

Today, the sunlight slips through the breaks of the blinds in my office, and it graces the folds of that gray robe. I cannot look at that robe without tears forming around the edges of my eyes.

I wonder how many sermons that gray robe has heard. How many lives have been changed, re-forged, and redeemed while listening to the man who wore it? Someday soon, I will slip into that robe myself. I will walk into the congregation at my church and deliver one more in the long line of sermons the gray robe has heard. However, for the first time in my life, my father will not be in a pulpit of his own in that same moment.

My father once told me that people will never remember what you said when you preach, but they will remember how hearing God in that moment made them feel.

While I cannot remember every point from any one sermon, I can affirm with all my heart that feeling the love of God from the man in the gray robe has changed my life forever, because the man in the gray robe cared enough about me to introduce me to the God of heaven and earth.

Your link has been forged well; your legacy passed on. We will take it from here.

(Facebook post, March 26, 2017)
Theater stages the greatest story

BY CHRIS SCHUTZ

The Roxy Theater in downtown Muskogee plays new parts these days — and one is as a church that especially welcomes the people who shelter at the nearby Gospel Rescue Mission.

They are invited to attend a contemporary worship service, called SPIN, on Sunday evenings at the venue that opened in 1948, said Jinx Barber, who is an associate pastor for Muskogee-St. Paul United Methodist Church.

Senior Pastor David Burris said SPIN stands for St. Paul “involved, inviting, in prayer, in service…”

St. Paul UMC first held a service in the Roxy on a Sunday in June 2016 after an electrical fire on the church’s main campus disrupted the usual schedule for the congregation in west Muskogee.

After activities resumed at the main location, church leaders asked Roxy representatives: Can you cut us a deal on renting the space for an evening service?

For St. Paul, “every couple of months we look at who we are reaching, who we want to reach,” Rev. Barber said. The church has identified a large, underserved, homeless population in Muskogee.

The idea is to create “a presence in downtown that is not a church building,” he said, but rather “a safe space where they can come and worship and not feel that they have to dress up.”

People who are homeless “don’t feel comfortable in a traditional church setting.”

Rev. Burris agreed that those who attend SPIN aren’t in worship at St. Paul on Sunday mornings. The church has been hoping to grow interest in the Roxy services, which began in October, but recent attendance hovers between 10 to 25 people, he said.

“The numbers have not been what we’d like them to be.”

Leaders are considering how to develop a band and music leadership for SPIN. Another idea is the dinner church concept.

Burris said, “We are trying to figure out ways to minister to people around us.”

Barber, also a student at Phillips Theological Seminary in Tulsa, is on track to be commissioned as a provisional elder at the 2017 Oklahoma Annual Conference. As part of that process, he was required to submit a video of a sermon he preached.

He chose to record one of his sermons at the Roxy, when he preached to a congregation of 52 people from the shelter.

“It was rowdy, but it was one of the most authentic experiences of church,” he said.

Closed for over 30 years, the Roxy reopened in 2001 as a multipurpose entertainment venue, according to information online.

Employment

Director of Student Ministries: Prague-First. Full- or part-time. Resume to pastorpaumc@outlook.com or call 405-567-3126.

Worship Coordinator Assistant: Norman-McFarlin Memorial. Part-time. Resume to wneal@mcfarlinumc.org.

Director of Senior Adult Ministries: Norman-McFarlin Memorial. Part-time. Resume and cover letter to Wendi Neal at wneal@mcfarlinumc.org.

Adult and Children’s Music Ministries: Norman-St. Stephen’s. Part-time. Could be two positions. Resume to ststephensumc@coxinet.net.

Church Business Manager: Tulsa-New Haven. Part-time. 918-743-6491 or cindy.havlik@newhavenumc.org

Nursery Staff: OKC-Village. Part-time. Must be age 18. Contact Jessica Maynard at 405-751-8116 or vumcfamilies@gmail.com.

THE TASTE OF SUCCESS — Representatives of the Wesley Foundation at Northeastern State University, Tahlequah, recently received a Community Service Award for the Wesley’s efforts to serve a weekly meal to all on campus. Leaders of the United Methodist campus ministry estimated 150-300 students are served each time. The Wesley also offers meals three times a day during finals week. Presenting the award was Kristi Norris, center, coordinator of fraternity-sorority life at NSU.

Accepting were student intern Abigail Shaw-Bolen, left, and Shana Dry, right, director of the Wesley. The project is a good demonstration of NSU values, said university officials. The Sigma Sigma Sigma sorority also raised and donated $300 to the Wesley to help with the meals project, Rev. Dry said.
Contemporary spirits. “You’re not going to amount to anything” was a frequent comment.

Age 9, she finished last in her first race. The child persisted. In 1976, at age 14, she watched women competing in the Olympics and set her sights on that. Her interest and skill in sports drew her in to a welcoming local community center.

She scored a basketball scholarship to the University of California-Los Angeles. “God will look out for you,” her mom had always said.

Her mother died unexpectedly at age 37. “The whispers of my mother’s voice” pulled Joyner-Kersee back to her Olympic dreams. That “gave me the strength to be bold.”

Joyner-Kersee still regrets missing that first chance at gold, although today she holds six Olympic medals, including gold ones, and the world record for heptathlon. An injury had caused her to doubt herself.

“We’re all faced with crisis at different times,” she summed up. “Sometimes we get lost. We’re not looking for a handout; we’re looking for a hand up. It’s your voice that becomes the voice for the voiceless.

“That’s what you give each and every one of the young people. You give the gifts of life, a second chance, for a homeless mother, a child, not knowing where their next meal is coming from, let alone a roof over their heads.”

“You believe in them. It speaks volumes when you give of your treasures — your gifts, your time. It is because of you caring for them. The Circle of Care is what each and every one of you embodies.”

Oklahoma clergywoman Anna Marie George gave the prayer at the event.

When she was a foster child, she said, she didn’t know about the United Methodist cross-and-flame emblem on the church van that picked up her and her siblings.

“What I understood was here was a van to take us to church where people loved on us, cared about us, and helped us to feel protected and safe.”

Rev. George prayed, “We thank you, Lord, for the last 100 years they have answered the call” as the Circle of Care’s “Finishing the Race” essay contest.


He was founding pastor of OKC-Leland Clegg and also pastored at May Avenue, Northwest, B.C. Clark, Christ, Crown Heights, Skyline, and Epsworth Churches, all in Oklahoma City; and in Nebraska. He taught religion at Oklahoma City University, was South Oklahoma City District superintendent, and in retirement founded the Oklahoma City Cooperative Urban Parish with his wife, Mary.

Among survivors are his wife of 60 years; son, Rev. Patrick McPherson, pastor of Kingsfisher UMC; and daughters Lora Wilkinson and Meggan Horne.

Service was May 17 at South Chapel, Oklahoma City University.

WHITE — Rev. Joe Harris White, 80, of Edmond, died May 10, 2017. He was the first president/CEO of Epsworth Villa, a United Methodist-affiliated retirement community in Oklahoma City.

Most of his 44-year career was as an administrator and CEO of retirement communities, also in Georgia and New Mexico.

Among survivors are his wife, Anne Josey White, and three children, Jocy DeBorde, Jane Sweigart, and John White.

Service was May 12 at Crossings Community Church, Oklahoma City, with burial May 15 in Camden, Ark.


Among survivors are five sons: Anthony Wilson and Walter, Timothy, Terry, and Bobby Brown.

Service was April 22 at the church where she was a member, Bethel A.M.E. Church, Lubbock, with burial at Peaceful Garden Cemetery.

Bob Jardine died April 27. He was the father of Rev. Mark Jardine, senior pastor at OKC-Chapel Hill.

Birth

Ruth Bailey Montgomery was born May 2, 2017. She is the daughter of Larry and Rev. Sara Pugh Montgomery, an associate pastor at Tulsa-Boston Avenue.

Appointment

Judy Conner, retired, to Claremore-St. Andrews UMC, effective May 1.

Outstanding — Oologah United Methodist Church was honored recently with the “Spirit of Will Rogers Award” for sharing its contemporary worship space with several community groups after the city demolished its community center to build a new one. The church is welcoming Boy Scouts, Oologah Senior Citizens, and other groups while the work is being done. From left are Chamber of Commerce President Carolyn Estes, Pastor Jennifer Long, and Lay Leader Justin Wine at the Chamber banquet. The presentation marked the first time the award went to an organization rather than an individual, according to the Oologah Lake Leader. The church also coordinates a food bank, organizes a Food for Kids drive, holds a Thanksgiving basket giveaway, and hosts a monthly drop-off site for the Northeast Oklahoma Food Bank.
New building:

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

freedom to do anything we can do. We know it is our mission to reach out. It’s not only this building; I think we can see that one has to reach out more. We pray that. We think about it and we cannot relax.

“You need to pray that God will use us so we can fill the place.”

In the older building, which is called the Hosanna Worship Center, ”we were just trying to find a seat,” he said. “Now they can eat together in one big space. Now the purpose of the love feast is the time we get connected and share together.”

According to Scott Zerger, who chairs the Building Committee, “We’re almost there” in paying off the debt. “We still lack about $270,000.”

EIC UMC paid cash for the property in 2009, then saved up more than $1 million for the new building, he said. Additional funding assistance came from the district, Oklahoma Conference’s New Faith Communities Ministry Team, and New People New Places grants. Your church’s Apportionments helped this ministry.

“People need to know that we’re very grateful and thankful for people helping and supporting us. God’s at work,” Scott said.

As the facility took shape, a group of 8-12 adults intentionally prayed together every Wednesday “for the building, for the workers, and for the people coming in the future,” said Dana.

Rev. Lau said, “Sunday mornings this whole thing is full of children and youth.”

The Chinese and English-language worship services continue in the Hosanna Worship Center sanctuary, with Rev. Lau and assistant pastor John Roper preaching, respectively.

The English-language service was launched “to reach out to more nations, more diverse groups,” Scott said. “If you’re only Chinese, that limits you quite a bit, and the young people who grew up in the church were raised in American schools, so they prefer English.”

The new building features LED lighting and flat-screen TVs, six classrooms and a large commercial kitchen, in addition to the gym. It complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. A family restroom includes a shower. Now the acreage has 55 new trees and 65 new parking spaces.

On Friday evenings, fellowship and study are held; Saturday mornings, volleyball; and Sunday and Monday evenings, basketball. There are two regulation-size badminton courts, and they may be the only ones in Edmond besides those at UCO.

“This is a magnet,” Dana said. “Now we have a new place to minister to the new people that are coming. This is the new place for the new people.”

Criminal Justice & Mercy Ministries

Event eases route to college

BY CHRIS SCHUTZ

A windstorm and power outage couldn’t blow away the excitement recently for some young people getting practical help for their college dreams, through the guidance of CJAMM (Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministries).

CJAMM had invited 27 youths who had participated in New Day Camps during summers past. Those events for children of incarcerated parents are held annually for ages 8-11 and 12-14.

The Oklahoma United Methodist agency seeks to grow connections with the campers, to be a positive influence on their lives, beyond the week of New Day.

Ministry leaders learned of a way to help some who’d outgrown the camp age requirements. Those students now were struggling with college application processes.

Several found the paperwork “too hard” to fill out when they began to apply for grants and other financial aid, said Kristin Harlin, CJAMM’s executive director.

The weekend event in Oklahoma City was designed to assist the young “leaders in training.” Several colleges and universities sent representatives, including the University of Oklahoma, Oklahoma State University, East Central University, Northeastern State University, and Seminole State College.

The event, a first for CJAMM, kicked off April 29 at OKC-Wesley United Methodist Church. Foreboding weather reduced attendance, Harlin said.

Then strong wind knocked out the building’s power.

But the conversations continued even without electricity, with note-taking on white boards, Harlin said.

As the power outage continued, OKC-Grace United Methodist Church offered its space — and electricity — so the group could continue its work and fun. An overnight lock-in party was on the schedule.

Harlin said the group played games all night and “ate lots of food.” She hopes to again offer the program in the future.
Planning Your Legacy Guide

A plan is important, but an estimated 60% of Americans don’t even have a will. The Planning Your Legacy guide from the Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation will help you by making the process easy and understandable.

During your lifetime, you may work 40 years to accumulate assets and spend 10 to 20 years conserving that accumulation. Through good planning, another wonderful chapter in the book of your life can be completed. However, some people may take two hours or less to plan for distribution of the assets. Too many times there has been little planning or sometimes no planning and their last chapter is burdensome for family members.

This guide is designed to help you move forward with a plan that writes a very good chapter in the book of your life. In your Christian walk with the Lord, you understand that through proper planning, a legacy of love and care that you leave for your family and friends can be encouraging and even inspiring. Indeed, the Bible tells us, “If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” 1 Timothy 5:8 (NIV)

Part of becoming a “good and faithful servant” is to create a good plan for your family. This important stewardship of the property that God has entrusted to you can both protect and provide for your family. We will show you in this document how to enhance their security by updating your estate plan with a will and planning for your potential future medical decisions.

This guide to planning your will and trust is designed to encourage you to think about how you want your assets to be distributed at death and to assist you in gathering the information your attorney will need. With this guide, the process will be much easier, less expensive and fulfill your desires for family and the Lord’s work.

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. Don’t wait any longer to plan your legacy of love!

PASSING THE BATON — 'Tis the season for clergy moves, and a late April event offered help with that transition for pastors arriving and exiting. Bishop Jimmy Nunn’s advice that day: “Lead with a question. Inspire with a story. Keep the faith.” Moving Day is June 8. Right, Rob Harris passes the baton to Sharon Cochran. With Bishop Nunn, center, are James Jones and Valerie Steele, showing their support for the OSU Cowboys of Stillwater. More than 50 people, including six superintendents, attended the workshop led by consultant Jim Ozier, at the United Methodist Ministry Center in Oklahoma City.

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