St. Luke’s Edmond completes its building

On opening day, Oct. 9, worshippers at the new Edmond satellite of St. Luke’s United Methodist Church — 754 strong — sang “What a Friend We Have in Jesus” just as the saints of the church did 127 years ago on founding Sunday.

Also “Standing on the Promises,” the people gathered outside the new facility, 41,000 square feet, so a drone-mounted camera could record the moment. (Those predecessors of 1889 would be fascinated.)

Consecration Sunday was followed by the Grand Opening on Oct. 16 — and the number of people swelled to 1,350.

St. Luke’s senior pastor, Bob Long, preached on “game changers” Oct. 9, including the first woman to complete the Boston Marathon and the biblical Esther, a Jewish orphan who became a queen.

“I can’t help but wonder if God brought you to this place for such a time as this,” Rev. Dr. Long said. “I think of the risk, but maybe God was giving us a vision of a new way to share God with the world.

“There is a joy that comes when you are working together. We love the statement: ‘Wouldn’t it be great if...’ And then we fill in the blank.”

Bishop Jimmy Nunn blessed the new space. “God, we consecrate this ground on which many people will find peace,” he prayed.

He told the worshippers, “People need this congregation. God is just beginning to work in a great new way here.”

In 2014, St. Luke’s launched an additional worship service at Edmond’s Sequoyah Middle School.

By Holly McCray

People note the welcome by Boulevard Brass Quintet as they flow into St. Luke’s Edmond UMC on Oct. 9 for the first worship service in the new facility.

Norma Gravley-Quinn named new Conference treasurer

By Holly McCray

Bishop Jimmy Nunn has named Norma Gravley-Quinn of Lawton as new Conference treasurer, effective Dec. 1.

She brings to the post decades of experience in finance as well as career ministry. She will follow Brian Bakeman, who has served as treasurer since 2006. He is retiring.

“I believe that we are called to a ministry of generosity,” she said. “How that is lived out in our lives will say more about how we embrace our discipleship. You give in gratitude, not out of duty. It becomes a spiritual journey.”

The Quinns find themselves packing moving boxes for the second time in recent months. They had relocated temporarily in late summer after a water line ruptured inside the parsonage of Lawton’s Centenary UMC, where Rev. Dr. Gravley-Quinn has served as senior pastor since 2010.

She said they still have the boxes from that emergency move. Although her husband, Bryant Gravley-Quinn III, retired in July, he hasn’t had time to relax, she said.

Gravley-Quinn worked as an independent accountant and financial consultant from 1976 to 1997.

She holds a B.B.A. in accounting, with honors, from the University of Texas at Austin/Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene.

But the calling by God that she first felt at age 17 persisted, she said. She defined it as “restlessness.”

Living in Dallas, with two young children, the couple signed up for the Upper Room’s Walk to Emmaus. Gravley-Quinn had to be “dragged” there.

But while there, “God said: It’s time, and it’s ordained ministry.”

She had been so angry when she set out for the Walk. Back at home, she told her husband they needed to talk. He wasn’t surprised, she said.

“He saw that in me. I’m a cradle Methodist. I have circuit riders in my ancestry. My great-grandparents gave the land and helped build the church in Sweetwater (Texas).”

She attained a Master’s of Divinity, with high honors, at Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth; she was ordained in 2003.

She earned a doctorate in ministry at Graduate Theological Foundation, South Bend, Ind.

Gravley-Quinn was an associate pastor at White’s Chapel UMC, Southlake, Central Texas Conference, as it grew from 1,100 to 11,000 members. She pastored OKC-Putnam City 2006-10.
Gas station quandary

I anticipated with great joy the service of installation in the Oklahoma Conference. To meet the publishing deadline, I write this reflection prior to the service. But, based on the wonderful reception and welcome that you already have extended to Mary and me, I owe many expressions of thanks; they number more than I can recount.

My gratitude goes to Asbury in Tulsa for hosting the event, to the worship planning team, those who participated in the service, and everyone who attended in person or via the live stream. I acknowledge as well the many gifts, cards, and words of welcome and hospitality that we have enjoyed since becoming your episcopal family.

It is great to be in Oklahoma! As I’ve pondered what it means to be in this new role and context for ministry, I recalled other experiences I have had over the years. I liken a new ministry experience to driving rental cars—although conceding the gravity of the example bears little resemblance to the real challenge.

Some times I pull into a gas station in a rental car and stop beside the pump, only to realize I’ve parked the car facing the wrong way. The gas cap is on the opposite side. So I drive around in a large circle, approach from the other direction, and try to look dignified in the process.

Even worse was my experience at one station as I searched for the rental car’s mechanism to release the gas cap. I looked all over the car’s interior. No visible release. I grew more and more irritated. While I was not in a pressing hurry, I still sensed my day ticking away as I looked in vain for that gadget.

Finally I remembered that some cars do not have interior release levers. I pressed the gas cap, and it popped open. I filled the car’s tank and drove sheepishly away.

Back on the road, I began reflecting on the challenge I had just encountered. I realized the question that I had used to begin the process was flawed. I had asked myself, “Where is the release for the gas tank?” That led me on a futile search.

Rethinking the moment, I recognized that my problem was not to find a release device. Rather, my newly framed question became “How do you access the gas tank?” I had learned to reframe the question. I needed to learn how to access the gas tank for the type of car I had. It was irrelevant whether the car had a release.

In Romans 12:2, Paul writes, “Don’t be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you can figure out what God’s will is — what is good and pleasing and mature.”

Entering a new role in life and ministry is a great time to reframe the questions, test assumptions, and challenge presuppositions we have. What questions are you asking? Do some of our questions need to be reframed?

35 colleges send reps to interfaith conference at OCU

Campus ministers, students, faculty, and even college presidents from 35 United Methodist-affiliated colleges and universities were among the 100-plus participants in Called To Be Neighbors, a national collegiate interfaith conference held at Oklahoma City University on Oct. 17-18.

The event consisted of panel discussions and breakout sessions on topics including: “The State of Religious Diversity on United Methodist Campuses,” “Wesleyan Tradition and Interfaith Cooperation,” “A Vision for Interfaith Cooperation on United Methodist Campuses,” and “Religious Life Amid Religious Diversity.”

Sponsors were the denomination’s General Board of Higher Education & Ministry, OCU, Emory & Henry College, and Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC), and the conference was underwritten by the Lilly Endowment and TMF (Texas Methodist Foundation).

OCU President Robert Henry opened the conference by welcoming participants and outlining the ways Oklahoma City University has been a leader in college interfaith work in recent years.

Eboo Patel, the founder of IFYC, praised OCU and encouraged all United Methodist universities to develop strategies for being welcoming places of interfaith dialogue, service, and engagement.

Speakers from OCU included Mark Davies, professor of Social and Ecological Ethics; junior religion major Melaina Riley, who is a Bishop Scholar; and Imam Imad Enchassi, who chairs Islamic Studies. Rev. Dr. Davies also was one of the convener’s for the conference and served as host.

The two-day gathering concluded with a time for delegations to reflect and develop action plans. Many campus ministers reported plans to immediately implement back home some of what they learned at OCU.

Organizers were pleased with attendance at the conference — only the second of its kind — and pledged to continue exploring ways to strengthen the connection between the Church’s institutions of higher education and the option of adding Interfaith Studies as a minor.

On the curricular side

OCU augments its required “Survey of World Religions” course with a service learning component that takes students out into Oklahoma City’s diverse religious community.

Each spring, OCU students present a World Religion Expo for church youth groups and others interested in learning more about the major world religions.

And, as of this academic year, students in all degree tracks have the opportunity to explore courses that develop action plans and opportunities for cabinet assignment, intern, and staff positions dedicated to Interfaith Life on campus.

In developing its efforts in interfaith engagement, OCU has found inspiration and direction from The United Methodist Church’s guidelines for interreligious relationships. The Church’s statement, “Called to Be Neighbors and Witnesses,” can be found at www.umc.org/what-we-believe.
UMW valued: ‘People in this state need you’

United Methodist Women elected Glenda Gilpin of Hooker as their new Conference president during the group’s Annual Meeting in Oklahoma City.

She follows Cindy Hull of Waynoka, who will complete her quadrennium of service as president on Dec. 31.

Gilpin will be joined by officers Ramona Paine of Enid; Sue Helms, Chandler; Karen Mitchell, Stillwater; Harri Williams, Harrah; Ann Cornelius, Sapulpa; and Joyce Alfred, Oklahoma City.

“A Fresh Wind Blowing” was theme for the meeting Sept. 30-Oct. 1 at OKC-St. Luke’s.

“What is a fresh wind? A force that influences,” said keynote speaker Derrek Belase, who is new director of discipleship for all Oklahoma United Methodists.

He gave examples of the seven UMW circles for girls at Boston Avenue UMC in Tulsa, of home-cooked meals prepared by UMW members for campus ministries across the state, of the Mission u spiritual and social justice studies that lead to Christian action.

“This is what it looks like when you are that force that carries and influences,” Rev. Belase said. “People in this state need you. You are that sweet spirit; you are the fresh wind.”

Heartland District Superintendent Greg Tener recalled his mother’s enthusiasm for UMW. He treasures a 1945 sympathy card — and where he first heard about the near-extinction of the American bison.

“Your fresh wind blowing strengthens us,” said Rev. Dr. Tener.

The 159 participants heard updates from UMW-supported missions in the state.

• Cookson Hills Center provided seeds and help to plant 250 gardens this year.
• Stacey Ninness introduced new mom Jessica and baby Graham, who have been assisted through Neighborhood Services Organization. NSO is one of 96 UMW mission institutions nationwide.
• Missionary Fuxia Wang said about 100 Chinese/English Bibles have been distributed through the Chinese International Fellowship in Norman.

Among other highlights, Kathy Caldron of Ponca City urged Oklahoma members to support the Legacy Fund as the national organization nears its 150th anniversary, in 2019. A video and more resources are at www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/150.

Yolanda Faye Perry of Oklahoma City was introduced as the South Central Jurisdiction’s UMW guide to assist units. Contact her at chaplain.fayeperry@gmail.com.

New units have been chartered at Tulsa’s Asbury and Christ churches, and at Grove, Miami, and Stillwater-First, according to the Annual Meeting program book. “Mission Today Awards” went to 183 units. Also, 445 women across the state participated in the UMW Reading Program.

Beginning this year, the organization’s historic focus on women, children, and youth is centering on four areas of advocacy and service.
• Maternal and child health
• Economic inequality
• Climate justice
• Criminalization of communities of color and mass incarceration

Oklahoma’s members approved a 2017 Conference UMW Pledge for Mission totaling $290,000.

Dates to reserve for 2017:
• April 21-23, Spiritual Growth Retreat, Canyon Camp;
• July 21-23 and July 23-24, Mission u, Oklahoma City University; and
• Oct. 6-7, Annual Meeting, Tulsa-Boston Avenue UMC. — Holly McCray

Workshop gives tips to go green

Professor Mark Davies put three questions before the women attending “Greening Your Congregation,” an optional class at the UMW Annual Meeting.

1) What does faith teach us about relating to creation?
2) When did you first fall in love with nature?
3) When did you first realize something’s not right in the way humans are relating to nature?

“I think it’s important to get in touch with your feelings about nature, to take it personally,” he said, in order “to do something about it.”

Rev. Dr. Davies recalled hiking with his dad in the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge as a child, growing up in Lawton.

That’s where he fell in love with nature — and where he first heard about the near-extinction of the American bison.

Today’s scientific data identifies human impact as causing great acceleration in the extinction of species as well as climate change, Davies said. He urges equipping homes and churches in more ecologically sustainable ways.


The Oklahoma City University professor led the 2016 Mission u study on climate justice and is scheduled to present part two next July.
BY CHRIS SCHUTZ

A recent graduate of Northwestern Oklahoma State University in Alva finds herself now at a church in the nation’s capital, helping organize meals for people who are homeless or have trouble getting enough food.

Stephanie Quammen, 24, is a Global Missions Fellow (US-2) for the General Board of Global Ministries. She is assigned to one of Metropolitan United Methodist Church’s five “pillar” programs: praising, learning, serving, caring, and sharing. The pillars create “ways for people within the church to kind of get involved in various ministries that appeal to them,” she said.

As coordinator of the “serving” pillar, Quammen helps the church’s kitchen ministry, which repurposes donated food from an organic market, a restaurant, and farmers’ markets.

Her main roles are communication and recruiting volunteers. She is housed with other US-2s.

“I love it; I think it’s wonderful. We are doing great work here. We really are radically hospitable.”

In 2015, Quammen earned a degree in English at NWOSU. She realized she felt a call to mission work.

Sarah Nichols, director of the Oklahoma Conference’s Young Adult Mission & Service, suggested she might try becoming a US-2.

While in Oklahoma, Quammen was a member of rural Prairie Chapel United Methodist Church, northwest of Ponca City. Worship attendance averaged 32 people in 2015.

Metropolitan UMC is part of the Virginia Conference. Combined attendance is over 400 people per week at the Washington, D.C., church’s three campuses.

There is a “large need” for the food turned out by the church, Quammen said. Metropolitan gets about 5,000 pounds of food per month and sends 1,500 meals a week out into the community.

Examples of items created by the kitchen are stir-fry dishes, spaghetti, lasagna, and chicken, fish, and beef entrees. The menus also include roasted vegetables, banana bread, and apple crisp.

For more information on joining the US-2 mission program, contact Sarah Nichols at snichols@okumc.org.

The two-year GBGM program is for adults ages 18-30. Mission opportunities are available domestically and in other countries.

Mission interest leads young adult to D.C.
OSU campus ministry clears ground for transformation

BY HOLLY MCCRAY

Lucian Cretiu drove from Houston to Stillwater for one purpose. "The Romanian native said he wanted to attend the Oct. 8 groundbreaking at the place he always will call home: the Wesley Foundation at Oklahoma State University.

His bond to that United Methodist campus ministry reflected how many in the crowd felt that day, gathered on a rocky lot at 823 W. University. With fanfare, the Wesley began construction of a three-story ministry center, following the demolition of a structure in service more than 60 years.

“This place was where I made my decision for the ministry almost 44 years ago to the day, October, 1972,” wrote retired Oklahoma clergyman Bob Younts on Facebook. “It needed to go, but it is kind of sad for me.”

It was 2005 when Cretiu and his wife arrived at OSU from Romania to pursue master’s degrees. They had $1,000 in hand, he said. Through the meals the Wesley served up for students, he connected with campus minister Michael Bartley.

The couple lived in the basement of the Wesley about three years. In exchange, Cretiu helped maintain the aging building. Both completed their post-graduate study and now work in the engineering field. They attend a Houston church.

“We come with great affection and memories of this place,” Bishop Jimmy Nunn told the 200-plus people at the crowd felt that day, gathered on a rocky lot at 823 W. University. With fanfare, the Wesley began construction of a three-story ministry center, following the demolition of a structure in service more than 60 years.

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“We come with great affection and memories of this place,” Bishop Jimmy Nunn told the 200-plus people at the groundbreaking. He linked the Wesley’s ministry to Jesus’ call for Christians to be the light of the world (Matthew 5).

• Light bends. “We bend to meet people where they are.”

• Light reflects. “We seek to reflect the light of Christ.”

“Congratulations on your vision,” he bishop said.

The Wesley is familiar to OSU President Burns Hargis, who lived beside it as a student. He spoke about the multiple construction projects under way on campus and thanked “all people who have donated to make this reality.”

Joe Hall, a member of the Wesley Board of Directors, quoted the founder of the Methodist faith, John Wesley: “Earn all you can, save all you can, give all you can.”

Hall and his wife, Ann, live out that teaching in their lives, he said.

“Lots of Methodists contributed” to the successful $6.5 million capital campaign, which was Phase 1 of the building project, he explained. He provided commemorative medallions to those present.

He and Ann “hope and pray” supporters step up to raise $3 million more by year’s end. That will make possible student housing on the third floor of the new building.

Some additional gifts were received Oct. 8, according to Janina Graves, the Wesley’s associate director and coordinator of student ministry.

Rea Paul chairs the Wesley board. She particularly thanked Rev. Bartley as the project’s visionary.

She said, “His love of young adults has pushed us to IMAGINE,” the campaign’s theme.

Bartley said he often is asked: What does the Wesley Foundation do?

That’s “both the easiest question to answer and, more profound, to contemplate always,” he said. “As a pastor in a university setting, the commitment is to befriend, uphold, and challenge young adults. The new facility has been designed around Wesley Foundation core commitments, including hospitality and shared community.”

Most important, the young woman said, the Wesley’s ministry to her has “led me to a faith so real” that she can introduce others to God.

She admitted “mixed feelings” about demolishing the original building, but “there will soon be a new set of doors for students to walk through.”

Boards call voters’ attention to state questions

Leaders of two Oklahoma Conference boards have shared their members’ concerns about state questions that will be on the ballot.

The Camps Board of Directors and the Environmental Coalition of the Board of Church and Society are highlighting three proposals:

• No. 777, about farming and ranching; and

• Nos. 780 and 781, the Oklahoma Smart Justice Reform Act and a related funding measure.

The Camps Board approved the following statement about State Question 777:

“Many of you may recall the concerns of the camping program regarding the building of hog farms near Canyon Camp in the late 1990s. 30,000-plus hogs were to be placed near Canyon Camp with two waste ponds the size of football fields used to hold the waste from the pigs and then sprayed onto nitrogen feeding plants. This had the potential of contaminating the camp’s well water supply, costing a large amount of money to rectify, or closing the camp. The operation would most certainly have contaminated the air quality and been almost impossible to get out of the canyon.

Because of the unified effort of our connectional church in contacting and writing letters to our state legislators, we were able to stop the building of this facility. The concerns were not against hog farms as a whole, just placement of those farms.

“SQ 777 seems to give out-of-state farming operations free reign to come into Oklahoma and start facilities. This has the potential to once again allow the hog farms and other operations to build near Canyon Camp, other camps, and recreational facilities. Please take this into consideration when you go to the polling place to cast your vote on SQ 777 on November 8.”

Mark Davies said the Environmental Coalition stated its opposition to State Question 777 at a recent meeting of the Board of Church and Society, and the board accepted the report. Rev. Dr. Davies chairs the board.

The connectional vision that helps define United Methodism also is seen when discussing State Questions 780 and 781.

Davies said they are favored for passage by the Oklahoma Conference of Churches (OCC), in which The United Methodist Church holds membership. OCC also advocates through the Oklahoma Coalition for Criminal Justice Reform.

Davies himself also is a member of OCC’s IMPACT and environmental committees. Retired United Methodist clergyman Stan Basler chairs IMPACT, according to the OCC website.

Find information about The United Methodist Church’s positions on environmental and criminal justice, and other social justice issues, in the Social Principles section of the Church’s Book of Discipline.

— Holly McCray
Dean from Upper Room will lecture at Ada

“Walking With Jesus in the Wesleyan Spirit” is theme of the Muntz-Myers Lecture Series on Nov. 13 and 14 at Ada-First UMC.

Guest lecturer will be Tom Albin, dean of the Upper Room Chapel in Nashville, Tenn., and an elder in the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference’s superintendent. Alumnus Brent Greenwood performed the honoring song. Rev. Dr. Wilson, wearing a white shirt, is near center at front. OCU senior Maryann Guolandle, Miss Indian OCU 2016-17 and a history major, stands in front of the garden’s Chickasaw Warrior statue, designed by Seminole artist Enoch Kelly Haney, also a former state legislator. OCU is his alma mater, too.

CEREMONY AT OCU — Oklahoma City University President Robert Henry, second from left, led a program to recognize Indigenous Peoples Day on Oct. 10 in the Chickasaw Garden on campus. The blessing was given by David Wilson, an OCU alumnus and trustee and the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference’s superintendent. Alumnus Brent Greenwood performed the honoring song. Rev. Dr. Wilson, wearing a white shirt, is near center at front. OCU senior Maryann Guollandle, Miss Indian OCU 2016-17 and a history major, stands in front of the garden’s Chickasaw Warrior statue, designed by Seminole artist Enoch Kelly Haney, also a former state legislator. OCU is his alma mater, too.

Dean from Upper Room will lecture at Ada

BY JEREMY STEELE
UNITED METHODIST COMMUNICATIONS

The story of The United Methodist Church is filled with deeply spiritual people like John Wesley, people who devoted their lives to the cause of Christ. We stand upon their lives and work; they continue to challenge us. Here are the stories of six Methodists that you can use in your lessons to help others hear the voice of God.

1. **Fannie Crosby**
   - Though her name may not be familiar to modern worshippers, her words are among the most well-known in all Christianity. Fannie Crosby penned over 9,000 hymns. While her songs like “Blessed Assurance” became popular among many denominations, Crosby was a lifelong Methodist.

   At the same time she was sharing her incredible musical gifts, Crosby lived a life characterized by hope and generosity. She followed Wesley’s example regarding possessions, constantly giving away all but what was required for her survival.

   Blinded by a treatment prescribed by a man pretending to be a doctor, Crosby wrote that her blindness allowed her to enjoy blessings that other people could not.

2. **John Fletcher**
   - When faced with the question of who would lead the Methodist movement after his death, Wesley had one person in mind: John Fletcher. Though Fletcher died before Wesley, his considerable skill as a theologian helped craft the formidable works that included Wesley’s world-shaping ideals.

   He was a prolific writer. His teaching: When God does something for us, we must not shy away from praising God and sharing what God has done.

3. **Sojourner Truth**
   - Born Isabella Baumfree, she grew up as a slave in New York. She escaped in 1862. A courageous and formidable woman, she took a slave owner in Alabama to court to get her son out of slavery. She succeeded and blazed a trail as the first black woman to win a case against a white man.

   Her fierce obedience to God’s call continues to be an example. She became a Methodist in 1843 and, on June 1 of that year, heard a clear call from God to become a traveling preacher speaking out against slavery. With that came a new name from God — Sojourner Truth. It named her work of traveling and speaking the truth.

4. **Richard Allen**
   - A part of American Methodism from its earliest days, Richard Allen witnessed the establishment of the Methodist Episcopal Church and saw Francis Asbury become a bishop during the historic Christmas Conference of 1784.

   The first black Methodist minister, Allen was a powerful preacher and incredible movement builder. Restricted in his early years to preaching only at early morning services, Allen built congregations wherever he served. After being continually held back, Allen left his appointment and established his own congregation. As that congregation grew, he was ordained by Asbury. Eventually he left the Methodist Episcopal Church and established the first fully independent black denomination in the United States. This year, the African Methodist Episcopal Church is celebrating its bicentennial.

5. **Selina, Countess of Huntingdon**
   - Lady Huntingdon became part of the Methodist movement in one of its earliest expressions: the Fetter Lane Society.

   Though much is written about the effect of the Methodist movement on the lower classes in England, her passion was bringing the fire of revival to England’s elite.

   In service of that goal, she appointed George Whitfield as her personal chaplain. She had him preach at dinners attended by the most influential members of British society. She also used her considerable wealth to build 64 chapels and aid Methodist efforts to serve the poor. After the Methodists were expelled from Oxford, she established a minister’s training college to educate preachers.

6. **Clementine and William Butler**
   - Though they married later in life, after he was twice widowed, the Butlers played a crucial role in planting Methodism in two countries. In India, in the aftermath of the Indian Revolution of 1857, the Butlers began orphanages and established the India Missionary Conference.

   Returning to the United States, Clementine encouraged support for single women missionaries. That developed into the Women’s Foreign Mission Society, a forerunner of today’s United Methodist Women.

   Later in Mexico, the Butlers established a printing press, school, orphanage, and several churches. Their lives orbited around serving the hurting and poor.

2017 Oklahoma Conference Calendars

Order your Conference Calendars online now at www.okumc.org

- The calendar is a helpful tool in local church planning. (It includes important Oklahoma United Methodist dates, the lectionary, and liturgical colors for the year)

- Cost is $10 each.
It’s a merry social media Christmas with task force’s plan

BY CHRIS BUSKIRK

For this Christmas season, the Conference Evangelism Task Force is shifting its emphasis toward making the most of social media.

We want to help people within your own church share information about Christmas services with their personal networks of “friends.”

Invitations are far more effective if they come from someone with a relational connection already in place. There are so many people with whom God longs for us to SHARE THE JOY.

With this approach, we anticipate more effective invitations, significant cost savings, and helping our local churches experiment with social media as a tool that could be used effectively at any time.

Christmas, among all the seasons of the year — and especially Christmas Eve — is when the hard heart of society most softens to the appeal of church.

During Christmas, 61 percent of Americans will attend at least one service. Only 18 percent of people regularly attend church weekly.

• A total of 39 percent of Americans don’t attend church — but 57 percent of those say they would if only they were invited! (Sheila Leith, Churchsource.com)

Here’s what your Evangelism Task Force will provide for your use this holiday season.

At no charge, we will make engaging video content available to SHARE.

Video resources that are being created for the SHARE THE JOY campaign will be available on the Conference YouTube channel “OkumcCommunications.” Look for the SHARE THE JOY playlist.

You can add the particulars of the service(s) you want to promote as you make it available to your people from your church’s Facebook page or other social media platforms.

SHARE THE JOY is specific to social media. It will not include other types of public advertising. The campaign will not require use of a find-a-church-near-you website or signing up with a marketing firm.

Initially, the Evangelism Task Force will email your pastor a promotional video to share during worship in late November, to introduce SHARE THE JOY to your congregation and promote their involvement.

Start planning your Christmas ministry! Be creative about how you will draw guests and how you will give them reasons to return as a part of the experience.

Christmas seems to magnify people’s hurts when they are having difficulties as well as their hopes when life is going well. It is a great time for the dynamic message of the gospel of Christ! SHARE THE JOY!

(Task force member Chris Buskirk is pastor at Abiding Harvest UMC in Broken Arrow.)

Tulsans help veterans to find ‘a way home’

BY JESSICA MOFFATT

SENIOR PASTOR, TULSA-FIRST UMC

I attended a church supper club Friday night. There were eight Sunday school class members in a home for a delicious meal. A Vietnam veteran was at our table. He described what it was like to serve and what it was like to come home.

“After I got home from Vietnam, I drank myself to sleep every night for 10 years. I did it so that I wouldn’t dream. In my dreams I was always back in the war. I couldn’t stand it.”

That was quite a while ago. He no longer drinks like that.

“I have stuffed it down,” he said. “It is a rough way to live, but it is the only way I know how to live. I can’t get a job. I can’t keep an apartment. It was right for me to serve — but I will never be the same.”

He said that being homeless is his way of life now. He has had no contact with his family members for years.

I have been thinking about his family. I am sure they wonder about him and would like to know if he is all right.

21 partnerships

I was recently invited to give the invocation for the large Rotary Club that meets in (First Church’s) Thomas Hall each Tuesday. When I saw Jeff Jaynes on the speaker’s platform, I assumed his topic would be Restore Hope Ministries. (Rev. Jaynes is director of that United Methodist-related agency in Tulsa.)

I was wrong. He was there to speak about a Tulsa initiative called “A Way Home.” It is the collaboration of 21 agencies working to end homelessness for veterans. Jeff is the chair of the committee.

In the last 12 months this initiative has brought over 400 homeless veterans into permanent housing. They are even building new housing just for homeless veterans. Many newly housed veterans have received much-needed help and are holding down jobs.

I was so thankful to hear there are people in Tulsa who are taking action to help the men and women who served our country. There is quite a cost to this freedom of ours and our veterans deserve all we can give.

(Employment)

Organist and Pianist: OKC-Wesley.

Part-time. Contact Marla Lobo at marla.lobo@yahoo.com for job details.

Two positions: Youth Director (full- or part-time) and Children & Family Ministry Director (part-time): Fairview-First UMC.

Resumes to First United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 457, Fairview, OK 73737-0457 or fairviewumc@sbcglobal.net

Oklahoma Conference Task Force on Evangelism DESIGN BY PRISCILLA HUBER OF ABIDING HARVEST UMC

...fullest.

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We now have new floor plans for Independent Living...call and schedule a tour

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Reduce your taxes with an IRA gift

A charitable IRA rollover (qualified charitable distribution) makes sense this year! If you are like many people, with the new tax law, you could be paying higher taxes in 2016. By transferring some of your IRA required distribution to your church or other Methodist ministries, you can lower your taxable income. With lower taxable income, you could reduce your income and capital gains taxes.

A SIMPLE WAY TO GIVE
In December 2015, Congress made the charitable IRA rollover permanent. If you are age 70 1/2 or older, you can make a charitable gift of up to $100,000 from your IRA. Your gift will quality for your required minimum distribution, and you will not have to pay federal income on the amount given from your IRA to a charitable organization.

To make an IRA rollover gift, simply contact your custodian and request that an amount be transferred to the Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation. Then contact us and tell us how you want your gift to be used. We will write the tax letter required by the IRS for your 2016 tax file.

NAMING A BENEFICIARY
If you are not ready to make a current gift from your IRA, consider naming your church or other United Methodist ministries as a beneficiary. A gift of part or all of your IRA permits you to make full use of your funds during your lifetime. Your favorite United Methodist ministry will benefit in the future from the remainder. Your plan custodian can provide you with a form to designate the ministry or ministries as the beneficiary of your IRA. Many use the Oklahoma United Foundation as the beneficiary and, through an agreement with us, you indicate the ministry or ministries you want your gift to support.

The Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation can assist you in making a gift of your IRA and accomplishing your goal. Please contact David Battles, CPA, at 800-259-6863 or dbattles@okumf.org.

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St. Luke’s Edmond:
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School. Ground was broken about a year ago for the $13 million building project on acreage at 900 N. Sooner Road, just west of Interstate 35 and south of Danforth Road.

The growing congregation bade goodbye to its middle school home on Oct. 2.

The new facility’s design includes elements that connect it to St. Luke’s Downtown in Oklahoma City. For example: black marble insets along the sanctuary walls and entry landscaping that forms the church logo, a three-cornered symbol called a triquetra.

The campus also houses St. Luke’s fourth children’s daycare center in greater Oklahoma City.

The complex includes a large indoor playground with a climbing wall and ceiling lights that move and change color, an interactive game projection system, and a 650-gallon aquarium.

In a news story published in The Oklahoman on Oct. 15, Long said that St. Luke’s Edmond “has mostly drawn people who weren’t attending church anywhere and others who have recently moved to the metro suburb.”

Twice on Sunday mornings, worshipers will hear Long’s sermons via broadcast from St. Luke’s Downtown.

Josh Attaway is campus pastor at St. Luke’s Edmond. “It’s about offering a place to enrich lives, become better parents and better people — the people God created us to be. How we’re able to use a building to bless lives — that’s what it’s all about for us.”