Worshippers keep rolling in for Blessing of Wheels

By Chris Schutz

Wheels are a good way to get people to church — and not just car wheels, the pastor of Wayne United Methodist Church has learned.

For the third year, Bo Ireland and his congregation invited people to come to the century-old country church to have their wheels blessed — any kind of wheels.

The April 16 ceremony was similar to blessing services for motorcycles, said Rev. Ireland, a biker himself.

Ireland was “looking for different outreach events” to promote the church in the Wayne community. He went online to research blessings that are used for motorcycles and adapted them for other vehicles.

“I wanted to make it very inclusive. Anything with wheels could come,” said the pastor, who is halfway through a four-year degree program at Saint Paul School of Theology at Oklahoma City University.

A variety of vehicles have been presented for him to bless. Among the more unusual: wheelchairs, roller skates, a lawn mower, and an excavator that was being used to tear down a building next door.

Wayne UMC has gained some new members who brought their wheels to be blessed and then came back to church.

“It’s a big draw for people, a good way to invite people into the presence of God,” Ireland said.

Someone brought a small scooter for special attention one year. Ireland quoted its owner, “This one needs to be blessed. It hurts lots of people.”

Outside at this year’s program, people circled up and joined hands as the pastor prayed over an Indian motorcycle owned by Russ Tresner of Norman. Ireland prayed for “safety and protection. Stay on the straight and narrow, and stay out of the ditches.”

Also in biker tradition, he handed out custom patches commemorating the Wayne United Methodist Church Third Annual Blessing of the Wheels. The patch depicts a rider kneeling at a cross beside his parked motorcycle.

Wayne UMC made the event bigger with music performed by Once-Lost Minstrels of Norman, door prizes, and a chili lunch.

People have attended from other United Methodist churches in the area, Ireland said, including Trinity UMC at Purcell, Lexington, and Maysville.
Gibson credits parents for modeling life of faith

By Connie Gibson

I grew up in First UMC, in Bixby, the church where my mother also grew up. I was baptized there as an infant, and was nurtured, supported, and shaped by that family of faith throughout my childhood and as a youth.

While my parents didn’t talk a lot about their faith in God, they lived out that faith through their quiet, behind-the-scenes service and care for others. Being at church and being involved in church was a regular part of our life.

Gradually my understanding grew of how God was at work in my life as well as my personal faith and trust in God, and during a youth revival at the church, I publicly professed my faith in Christ. I then became more personally involved in the youth group and in our Sunday evening worship services.

All of this has provided a solid foundation for my spiritual journey throughout my life.

After graduating from high school, marrying my high school sweetheart, Gary, obtaining an accounting degree from Oklahoma State University, beginning a career in accounting/finance/information systems at an oil and gas company, and starting our family, Gary and I returned to my home church in Bixby.

My trust and faith in God continued to grow, with the encouragement of a powerful prayer warrior/Sunday School teacher and through close Christian relationships developed in Sunday School and Bible studies. The faithful proclamation of God’s Word and spiritual leadership of loving pastors, a mission trip to Russia, the Walk to Emmaus, and a faithful prayer partner provided a foundation for a deeper love of God to grow in me, along with a desire to be involved even more in ministry and in the church.

When the oil company for which I worked decided to relocate to another state, I knew my family and I were not supposed to move. I volunteered for more ministry at our church. I served as volunteer staff, coordinating ministry teams and assisting in long-term building plans.

During that time I clearly felt God’s call to “help build my church” — not to build physical facilities, but to be in full-time ministry to grow and strengthen God’s church and God’s kingdom.

I enrolled at Phillips Theological Seminary in Tulsa, and as I was preaching my very first sermon in my first preaching class, God’s call was confirmed upon my life, to pursue full-time ministry as an ordained elder in The United Methodist Church.

The people with whom I have had the privilege of serving in ministry have helped my faith and love of God continue to take shape, at Tulsa-Harrison Memorial, Tulsa-Rose Hill, Trinity UMC in Muldrow/Roland, and, for the past seven years, at OKC-Southern Hills.

A faithful, loving God has certainly been at work, step by step, in my journey of faith. I was surprised and humbled when Bishop Hayes provided the wonderful opportunity to serve in ministry with the people of the churches in the Wichitas District. I am excited about moving forward together with them in helping build/grow God’s Kingdom for the glory of God.

School of Religion honors Mary Hughes-Gaudreau

At a dinner on April 23, Mary Hughes-Gaudreau received the distinguished alumna award from the Wimberly School of Religion at Oklahoma City University. The event was part of OCU’s All Alumni Weekend celebration.

Rev. Hughes-Gaudreau, B.A., Class of ’81, serves as director of emotional and spiritual care for the Oklahoma Conference of Churches, an interfaith group. She is responsible for OCC’s disaster, spiritual, and emotional care ministries.

She facilitates OCC’s training and credentialing of the spiritual care responders who are actively engaged in addressing the long-term spiritual and emotional needs of people affected by Oklahoma’s 2013 spring storms.

Hughes-Gaudreau, a native of Oklahoma, is an ordained United Methodist deacon and licensed professional counselor. She first entered disaster response work following the 1995 Oklahoma City Murrah Building bombing.

Since then, she has provided direct training, response, and consultation in more than 20 states after disasters. Hughes-Gaudreau served as a national consultant for UMCOR (the United Methodist Committee on Relief), 2005-2013, and was the designer of UMCOR’s national spiritual and emotional “Care Team” program.

For the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, she is past chairperson of the Emotional and Spiritual Care Committee. She helped facilitate the development and ratification of the National VOAD Spiritual Care “Points of Consensus” and currently chairs the National VOAD Disaster Spiritual Care Guidelines writing group. She also served on the writing team for “Light Our Way: A Guide for Spiritual Care in Times of Disaster,” a resource for volunteers, first responders, and disaster response planners.

Sharon Betsworth, director of OCU’s Wimberly School of Religion, praised the honoree. “Rev. Mary Hughes-Gaudreau exemplifies the kind of servant leader that we seek to develop at Oklahoma City University. She serves all people, meeting them in the place of their deepest need. Her ministry and leadership are crucial in our community and country today.”

Honored by other schools within the university that evening were broadcast journalist Lola Hall Gadd, B.A. ’51; Justin Briggs, M.B.A., ’10, vice president of business development and operations at Aceele BioPharma; Jody Arbuckle-Ulrich, B.S. ’81, director of the Convention and Cultural Services Department for the City of Sacramento; musical conductor Don Jaeger, B.A. ’58, of the Interlochen Arts Academy; Nathan Peck, B.P.A. ’97, stage and screen actor; and registered nurse Wendy Beson, B.S. ’98, the clinical nurse educator at the Muscular Dystrophy Association/ALS Neuromuscular Center at Integris Southwest Medical Center in Oklahoma City.
“The evidence of Christ has been clearly verified in your lives.” (1 Corinthians 1:6, The Message)

Part 2

BY BISHOP ROBERT HAYES JR.

As I think about the 10,000 experiences of our time together, memories surface that will last always for me. This 12-year journey is filled to the brim with treasured moments that will require my careful sorting and sifting, appreciating each one by one. So at the top of my must-do list in retirement is to set aside days when I find quiet places — to reflect, laugh out loud, shed a tear or two, and thank God for allowing me to be a part of your lives.

In my previous message to you, I especially celebrated the presence of the children and youths who have made such a profound difference in my life here. This time, I feel compelled to share a couple of particular recollections, quietly appreciated by me; few people know about them. But they cause me joy, and I am thankful.

First is the indelible imprint made on me by my visitation to each church. I remember them all! And in remembering, I realize that it was in these holy places that I experienced the presence of God!

The second recollection I share today has to do with the people in our churches who have expressed to me their appreciation for the Contact articles I’ve written over the years. Invariably I meet people in every district and corner of Oklahoma who tell me how much they enjoy my columns.

What you don’t know is how much I’ve enjoyed writing them for you.

Some people have told me that they cut out each one and save it. Some have said they send my articles to a loved one or friend, and others have said they use what I write in Sunday School or some other setting.

I truly am honored that you appreciate the thoughts I’ve heaped upon you — but also there is another aspect I’ve never shared until now.

Let me explain.

All of us are on a journey. We are not where we once were in life, nor have we arrived at where God wants us to be. On each person’s journey, unexpected things will happen. Some experiences will be joyful; others will test you and your faith.

But there is a common thread woven through all our journeys: we need strength.

Those many years ago when I sat down to pen my first Contact article, I prayed about what I should call it. After praying, I knew: Strength is what we need! All of us! “Strength for the Journey”!

You might think that was the genesis for these messages from me to you.

But you would be wrong.

Looking back, I realize God was preparing me for this long before I knew it. In my last local-church appointment, at Riverside United Methodist Church, Houston, Texas, I wanted to find a way to speak to the sick and homebound of that congregation. This was in the time before the internet; TV broadcasting wasn’t affordable for us. The church had an aging membership.

I chose to put to use whatever writing skills I had to produce mini-sermons, under the column title “As I See It.” The articles I crafted were biblically based and sought to inspire members who could not attend services in person.

Each Monday I produced a column before 3 o’clock in the afternoon, and someone with the United Methodist Reporter/News Service picked up my printed pages at a designated place. My mother Dorothy was my editor and proofreader. I was late many times getting my article to the pick-up location.

But during those years I began to fall in love with the act of writing about the Word. When I arrived in Oklahoma 10 years later, my love for reaching out that way remained intact.

What you have done for me, Oklahoma, is given me strength for my journey! I pray that in some small way something I’ve said in these articles has lifted you, inspired you, and given you strength for whatever life has in store for you.

These two examples are among all the recollections that I take with me into retirement. But the thanksgiving in my heart for you and for what you’ve done for me and Dee cannot be put into words. I love each and every one of you!

**OBU receives grants for student mission trips**

Oklahoma City University has been awarded two Woodworth Estate grants for mission-related trips.

OBU will receive a $6,000 grant to assist with an international mission trip to Belize planned for January. Another $10,000 grant will be applied toward spring break and summer mission trips next year.

“These funds will greatly assist in keeping costs low for our students who want to participate in the mission endeavors,” said Charles Neff, vice president for University Church Relations.

The Woodworth endowment is managed by the Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation.

**Appointment**

Jessica Tanner, new, to Epworth Villa chaplain, effective May 15.

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**Saying thanks**

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**Save the date**

- **Mission u**
  
  Oklahoma City University
  
  July 22-24 and 24-25
  
  Spiritual growth study: Human Sexuality and the Bible
  
  Geographic study:
  
  Latin America: People and Faith
  
  Special interest/children/youth study: Climate Justice
  
  Dean: Jo Ellen Reed
  
  jreed@sunnylaneumc.org

- **Young Adult Retreat**
  
  (for ages 18-35)
  
  Egan Camp
  
  July 22-24
  
  https://okumc-reg.brtapp.com/5202/YoungAdult

- **Retired clergy fall retreat**
  
  Canyon Camp
  
  Oct. 10-12
  
  Keynote speaker: Tex Sample

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- Shawnee: 405-693-7795
- Stillwater: 405-312-6640
- Tulsa Metro: 918-794-3876
- Weatherford: 918-308-7715
- Toll Free: 866-978-2956

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**There is a child waiting for you, will you help?**

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OKC Metro 405-463-6626

Ponca City 405-802-7697

Ponca City 2 405-902-9687

Shawnee 405-693-7795

Stillwater 405-312-6640

Tulsa Metro 918-794-3876

Weatherford 918-308-7715

Toll Free 866-978-2956

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**Strength for the journey: A collection of ideas and thoughts from our bishop**

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The ministry careers of 20 retiring clergy will be celebrated at 2 p.m. Tuesday, May 31, in OCU’s Freede Center during the 2016 Annual Conference. Each retiree and spouse will be invited on stage with Bishop Hayes, to receive recognition from the Boards of Laity and of Ordained Ministry. Service for some in this group began in 1964, according to the Service Records in the Journal.

**AC 2016 CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

worship design team. She is Muscogee (Creek) and an associate pastor at Norman-Fairlin UMC.

The work by the seven-member team included meeting at the unfinished Native American museum at the crossroads of Interstates 35 and 44 in Oklahoma City.

“I began to gather a sense that things get started and never finished,” Rev. O’Neal said, and she grieved that.

In 2012, a Church resolution called all United Methodists to engage in acts of repentance and reconciliation with indigenous people, with accountability assigned to the bishops.

Bishop Robert Hayes Jr. of the Oklahoma Area activated a three-year project among the Ainu of Alaska, Japan, and Siberia, Russia.

He has taught in Ghana and Nigeria and twice at the Pontifical Biblical Institute at the Vatican. He was a preacher for the joint General Conference/General Assembly of the UCC and DOC denominations.

He was Preacher of the Year for Phillips Theological Seminary.

In UM leadership he has directed the Native People’s Communication Office (UMCom) and also Connectional Ministries for the Alaska Missionary Conference. He is author of nine books.

Buckley said he likes pot roast and mashed potatoes. Sounds to me like a yummy story topic! — Holly McCray

**Changeover almost complete in clergy health plan**

Oklahoma’s proposed 2017 budget would complete a four-year transition to zero for the Active-Clergy Health Benefits Fund Apportionment.

Restated, next year the Health Apportionment that churches pay will cover only retired clergy benefits, if approved by the Annual Conference.

That does not mean the Conference is abandoning its long-time commitment to care for its active clergy and their families.

It does mean a smaller Apportionment and a direct-billing process for churches with full-time active clergy.

The shift will give clarity about the actual costs of medical care today, said Treasurer Brian Bakeman.

As proposed, a church with a full-time active clergy will be billed directly for 60 percent of that person’s health insurance premium, and the clergy person will pay 40 percent.

Additionally, the Conference Health Benefits Plan will expand to five insurance choices for participants: three PPO plans and two high-deductible plans. And the pharmacy vendor will change from Max Care to Express Scripts.

For years, the Oklahoma Conference has offered a self-funded medical plan for full-time clergy, church staff, and their dependents. Since it began, the plan has been funded by both the churches and the plan participants. Accountability is assigned to the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

As medical care costs have climbed, Conference leaders have acted to address the burden on churches and participants, noted Stephen Mitchell, director of Benefits/Personnel. For example, significant savings were achieved in 2011 by moving claims administration to Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oklahoma.

The rates for clergy always have been subsidized by the churches, Mitchell said. Prior to 2014:

- All churches paid into a Health Benefits Fund Apportionment. That amount covered one-half the cost of the premiums for active clergy and their families as well as the cost for retired clergy.
- Active clergy paid one-half of the premium cost.

The Pre-Conference Workbook has the reports and recommendations from the Pension and Health Benefits Board and CFA, and information will be in the displays area at the meeting. — Holly McCray

**Annual Conference updates**

1. Live streaming begins at 3 p.m. Memorial Day. Watch worship services at St. Luke’s, business sessions at OCU, and the Service of Celebration at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum.

2. Find book sales and displays in new locations: Kramer School of Nursing East and West buildings on the OCU campus. While you browse, you can track what’s happening live on wall screens.

3. Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation will have tote bags at its booth in Kramer-East. And sign up for the Yeti cooler giveaway.


5. Offering will help establish an endowed scholarship, honoring Robert and Dee Hayes, at Africa University.
All creatures great and small

Animals and people get nurtured at Bartlesville

BY SUSAN ALBERT

I t’s not every day you see a group of people walking two donkeys in Bartlesville, but catch them on Thursdays and that’s exactly what you’ll see.

Tari Carbaugh’s animal ministry, which began a couple of years ago, includes three horses, two donkeys, a goat, a lamb, a llama, and a micro pig. They take walks on the property of Bartlesville-First United Methodist Church, where Rev. Carbaugh is associate pastor, or in the adjacent neighborhood. Anyone is invited to join them; the more people they have, the more animals can come.

The ministry is a boon to area children and adults, from those needing a furry shoulder to lean on to those grieving or just to experience joy. “They are not just for our church; they are for the whole community,” Carbaugh said.

The furry friends have gone to Tractor Supply, Blessing the Animals events, and to East Cross United Methodist Church for Vacation Bible School. The animals have starred in First Church’s fall pumpkin patch, as well as birthday parties, pony rides, and a donkey block party. And plenty of people and organizations come to them: homeschool field trips, fundraisers, daycare centers, and Grand Lake Mental Health Center.

Carbaugh, who grew up around horses, gave hers up when she moved into a parsonage. Upon hearing that Buddy the horse needed a home, she went to the church leadership to plead her case about the benefits of being around and taking care of animals.

“I said, ‘This can be a ministry.’ And they thought I was off my rocker. But now they are seeing the great things that the animals are doing.”

First Church owns 64 acres of property, which also is home to a community vegetable garden. Carbaugh leased land from the church and started the nonprofit TLC Animal Ministry.

Then she got a call from Bob Burnett, who was closing a therapeutic horse facility. He donated two horses to her ministry — Sam and Beamer.

Soon after, in the barnyard doing chores, Carbaugh noticed a girl hanging out in the yard. She knew the girl had recently lost her father and really didn’t like people to touch her.

“Which is your favorite horse?” Carbaugh asked her.

The girl pointed to Sam.

“That’s interesting because Sam wants to be there, and he wants you to give him treats, but he’s really one of the only horses I know that isn’t crazy about being petted. And you and Sam have that in common.”

Carbaugh went about her chores, then saw Sam leaning his head over the fence and the child leaning forward against Sam’s head.

“And ministry was happening — this little girl was being healed by this horse. … Ministry happens with these horses.”

The next animal that came was Sam the Lamb, who had been rejected by his mother. Carbaugh and church members bottle-fed him.

Sam the Lamb comforted church members who were grieving at the loss of their spousess. In another instance, a boy with behavioral issues showed improvement after he helped take care of Sam.

Kids get a chance to learn about the barnyard animals at summer camps hosted by the church.

Carbaugh educates the children about them. For example, goats and lambs only have top teeth, and horses have a “frog” under each hoof that pumps blood upward with each step.

Safety is a priority, she said. “I train other people to be attentive to an animal’s body language, such as their tails and ears. Is the pig making a happy sound or a sound like she wants you to leave her alone?”

The ministry also benefits the animals.

When the gray miniature donkey Jethro came, no one could get within 10 feet of him, Carbaugh said. “But his confidence has been boosted and the fear has gone away, and his life is happier because of his place here and his work here in the ministry.”

Buddy the horse was once terrified to go on outings. Now, he gives pony rides and attends the Christmas parade.

“We teach them they are safe; we are responsible leaders for them. So the ministry is both ways,” Carbaugh said.

The menagerie also includes Evenangelie, a female miniature donkey; Dali Llama is shy, but confident and easygoing. When on a lead rope, he will kiss and allow petting. He only spits at Jethro, Carbaugh claimed. Esther, a bottle-fed baby goat, loves the daycare children.

The newest addition is Miss Sarah Piggy, the micro pig. She should grow no bigger than 20 pounds. Carbaugh may have Sarah certified as a therapy animal.

“I love people and animals and ministry. That is what I wanted to give my life to when I signed up to be a pastor,” she said.

(Reprinted with permission, April 3, 2016, Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise)

MARATHON COURSE — OKC-Nichols Hills took the worship services outdoors April 24, supporting the Memorial Marathon runners whose route took them by the church. Children’s Ministry Director Madison Chillies speaks at left, with Student Pastor Matt Patrick at right. Senior Pastor Trevor Smith said some racers waved, lifted hands in prayer, or briefly bowed heads as they passed. He preached on 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 and Hebrews 12:1-2.
Bible survives Davis sanctuary collapse

BY CHRIS SCHUTZ

Stepping carefully across the rubble and broken stained glass left by a destructive storm, a helper emerged with precious cargo and handed it to Sue Harshaw — her Bible.

She had left it on a pew behind the pulpit before the storm hit Davis-First United Methodist Church, where her husband pastors.

The storm the night of April 26 destroyed the sanctuary and caused an estimated $780,000 in damage.

“I didn’t realize I didn’t have my Bible until this morning,” Sue said the next day. “I knew I could never replace it.”

When the book was put back in her hands, “I got really teary-eyed,” she said. It has “notes, everything you put in a Bible.” She’s had it about 25 years.

And now it’s survived two major disasters — a fire and the destruction of the Davis sanctuary.

The Sunday after the storm, the congregation worshipped outside, with a flatbed trailer serving as a stage, Steve Harshaw said. “The wind was a little cool, but it wasn’t bad.”

Structural engineers have determined the fellowship hall and educational wing are safe to use, he said. Going forward, services will be in the fellowship hall until the sanctuary is rebuilt.

Church leaders were told the damage to the sanctuary was caused by 90 mph straight-line winds, Steve said.

They’ve been asked to list all that was lost or destroyed. Steve, who has been pastor at Davis for two years, said, “Making a list of that is going to be very difficult.”

Before the storm, First UMC had been planning a building expansion. That plan is being revised, Steve said. Under consideration, in addition to a new sanctuary, had been adding a children’s area and relocating restrooms and offices.

The pastor estimates restoring the church will take 18 months to two years.

Salvage work begins among the pews April 27 in Davis-First United Methodist Church. The sanctuary roof fell in a wind storm, but some furnishings and books remained intact.

Case managers seek out ‘most fragile’ after disaster

BY CHRIS SCHUTZ

In the chaos that follows a fire, flood, tornado, or other disaster, it’s sometimes difficult to figure out who most needs help and how best to deliver it, said Christy Tate Smith, a disaster response consultant for the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR).

Smith, of Memphis, Tenn., was at the United Methodist Ministry Center in Oklahoma City on May 3-5 to train about a dozen people in case management before the next crisis.

Churches are eager to help when disaster hits, Smith said. Yet she urged caution.

In one instance, a church offered to help a woman who was seen hauling belongings from a damaged house. It turned out the house was her rental property. Volunteers “were helping someone that wanted their business repaired,” Smith said.

Case managers find out about deserving clients in a disaster area, she said. UMCOR’s goal is to make sure “the most fragile are going to be connected” to help.

Workers seek to help them achieve realistic recovery.

UMCOR is not charity, Smith emphasized. “It is empowerment of survivors to take care of their own decisions.”

Drew Shahan came for the training.

He works in the Oklahoma Conference’s Disaster Response Ministry and is based at Moore-First.

He said the job of a case manager involves “a good bit of OJT” (on-the-job training).

Shahan recalled several churches “adopting” an Oklahoma family whose home was badly damaged in a disaster. They gave money for new wallboard and other materials and helped pay for a Thanksgiving dinner.

Case managers are required to respect the privacy of families, so he could not share specifics.

Smith, a United Methodist for 40 years, said she joined UMCOR in 2003. After retiring from journalism, she wasn’t sure what to do, so she prayed, “God, if there’s anything you need me to do …”

When you pray that, she said, a door doesn’t just open. “Sometimes the windows and the doors fly off.” Since then, she’s traveled the country, training people in UMCOR’s highly respected case management processes.

Ex-offender says thanks for grant to Exodus House

BY SUSAN HENRY-CROWE

Earlier this year, I received a wonderful letter from Meagan Gaddis, a 27-year-old woman from Oklahoma City. She was writing to thank the General Board of Church & Society for the Peace with Justice grant supporting Exodus House, part of Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministries (CJAMM) of the Oklahoma Conference.

Exodus House is a temporary residential project for people newly released from prison.

Through the financial and emotional stability offered by Exodus House, Meagan is planning on “moving out on my own two feet.” She works part-time and is a full-time student at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond.

Peace includes offering a place of hospitality, of forgiveness and reconciliation in the community. Welcoming Meagan and her family into a new way of being out of incarceration is one critical way that we are building peace in this world.

As Meagan wrote, “My life is just beginning to grow, and I know that it was the Exodus House that provided such a fertile foundation to nurture that growth.”

Peace with Justice Sunday will be observed May 22 in The United Methodist Church.

Annual conferences keep half of that Special Sunday offering to fund local peace with justice programs. The other half comes to GBCS to help fund U.S. and global work in social action, public-policy education, and advocacy.

(Rev. Dr. Henry-Crowe is chief executive of the General Board of Church & Society, based in Washington, D.C.)
Adair woman recalls a century’s worth of change

Bessie Kinion was born in 1916 and has had a front row seat to some of Adair’s most historic moments.

To many, turning 100 years old is a milestone, but to Kinion it’s just another day. “People keep telling me it’s a big birthday. They sure won’t let me forget how old I am. I keep telling them it’s just another day.”

She was born on May 5, 1916, on a farm 3 miles outside of Adair. “I’ve been on a farm all my life; I wouldn’t know how to act in the city,” she laughed. “When I was growing up I said I’d never marry a farmer cause we had to work too hard and, what do you know, I went and married a farmer. And I’m not a bit sorry of it, either.”

Growing up she went to Lone Elm country school. “It was a mile and a quarter, we walked every day there and back, on a dirt road.”

She said she’s been a member of Adair United Methodist Church at least 100 years. “I’ve been a Methodist all my life. I even went before I was born,” she laughed. “My mother and dad always went to church. You had to be pretty doggone sick to miss church.”

From her farm, she’s seen Adair change completely.

“Oh, Adair? It’s altogether different now. The highway even changed. This was a mud road here to the house; it wasn’t even gravel. Even downtown Adair was gravel. I remember when they were building Highway 69 over here, the dust would just boil up in the air like you wouldn’t believe,” she remembered.

“I remember when they made it double lane. There was a guy standing out in the middle telling you which way to go.”

For some time she worked at Lee’s Grocery Store in Adair and made the trek to and from work in the Model T she and her husband bought after they married.

“I’d drive my car to work and if it was winter I’d have to drain the water out, because there was no such thing as anti-freeze yet. Then before I went back home I’d have to put water back in it,” she said. “You tell people what you had to do back then and they don’t believe you.”

The side of the store was painted white, and silent movies were shown on it. “Now those were the good old days.”

“We didn’t get electricity until 1940. I remember watching them dig the holes by hand to set the poles. The first thing I bought was an iron.’”

— Bessie Kinion

“There then comes the Depression. Everything in the store was cheap, but no one had any money. You could buy six loaves of bread for a quarter, but you didn’t have the quarter,” Kinion said.

“We were all poor but we didn’t realize it because we had our cows, we had homemade butter and cottage cheese. We had a big garden. We’d go out and pick blackberries and make jelly. We sure didn’t go hungry. You did what you had to do to survive.”

She recalled, “Then the dust storms came, just like you see on television. I could put white sheets on the line, and when I’d bring them in there’d be brown in the wrinkles, dust that got on them before they dried.”

The best thing to happen in the past 100 years, Kinion said, is rural electricity. “When we first moved here there was not even electric poles or nothing. We had coal oil lanterns and lamps. We didn’t get electricity until 1940. I remember sitting and watching them dig the holes by hand to set the poles. The first thing I bought was an iron. I was so tired of ironing those jeans and overalls with the ones you put on the cook stove and heat up,” she said.

While Kinion still has those irons as a reminder of another time, she’s glad she doesn’t have to use them anymore.

In her 100 years, she’s spent only one away from Adair.

“My brother moved to Indiana and just thought it was great because it was good farming country. It was in the ’50s when we had such a drought the cows were eating the leaves off the trees because there was no grass. So we thought we’d move to Indiana ... We stayed one year. My husband got sick while we were out there, and I just knew it was because he was lonesome for home,” she said.

She was working in Choateau at the Senior Center when the last passenger train made its final trip through the area. They all went outside to watch it pass, she recalled.

One of her passions has been quilting, which she happily does by hand.

“I wish to goodness I’d kept track of every one I did for people, but I didn’t do it. It would run into the hundreds. People from all over would send me quilt pieces. That was my main hobby,” she said.

And she tried her hand at ceramics, painting and other crafty endeavors. “Well, everybody says I’m artistic, but I learned it. I wanted to learn and I did.”

Kinion has made a point of staying active.

When she turned 90, she decided walking 4 miles a day was a bit much, so she dropped it down to 2.

She was 96 when she decided “putting on my boots and going out to water the garden was for the birds,” and put her gardening days behind her.

Despite her protests that the day is nothing special, a birthday party for her was held May 7 at Adair UMC.

“I tell you what, I used to work with old people. And do you know, not one time did I ever think ’I will be one of those,’” she said. “That never even entered my mind. And, wouldn’t you know, all the time I was getting older one day at a time and I didn’t realize it.”

(Reprinted with permission, The Pryor Times, May 6, 2016)
The Honoring Power of Endowments

Carol wanted to establish an endowment fund to honor her mother who had recently passed away. Her mother had a passion for missions so it was fitting that the endowment would support the work of the church’s mission team.

It would be difficult to find a better way to honor someone than to establish a named endowment fund. Such an endowment fund carries the honoree’s name far into the future as it benefits a worthy cause through annual gifts.

Every time the fund is mentioned, the memory of Carol’s mother will be acknowledged and honored. Grandchildren and great-grandchildren will identify with the endowment and have a sense of what was important to their grandmother or great-grandmother. Perhaps they will be inspired to establish an endowment fund to honor their mother.

The endowment fund bearing her mother’s name will produce a certain amount of income each year to support local and global missions.

Of course an endowment could be established to fund any ministry or program. An endowment fund preserves the principal and provides annual payments to the ministry forever. It is a witness to the foresight and commitment of the person establishing the endowment. An endowment honoring your parents or another person or persons can be established now with current gifts of cash, securities, or real estate, or created later through a bequest or planned gift.

Many establish charitable gift annuities to ultimately fund their named endowment fund. They will receive fixed payments for one or two lives based upon their age. The older you are, the greater the payments. There are also some nice tax benefits. It is really a win-win arrangement. The donor receives benefits for life, and the ministry receives benefits forever.

To learn more about establishing an endowment fund at the Foundation to benefit any ministry in the Oklahoma Conference, please contact David Battles, CPA, at 800-259-6863 or dbattles@okumf.org. Your action today will make a significant difference in the work carried on by future generations.

Ethnic faith family grows

Panhandle church proud of Hispanic outreach

In Guymon on any Sunday at Victory Memorial United Methodist Church, you will find ethnic diversity among the worshippers as well as four diverse services.

Attendance especially is growing in the Spanish-language service. On Easter Sunday, Associate Pastor Tino Espinoza baptized 13 new Christians and, on the following Sunday, three more.

Church members who worship in that service also are showing growth in mission-mindedness, said Gary Holdeman, senior pastor.

The group recently hosted a multicultural luncheon of Mexican, Cuban, and Honduran foods. Victory’s wider congregation supported the mission endeavor, which raised more than $1,500. The funds will be used to reach out to the city’s Hispanic population through events designed to invite and welcome more new people.

Rev. Espinoza and his wife, Mode, encourage the people to take on leadership roles, and finances are incorporated into Victory’s budget.

Spanish-language worship on Sunday begins at 12:30 p.m. Two other services are held at 8:45 and 10:50 a.m. And a growing Ethiopian (Coptic Christian) group also meets at Victory UMC.

More than 50 percent of residents in the Panhandle city are Hispanic, according to Census reporting. In Guymon’s schools, 27 languages are spoken, said Superintendent Doug Melton, also a United Methodist.

“We are proud of the fruitfulness of our Spanish-speaking congregation,” Rev. Holdeman said.