

Methodist Messenger

Prague/Arlington Charge

March, 2016

What do you love?

I don't know that much of the history behind "giving up" something for Lent. I think it has to do with the idea that as we prepare for Easter in the forty days of Lent, we "give up" that which keeps us from a full relationship with God. People choose all sorts of things to give up and I certainly think we should use this time to prepare in an appropriate manner.

Think about a relationship which is important to you. What happens to that relationship when something or someone gets in the way? We recognize this in our earthly relationships; it is not any different in our relationship with God.

Though the statistic is a bit dated, in 2011 a third of divorce filings included the word "Facebook." And more than 80 percent of U.S. divorce attorneys say social networking in divorce proceedings is on the rise, according to the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers. Something to think about.

If our relationship with God is about bringing life, then Lent is a great time for us to turn away from those things which do not bring us life. I always feel a kind of urgency during Lent that I don't feel in most other seasons of the Christian year.

One of the appointed Lenten texts in Year C is Luke 13:6-9. It's the parable of the fig tree whose owner wants it cut down after three unproductive years but whose gardener pleads for just one more year. In that year, he will tend it in a special way, even adding some nutrient-rich soil.

While there are many ways to interpret this text, I often wonder if it's not a parable about our lives. Is Jesus reminding us that the time has come for us to make some changes? Isn't that what Lent is all about?

Are we not spending enough time with our family because work overtakes all our free time? If so, how long can we keep up with that frantic pace? Does your job love you like your family or do you love something which returns no love?

We want to believe we have plenty of time to make changes. We say, "I'll work less when I am promoted" or "I'll take more vacation next year." We think we have all the time we need, so we live with no urgency. Maybe we need a person to help us examine our lives and instead of announcing "Cut it down," we need someone to say "Cut it out!"

In a recent edition of *The Christian Century* (17 Feb. 2016, pg. 18), Emily Heath offers an apt reflection on this text: "We have failed to bear fruit for far too long, choosing instead to focus on those things that will not bring us joy. The good news ... is that there is great freedom in proclaiming ... that (we) no longer have to wait to focus on what matters the most. Now is the time to put first things first – no excuses."

No excuses. Easter is coming. One more year? Maybe we have it and maybe we don't. Let us make the changes we need to make. Until I see you again, grace and peace. *Pastor Derrek*



Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

— Luke 13:6-9



UNITED METHODIST MEN

Information from secretary/treasurer Jerry Opela

The charge UMM, with seven present, met Saturday, February 6. Pres. Jack Vaughan opened the meeting with prayer. Rick Martin presented the devotional, "Capacity," from the book *Ten Life-Charged Words*.

The only order of business was to plan the next potato bar for Sunday, February 21. Randy Eby offered the closing prayer.

The next UMM meeting will be Saturday, March 5, 7 am, in the Prague church Fellowship Hall. All men and boys are invited.



UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Info/Written by Secretary

MM Greene

The Arlington/Prague UMW met February 11 with a dozen-plus members present. The feature of the evening was a visit from Harri Williams, UMW district membership chair, who offered a most interesting book report on *House of Purple Cedar* by Tim Tingle.



Discussion of poster boards, the reading program, funeral dinners, kolache volunteers, and the OK Regional Food Bank filled our business time. Secretary MM Greene reported on a most interesting national project in which our unit is participating:



The above picture is of the two Quilted Finger Labyrinths quilted by Diana Kinzey. They will be submitted on behalf of the Prague/Arlington United Methodist women.

One of United Methodist Women's planned prayer ministry activities for General Conference 2016 is to offer quilted finger prayer labyrinth squares for delegates and guests. The variety of labyrinths made by women from all over the country will extend support, outreach, and blessings to thousands of recipients. Each labyrinth will be tagged with a card identifying that it was "handmade with love and prayer by United Methodist Women."

What a great way to be a part of this important gathering in May.

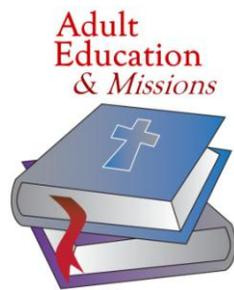


March Worship Calendar

- March 6 Fourth Sunday in Lent
One Great Hour of Sharing
Holy Communion
Mark 5:1-42
"NOTICE: The Ill"
- March 13 Fifth Sunday in Lent
Mark 10:46-52
"NOTICE: Those Asking for Help"
- March 20 Palm Sunday
Luke 19:28-40
"NOTICE: The stones ..."
- March 27 Easter
Luke 24:1-12
"It is what it is!"

Survey of congregation planned by committee

The Adult Education and Missions Committee, under the leadership of chairperson Lynn Wilhite, will offer a survey of the Prague congregation regarding future adult education offerings. The survey will be included in the March 6 bulletin. It can be filled out and returned that morning.



The survey will ask congregants what sorts of classes would be of interest: films, field trips, guest speakers, tours, special meals, book club, game night, movie nights, and many other opportunities. After the survey results are compiled, the committee will make decisions about what will be offered.

In a recent meeting, the committee spent time analyzing the current adult education program, ideas for new classes as well as how we might engage in a more vigorous mission program.

Committee members include Lynn Wilhite, Reese Capron, Diana Kinzey, and Donna Smith. Pastor Derrek is the staff representative.

THANK YOU!!

During our 45th anniversary

worship service celebrating the Prague/ Arlington charge on Sunday, January 24, a special offering was received for the work of Project Transformation. \$900 was donated. The following thank you note was received a few days ago:

Prague and Arlington UMC friends – Thank you! Your community's financial gift to Project Transformation will ensure a summer full of love, laughter and learning for 2 PT campers. Thank you for supporting and praying for this ministry and the awesome kids we serve! Thank you! PT Staff (Sarah and Charlie)



The charge has a very full schedule of events for Holy Week 2016, which will officially begin on Palm Sunday.

- Palm Sunday – March 20 during both services. Due to the dates of Spring Break, the Easter cantata will be held on April 3. Our Palm Sunday services will include a palm procession and a special sermon.
- Community Easter Service – March 20 at 6 p.m. – Prague UMC. Rev. Nathan Howard will bring this year's message and a special offering will be taken to benefit the Prague Ministerial Alliance's benevolence fund. Special music will be a highlight of the service.
- Holy Thursday – March 24 at 6 p.m. in the Prague Fellowship Hall. Pastor Derrek has written a special program which will take place in the fellowship hall around tables. We will dine together over a light supper of sandwiches and soup before remembering again the story of Christ's last supper with his disciples. Communion will be celebrated in a unique way.
- Good Friday – March 25 at 7 p.m. in the Arlington sanctuary. This service of word and song will remind us of what happened on "that hill far away," as the old song says. Our confirmands will assist us as worship leaders.
- Easter Sunrise Service – March 27 at the Prague Golf Course – The time of the service will be announced as the date gets closer. Rev. Capron will offer the sermon, Pastor Derrek will preside over Holy Communion and Steven Hodge will lead the music. There may be some other musical treats!

One Great Hour of Sharing coming up

"Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; ... Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live."

— *Isaiah 55:1a, 3a, NRSV*

In May, October, and December, 2015, three major tornadoes hit Texas. Flooding accompanied the autumn tornadoes, while frigid temperatures followed the winter tornadoes.

This was just one of the places that the United Methodist Committee on Relief provided disaster relief and remained present and committed in long-term rebuilding of the community. UMCOR assists people with physical needs and offers psychological and spiritual support in these overwhelming moments when individuals and families face loss and an unknown future.



UMCOR does more than disaster work in the United States. It serves internationally. Some of UMCOR's mission involves community development, working toward improving water, sanitation and hygiene, sustainable agriculture and food security, and nutrition. Again, UMCOR is committed to long-term relationships, collaborating with communities to overcome issues of poor health and hunger.

For more than 50 years, United Methodist congregations have participated in a special One Great Hour of Sharing offering, laying the foundation for UMCOR's ministry of relief and hope. Donations UMCOR receives through this offering, along with other undesignated gifts made throughout the year, cover costs of doing business.

One Great Hour of Sharing makes it possible for UMCOR to use 100 percent of all other contributions on the projects donors

specify, instead of on administrative or fundraising costs.

On Sunday, March 6 – the fourth Sunday in Lent – we will celebrate One Great Hour of Sharing, walking alongside our sisters and brothers in crisis. Offering envelopes will be inserted in each bulletin. Please plan to give generously to this worthwhile cause.

The Prague Church will host the Prague Ministerial Alliance's annual Community Easter Service on Sunday, March 20th at 6 p.m.



The evening preacher will be Rev. Nathan Howard of Garden Grove Baptist Church.

As always, a special offering will be taken for the Prague Benevolence Fund, which is administered by our church's secretary Terri Tackett. The balance of the fund determines what assistance we can offer, so we are praying for a great offering to assist those in need.

Following the service, we will be hosting a reception in the fellowship hall. Janet Baker is handling the details for the reception. If you can assist, please let her know.

Most importantly, come out and support this important ecumenical event in our community hosted right in our building!



SIGN LANGUAGE

Written by Director

Rev. Sharon Capron

Earlier this month the children's sign class was scheduled to present "How Can I Keep from Singing" at both churches, but due to circumstances beyond our control, that did not happen. But these youngsters can't be kept from signing! We are re-scheduled to sign this Sunday – the day this newsletter comes out! I hope you can be there.



united methodist youth fellowship

UNITED METHODIST YOUTH

Written by Youth Team Leader Tina Thompson

Last month, I reported that we learned about people with disabilities in Quest. We wrapped up that section with hands on experience of what it is like to live with a disability. We had various stations, where Quest participants wrote in Braille, painted with their mouth, performed tasks with impaired vision and their non-dominant hand, used equipment to get around, learned a song in sign language and read a short story as a dyslexic person would see it. The kids really seemed to enjoy these stations! Sara Martin preached that Jesus taught us that all people are children of God, even people with disabilities.

Dr. Charles Neff, Vice President of Church Relations at UCO, taught our last two Quest classes, going through the stories of the old and new testaments chronologically and teaching how they all link together from creation to after the resurrection. He will be visiting Quest again in March teaching about church history!

By the time this newsletter comes out, we will have enjoyed a Seder meal during Quest; a special thanks to the church for providing the side dishes for this meal. I know the kids will really enjoy it and learn about the Passover at the same time!



Pastor Derrek officiated at our youth and children's Seder, using a well-researched script and symbolic foods including the shank of a lamb, an egg, bitter herbs, charoset (apples & nuts), Matzah, and four cups of "wine" (Welch's grape juice.)



The Seder – February 24, 2016
Picture shows a few of the eight tables.

The Valentine's lunch was a great success; thank you to all who supported our youth by purchasing tickets! We raised just over \$1,000 and enjoyed some great fellowship, fantastic food and service by our youth. These funds will be used to send youth to Youth Force, a program where youth repair homes of elderly people who do not have the means to get the repairs done another way!

Upcoming Events:

Winter Jam – Mar. 12th – this is a Christian concert; greatly enjoyed by the youth that have gone previously. We still have some openings for youth to sign up!

Volunteer at OK Regional Food Bank – This is scheduled for March 19th; we will be leaving the church at 12:00 and arrive home at approximately 5:15 pm. We still have spots open; adults are welcome! If you would like to go, please contact Tina Thompson; if you don't catch me at church, you can text me at 405-850-9581 or email at pragueumcyouth@windstream.net.



Rev. Sharon Gage, Brayden Powell, Riley Davis, Lesley Walton, Tina Clark, and Thompson

Four youths and two adults attended a Confirmation Retreat at Egan, February 19-20. More on that event in the next newsletter...



Written by Children's Coordinator Melinda Pruett

Very important dates for your calendar! **VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL** begins on **Sunday, June 19** and yes that is also Father's Day (sorry) and it **ends on Friday, June 24** at the Prague Pool. We are doing "Egypt: Joseph's Journey from Prison to Palace." We will be doing the market place again. It's going to be GREAT fun.

Also we have all the **CAMP DATES:**

- Sonshine camp is for children going into 1st or 2nd grade: July 23 – 24 at Canyon.
- Growin' in Grace camp is for children going into 3rd through 5th grades: June 27 – 29 at Egan.
- T'weens camp is for kids going into 6th grade: June 27 – July 1 at Egan.
- District Camp (also called Camp Spark) is for youth going into 7th grades through graduated seniors: June 27 – July 1 at Canyon.



L to R: Seth Pruett, Jonah Bond, Emily Donaldson, Abbey Warren, Molly Pruett, Ryder Carver, Elizabeth Belase, Madison Belase

photo: Lisa Hefner

On Sunday, February 21, children at the Prague church were invited to come forward for the children's sermon. Pastor Derrek asked them to kneel at the altar. All who wished were invited to come forward and lay their hands on the children, as Pastor Derrek offered a prayer for God's blessing upon them.

CROSSROADS & HEARTLAND CELEBRATION



Wanda, Sara, Madison, Bishop Hayes

Wesley UMC of OKC was packed full on February 21 to celebrate the formation of the Crossroads and Heartland Districts as well as the leadership of Bishop Robert E. Hayes, Jr. The congregation worshiped in prayer, song, Bishop Hayes' sermon, and communion. Pastor Derrek & Madison, Jean Bradburn, Reese & Sharon Capron, Tina Thompson, Diana Kinzey, Sara Martin and Wanda Clark rode the van and ate out together after the reception. A wonderful time for everyone.

DIANA KINZEY QUILTED for COSTA RICAN CHURCH



table runner



quilt for head cook

Diana Kinzey, veteran of two VIM trips to Belize, Costa Rica, displays the table runners she made for the church volunteers who cooked for the team and two pastors and the quilt she made for the head cook.

On both VIMs, Diana developed the biblically-related crafts for the children who came daily. Bilingual native teenagers were invaluable assistants. Additionally, Diana worked construction and wherever needed. She also enjoyed a "ladies night out" with volunteers from the US and from Costa Rica. Thank you, Diana, for representing us all!

MARCH 2016

Tuesday, March 01

6 – 7 pm AA & Al-Anon

Wednesday, March 02

11 am Arlington Ladies Day Out
Quest

3:45-5:30 pm Recreation

3:45-4:15 pm Sign & Music

5:30-7:00 pm Dinner & Class

7:00-7:30 pm Worship

6:30 pm Vocal Choir practice

7:30 pm Bell Choir practice

WA James & Charlene Jezek

Thursday, March 03

BD Doris Huff

BD Stanley Kolar

Friday, March 04

5 – 7 Confirmation Class & dinner

6 – 7 pm AA & Al-Anon

7 – 11pm at *The Flame*

for 6th – 12th graders

Saturday, March 05

7am United Methodist Men

Sunday, March 06

One Great Hour of Sharing

9:15 Arlington worship

9:30 Prague Sunday school

10:30 Arlington Sunday school

10:45 Prague worship

mission **pretzels** after worship

BD Sandra Sue Dukes

Monday, March 07

BD Leah Carver

Tuesday, March 08

6 – 7 pm AA & Al-Anon

Wednesday, March 09

11 am Arlington Ladies Day Out
Quest, vocal & bell choirs

Thursday, March 10

6 pm United Methodist Women

BD Alice Largent

Friday, March 11

6 – 7 pm AA & Al-Anon

7 – 11 pm at *The Flame*

for 6th – 12th graders

BD Kathy Eby

BD Preston Fridrich

Saturday, March 12

WINTER JAM – concert for youth
SPRING AHEAD when you go to
bed! Daylight Savings begins.

Sunday, March 13

9:15 Arlington worship

9:30 Prague Sunday school

10:30 Arlington Sunday school

10:45 Prague worship

WA Aaron & Genise Fridrich

Monday, March 14

SPRING BREAK begins

Tuesday, March 15

6 – 7 pm AA & Al-Anon

Wednesday, March 16

11 am Arlington Ladies Day Out

No QUEST or choir rehearsals.

Thursday, March 17

2 pm Parkland birthday party

Friday, March 18

SPRING BREAK ends

6 – 7 pm AA & Al-Anon

The Flame closed

Saturday, March 19

Noon-5:15 pm Regional Food

Bank volunteer project

BD Dick Wilkerson

BD Linda Poteet

Sunday, March 20

PALM SUNDAY

9:15 Arlington worship

9:30 Prague Sunday school

10:30 Arlington Sunday school

10:45 Prague worship

6 pm Community Easter service

at the Prague UMC

BD Rose Vaughan

Monday, March 21

BD Ola Bon Fouquet

BD Gary Kinslow

Tuesday, March 22

6 – 7 pm AA & Al-Anon

BD Kristen Hamm

Wednesday, March 23

11 am Arlington Ladies Day Out
Quest, vocal & bell choirs

Thursday, March 24

Holy Thursday

6 pm dinner & program at Prague

BD Riley Waltonbaugh

Friday, March 25

Good Friday

5 – 7 Confirmation class & dinner

6 – 7 pm AA & Al-Anon

7 pm service at Arlington

Saturday, March 26

BD Dillon Good

Sunday, March 27

EASTER

7:10 am Sunrise Service

at 15th & Brunson (golf course)

9:15 Arlington worship

9:30 Prague Sunday school

10:30 Arlington Sunday school

10:45 Prague worship

BD Banks Weeks

Monday, March 28

BD Carrie Good

Tuesday, March 29

6 – 7 pm AA & Al-Anon

Wednesday, March 30

11 am Arlington Ladies Day Out
Quest, vocal & bell choirs

Thursday, March 31

BD = birthday

WA = wedding anniversary

Sunday, April 3

10:45 Cantata at Prague

Sunday, April 17

UMW Sunday at both

churches

Kolache baking dates in next
newsletter!