

Methodist Messenger

Prague/Arlington Charge

January, 2016

Reflections at the beginning of another year

There is a story of an explorer who returned to her village after many years traveling. There was great celebration when she arrived home and the villagers put out the bunting and held street parties for this daughter who had come back.

They asked her to tell of the things she had seen and experienced and whenever she did, she found it difficult to explain tigers and lions and giraffes, none of which any of the villagers had ever seen. Comparing them to other more familiar things just left everyone confused.

The explorer decided she would draw a map of the places she had been. The villagers were very excited and seized the map. They framed it, and hung it on the town hall wall. People came to stare at it, photograph it, some even wrote treatises on it. It was almost worshipped but when they turned to the explorer to ask questions she was no longer there, off exploring again somewhere else.

She realized that even though she offered them images and dreams and even a map to go beyond the village boundary, none of them would. They preferred the map to the adventure itself!

As I have been reflecting on the year 2015, our year of ministry has come into focus in new ways for me. Our churches have been on an adventure of epic proportions. Here are some images of our adventure:

I can see our youth hosting the second “Angel Tree Christmas Party” for recipients of the gifts you all purchased. Children of incarcerated parents are often the forgotten victims of crime. The party is a great way for the children to see just how important they are!

I can see the precious teddy bears in the pews on Sunday morning and then I see you carrying them from the sanctuary to those who need to know they are loved during illness, hospitalizations and at times of grief and loss. What a great way to connect our Sunday morning prayers and presence with the incarnational witness of love in the world.

I can see the youth selling baked goods after worship on a Sunday morning knowing the money they raised would be donated to the United Methodist Committee on Relief to help Syrian refugees. They were inspired to do this after studying the issues during Sunday school. United Methodists are a people connecting heart and mind.

I can see the children of our church and community participating in a great new Vacation Bible School format as well as our first ever “Nature Camp.” The bug zoo, fishing excursion, bird watching trip and skins/skulls presentation reminded them of the beauty of God’s creation.

I can see young people at church camp learning about Jesus Christ in the natural setting of beautiful Camp Egan during the last Stillwater District Camp. What a joy it was for me to walk beside them as camp dean one more time!

I can see faithful people of Prague and Arlington coming to church on Sunday morning to worship God in spirit and truth and then going back out into the community to transform it, our state and our world.

But even more importantly, as you reflect on our last year of ministry together and prepare for our next year, I want you to think about this question: Are we willing to take up our crosses and follow Jesus wherever he may lead even if it means losing ourselves in the process or are we just going to study the map?

I don’t know about you, but I’m ready for more adventures and less map gazing. Until I see you again, grace and peace.

Pastor Derrek

January 24 celebration scheduled for Prague/Arlington charge; Bishop Hayes preaching

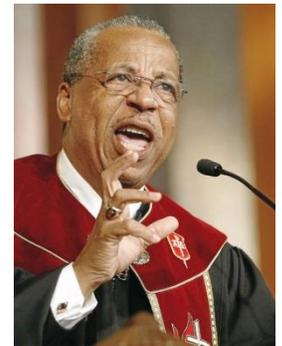
On Sunday evening, January 24, a special worship service will be held in the Prague sanctuary commemorating and celebrating the 45 years of the Prague and Arlington charge. In 1971, Bishop Paul Milhouse appointed Olaf Hoggard to the Prague/Arlington charge.

Our Bishop, Robert E. Hayes, Jr. will be the guest preacher for the night. His sermons are always topical, timely and relevant.

Opportunities to hear Bishop Hayes are numbered as he will be retiring on September 1, 2016. He has been ably and energetically leading our annual conference since arriving in 2004 with his wife, Dee. Known for his passionate preaching and affable personality, he has been a breath of fresh air for Oklahoma United Methodists.

Elizabeth Grace, infant daughter of Revs. Derrek and Rebekah Belase, will also be baptized that evening. Following the service, the Belase family will host a reception in the narthex.

Former pastors have been invited back for this special night of worship. Please share this information with others you might know would like to be a part of this celebration.



Staying Connected!

With winter upon us, we want to remind you that we offer a variety of ways for you to stay connected with what is going on in and around our churches.



We regularly keep our website – www.pragueokumc.com – updated with great information. There you can find an archive of sermons, newsletters, bulletins and announcements as well as a calendar of events. During inclement weather, we also post closing information on the front page.



We have a Facebook group called "Prague United Methodist Church." If you are on Facebook, look up the group and ask to join. The administrator will approve your request and you are in! We post lots of things there, including information about others on Facebook, former pastors, links to articles and other cool stuff! We also post the most up-to-date information about our events. We ask that you "like" and "share" our events on your own pages to increase our social media presence.



Finally, we offer a calling program where your phone number can be called with various announcements and prayer requests. You can put your home and cellular numbers on a number of lists – all church, UMW, UMM, Arlington and QUEST parents just to name a few. If you want to add or update your number, contact Terri Tackett at the church office.

Human Relations Day to be celebrated third Sunday in January

The United Methodist Church celebrates six Sundays with special offerings each year. The first of the offerings is called "Human Relations Day" and is celebrated on the Sunday before Martin Luther King, Jr. day is observed.



It is our day to celebrate every person's potential to do great things. It's our day to empower those living in the margins of society. It's our day to invest in at-risk youth. It's our day to make a difference together.

On Sunday, January 17, 2016, thousands of United Methodist communities will come together to receive a special offering. We will join them!

Financial support shared during this special offering will strengthen our U.S. outreach ministries as well as community-development programs near us. Over the years, on Human Relations Day, we have collected thousands of dollars that went toward making a real difference in communities across the United States.

There will be offering envelopes in the Sunday bulletin to receive your generous offering on this special day.



UNITED METHODIST MEN

Information from Pastor Derrek

The UMM met Saturday, December 5, with nine members present and Pres. Jack Vaughan officiating. Pastor Derrek offered the devotional "Excellence" from the text, *Ten Life-Charged Words*.

The group decided to not host a potato bar until we are no longer worshipping in the Prague Fellowship Hall. [As of Christmas Eve, the Prague church has returned to worship in the sanctuary.]

Updates were given on the fire restoration as well as on the recoveries of both OlaBon Fouquet and Whitey Sands.

The next UMM meeting was set for January 2 [too recent to make this issue's deadline]. Randy Eby will offer the devotional on the 3rd word, "Passion," from the aforementioned text.

The UMM normally meets the first Saturday of every month, 7 am, in the Prague Fellowship Hall, for breakfast, devotional, business, and fellowship. All men and boys are welcome to attend.

ALL-CHARGE CANTATA DECEMBER 20



Under the leadership of Music Director Barbara Holman, members of both churches joined their voices in "I'll be Home for Christmas." Not even the venue could diminish the size of the crowd. Our sound booth staff went all out and many others worked as well to support the choir for a memorable, heart-warming occasion.



UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Written by treasurer Tina Thompson

Thank you from the UMW!

The United Methodist Women say thank you to the entire church for your support of our kolache baking and Harvest Dinner every year! This year, we had some unusual and very special causes. We hosted a church wide baby shower to welcome Elizabeth into our pastoral family – congratulations to Derrek, Rebekah and Madison! We also contributed \$3,000 towards the purchase of a new dishwasher for the fellowship hall. Following is a list of the other causes that were supported in 2015:

Regional Food Bank (Backpack for Kids Program)	\$4,000
Stillwater District Mission	\$1,125
World Thank Offering	\$ 89
Prague Ministerial Alliance	\$ 200
New Beginnings Ministry	\$ 200
Our Little Roses (home for Honduran girls)	\$ 50
Arlington UMC	\$ 100
Cookson Hills (UMW National Mission)	\$ 100
Circle of Care (helping women & children)	\$ 100
Neighborhood Services Organization (housing & health in OK)	\$ 100
Boy's Ranch (Methodist boy's home)	\$ 150
Francis E Willard Ministry Center (OK foster children)	\$ 150
Pearl's Hope (OK women & children's shelter)	\$ 150
Costa Rica Mission Trip	\$ 400

If you are female (you don't have to be an adult) and would like to be a part of this fantastic ministry, just come to our next meeting. We meet on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 6:00. The UMW plans their fundraising activities at these meetings; we also have great fellowship and refreshments. If you want a very special treat, come to our meeting to hear Response Moments delivered by Margaret Parks at almost every meeting!

Prague sanctuary renovations complete

Christmas Eve 2015 was the first worship service in the renovated Prague sanctuary. The congregation had worshipped in the fellowship hall since October 4. A small fire on September 29 disrupted the final quarter of the year. However, after all the work was completed, a wonderful new look has emerged. Here are some of the significant changes and improvements:

- The ceiling was scraped and textured; then the walls and ceiling were painted a light gray to match the new gray carpet installed by Gary Long and crew.
- All fluorescent and incandescent lights were changed to LED's making a much brighter and more energy-efficient sanctuary.
- Three new projectors were purchased and installed.
- All of the pews were steam cleaned and freshened up.
- A new pulpit and communion table were designed and constructed by Mark Pennel of Paden to match the wood work and straight line design of the surrounding walls.
- New green altar paraments and brass candle holders and cross were purchased to replace those destroyed in the fire.



front view of pulpit



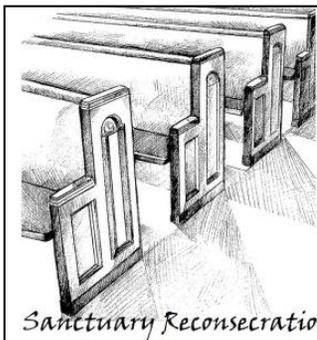
altar



pulpit & altar in place on new carpeting



rear view



Bishop Hayes will officially reconsecrate the sanctuary on Sunday, January 24 at 6 p.m. during our special worship service.



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE 2015

Photo courtesy Lisa Immel Hefner



BELL CHOIR

Information from Director

MM Greene



L to R: Lynn Wilhite, Nancy Opela, Leah Carver, Jean Gibbard, Carrie Good, Barbara Holman, Donna Smith, Diana Kinzey, Rebecca Bond. Director is MM Greene.

The bell choir provided music to a packed crowd, as part of the Children's program and our charge-wide Christmas Dinner celebration on December 6. The bell ringers will be taking a break through January and resuming practices in February.

Thinking about trying out bells? MM is looking for beginners, who want to learn. Possible practice times are Mondays at 5:30, Thursdays at 5:30, and Saturday mornings. Give MM a call and let her know when you want to practice with the beginners' bell choir.



ALL-CHARGE CHRISTMAS FELLOWSHIP DINNER & SERVICE OF THE BELLS

Our first annual all-charge Christmas fellowship dinner and Service of the Bells children's program was a grand success. After morning worship on December 6, parishioners worked together, setting up tables and arranging chairs for the big event. The temporary chancel remained on the south side of Fellowship Hall. The bell choir was arranged against the east wall; the buffet was set on the rolling tables to the west and then removed to the north to make room for the children's

tableau in front of the kitchen. Over ninety folks arrived for dinner at 5:30, and then stayed for a wonderful time of worship with drama and music. Several youth took part in the service, reading scriptures and leading prayers. The bell choir played, the children presented the traditional nativity tableau, and Steven Hodge sang "Hallelujah."

It was a beautiful and heart-warming experience for the first Sunday of Advent.



Christmas dinner was served on the rolling tables for quick and easy removal to the north.



With lots of singing and signing by the children's sign class, the children played out the story of the nativity.



Steven Hodge singing "Hallelujah"



united methodist youth fellowship

UNITED METHODIST YOUTH

Written by Youth Team Leader

Tina Thompson

During Quest, we learned about Mary and Joseph and their homelands. We learned that Mary was a young lady of about 14 that was completely surprised that God chose her to bear his son. We learned that being honored by God in that way was probably very scary and she responded by asking "How can this be"? Even though Mary had to be scared at the prospect of becoming pregnant while engaged, and having to tell Joseph that she was pregnant, she said "yes" to God without hesitation. We also learned that Joseph didn't want Mary stoned to death, even though the law said that's what should happen. He had to have been devastated to learn that his fiancé was pregnant, but he still tried to protect her. When it was revealed to him that she was carrying God's son, he did everything that God led him to do. We must ask ourselves: Could we do the same in very difficult circumstances?

We had a total of 13 people who went to Midwest City to enjoy a Christmas lights display, following up with dinner at Cici's Pizza. We had a great time, even though we had to use the air conditioner for this Christmas event!

The second annual Angel Tree Christmas Party was hosted by the Youth on Dec. 20th. We had 3 families attend with 5 children. The adults had some very good conversation while the children played games. Santa showed up and along with his helper Elf, handed out presents to the children, along with gift bags, a Christmas hat and a hand decorated tree ornament. Thanks to the UMW, each family also had a turkey to take home. We had plenty of refreshments provided by the generosity of our church and several youth and adults who stayed for the party and helped entertain.



Santa Reese Capron & Elf Leslie Clark



Guests enjoyed the Flame video games.

January is going to be a busy month with the youth travelling to Oklahoma City to volunteer at the food bank and 7 kids are signed up to attend Mid-Winter Retreat at Canyon Camp.

Also coming up....

Valentine's Lunch – Eric Capron has agreed to help us out again. The youth will be hosting a Valentine's Day lunch of pork loin, cooked by Eric.

This event will take place after church on February 14th. This will be a full service lunch attended by the youth that will be going to Youth Force. Proceeds of this lunch will help pay for Youth Force, a week long youth mission trip in Oklahoma City, where the youth repair the homes of elderly that cannot get needed repairs done any other way.

OCU Youth Service Day – Mar. 5th – this is a chance for our youth to learn about OCU, play some games and participate in a service project.

Winter Jam – Mar. 12th – this is a Christian concert; greatly enjoyed by the youth that have gone previously.

**New sermon series begins
Jan. 17**



Contemporary society loves the words happiness and joy, but like so many words, we use them without thinking too much about the meaning behind them.

The early Methodist tradition used the language of happiness often. Not only did John Wesley preach and teach about happiness but his brother Charles wrote hymns about happiness that the early Methodists sang. The happiness they sought was happiness in God.

During our first sermon series of the year, we will discover together how we can find joy in the journey of life. How do United Methodists understand happiness and how can we live the life that God calls us to. This is a great way to start the new year!

Special Movie Screening

As a part of this sermon series, we will have a special showing of the documentary "HAPPY."

Does money make you happy? Kids and family? Your work? Do you live in a world that values and promotes happiness and well-being? Are we in the midst of a happiness revolution?

"HAPPY" is a film that sets out to answer these questions and more. Taking viewers from the bayous of Louisiana to the deserts of Namibia, from the beaches of Brazil to the villages of Okinawa, "HAPPY" explores the secrets behind our most valued emotion.

The screening will take place in *The Flame* on Saturday, January 30 at 6 p.m. The movie is 75 minutes long. If you would like transportation to the screening, please contact the church office by Friday, January 29. We will have a variety of snacks (yes, popcorn!) & drinks during the movie.

Worship Calendar

- January 17 Human Relations Day
Psalm 1
"Stream Living"
- January 24 Various scriptures
"Living a Joyful Life"
- January 31 Matthew 6:19-34
"Serving Two Masters"
- February 7 Transfiguration Sunday
Holy Communion
Luke 9:28-36
"Remaining Joyful in the Midst of Life"



"Ring Out, Wild Bells"

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more,
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

— Alfred, Lord Tennyson, from "In Memoriam"

Youth to lead "Baptism of the Lord" Sunday on Jan. 10

Each year on the Sunday after Epiphany, we celebrate the "Baptism of the Lord" Sunday. That Sunday is designed to remind us of the importance of baptism in our own lives by focusing on the baptism of Jesus.



This year, we will honor this special day by being led by our youth in both services. They have worked very hard to design a service which will be meaningful and inspirational through their sermonettes and other elements of worship.

Our youth lay servants (Montrey Bond, Wanda Clark and Sara Martin) will offer short reflections on the questions each of us is asked at our baptism. There will be special music, baptism trivia and a time to respond in a unique way.

You will not want to miss this service. It will be a spiritual blessing and an opportunity to support the great youth we have in our congregations.



LIGHTING of the PARK 2015



With the weather threatening to be nasty, officials moved the Lighting of the Park to the much-more-comfortable City Hall. Christian Formation Director Rebecca Bond and a small band of volunteers kept busy with a three or four times as many youngsters in attendance as in previous years

Children created religiously oriented Christmas crafts, munched on Christmas cookies and drank hot chocolate, and enjoyed a balloon-twisting clown, all provided by five of our Ministerial Alliance churches. Towards the end of the craft room time, many families loaded up in their cars and cruised the city park to view the new tree wrapped lights. It was a great evening for all parties involved.

ARLINGTON NOISY OFFERING



On the final Sunday of each month, the Arlington congregations takes a "noisy offering" for missions. Members are encouraged to bring loose coins to donate. This year, \$500 was collected throughout the months with \$250 being donated

to Circle of Care and \$250 to Hope House in Shawnee. Good job!



United
Methodist
Women
FAITH • HOPE • LOVE IN ACTION

NEW POSTER PROJECT for UNITED METHODIST WOMEN



Have you seen the posters in the Prague church's hallway intersection? Lisa Hefner started the project off in November with a poster of previous UMW November projects. Sara Martin (pictured above) continued with a poster of previous December projects. Wow! Would you have thought that our women do that many different things every month? Your women's group is active! Keep an eye out to see who does what next!

The Arlington/Prague unit of the United Methodist Women meet the third Thursday of every month, September through May, at 6 pm in the Prague Fellowship Hall. All ladies of all ages are welcome. Come and see.

CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING

This year's Christmas Eve offering was split between Church World Service's "Blanket Program" and the Prague Ministerial Alliance. A total of \$778 was collected and given to these two worthwhile causes.



JANUARY 2016

Friday, January 1

HAPPY NEW YEAR!
6 – 7 pm AA & Al-Anon

Saturday, January 2

7am United Methodist Men

Sunday, January 3

EPIPHANY SUNDAY
9:15 Arlington worship
9:30 Prague Sunday school
10:30 Arlington Sunday school
10:45 Prague worship

Monday, January 4

BD Betty Brauer

Tuesday, January 5

6 – 7 pm AA & Al-Anon

Wednesday, January 6

EPIPHANY
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

Thursday, January 7

BD Dakota Beachler
WA Reese & Sharon Capron

Friday, January 8

6 – 7 pm AA & Al-Anon
7 – 11 pm at *The Flame*
for 6th – 12th graders

Saturday, January 9

Sunday, January 10

YOUTH SUNDAY celebration
at both worship services
9:15 Arlington worship
9:30 Prague Sunday school
10:30 Arlington Sunday school
10:45 Prague worship

Monday, January 11

Tuesday, January 12

6 – 7 pm AA & Al-Anon
BD Brinae Holman

Wednesday, January 13

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

Thursday, January 14

6 pm United Methodist Women
• Installation of officers

Friday, January 15

6 – 7 pm AA & Al-Anon
7 – 11 pm at *The Flame*
for 6th – 12th graders
WA Buck & Linda Poteet

Saturday, January 16

BD Paula Brauer

Sunday, January 17

HUMAN RELATIONS DAY
"Stream Living"
9:15 Arlington worship
9:30 Prague Sunday school
10:30 Arlington Sunday school
10:45 Prague worship

Monday, January 18

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY
BD Jack Vaughan
BD Sheila Powell

Tuesday, January 19

Pastors in OKC for annual meeting
of Clergy Orders
6 – 7 pm AA & Al-Anon
BD Charity Gile

Wednesday, January 20

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

Thursday, January 21

2 pm Parkland birthday party
BD Bryna Anderson

Friday, January 22

6 – 7 pm AA & Al-Anon
7 – 11 pm at *The Flame*
for 6th – 12th graders

Saturday, January 23

BD Kristi Stricklin

Sunday, January 24

"Living a Joyful Life"
9:15 Arlington worship
9:30 Prague Sunday school
10:30 Arlington Sunday school
10:45 Prague worship
6 pm **BISHOP HAYES**
45TH ANNIVERSARY of CHARGE
Elizabeth's baptism
Reception following
BD Kaleb Burleson
BD Donnal Smith

Monday, January 25

Tuesday, January 26

6 - 7 pm AA & Al-Anon
BD Jerry Short

Wednesday, January 27

11 am Arlington Ladies Day Out
Quest, vocal & bell choirs
BD Heather Capron
BD Tracy Howard

Thursday, January 28

Friday, January 29

6 – 7 pm AA & Al-Anon
7 – 11 pm at *The Flame*
for 6th – 12th graders
WA Robert & Barbara Holman

Saturday, January 30

6 pm Movie Screening of
"HAPPY" in *The Flame*

Sunday, January 31

"Serving Two Masters"
BD Jo Ann Coleman
BD Barbara Sands

Sunday, February 14

Youth sponsored Valentine's Day
Dinner of pork loin by Eric Capron

BD = birthday

WA = wedding anniversary