

The United Methodist News

VOLUME 21 NO. 6

JUNE, 2013

SERVING GOD 120 YEARS

Sunday School
9:30 A.M.
Morning Worship
10:30 A.M.

Potluck Brunch
to welcome
Tracy Hoskins,
our new
Director of Children
and
Family Ministries
June 16
at 9:30 a.m., in the
CFLC.



**What's
Inside**

Church Calendar..... 2
Finance Report 2
Welcome New Members..... 2
Sympathy Note 2
Youth (CHAOS)..... 3
Cards of Thanks 3
United Methodist Women 4
Birthdays, Anniversaries 4
Missions Report..... 4

PASTOR TO PEOPLE

“The Lord is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid?” Psalm 27:1

It’s one thing to experience tragedy. It’s something else entirely to have it followed by a sermon, especially a moralizing sermon. And yet, it hasn’t taken long for some recognized names in Christian circles to voice some unusually cruel and insensitive comments. Perhaps you have heard them.

Pat Robertson has suggested that the folks of Moore could have stopped the tornado if they had simply prayed harder. Then he suggests that Oklahomans (or anyone that lives in tornado alley for that matter) are somehow at fault because we have chosen to live in an area where tornados occur.

John Piper, choosing a different form of mass communication, tweeted about the Moore tornado.

Piper has stated after other tornados in other areas that the “winds are controlled by Jesus” and events such as tornados are God’s “fierce fingers” that are gently but firmly warning us that the wages of sin are death and then points out only sexual sins as the reason for this “gentle warning.” I will let you draw your own conclusion as to any inference.

Like you, I have spent the past few days completely consumed by the coverage of the tornados that have devastated Shawnee and Moore. When I hear and read the things some Christian leaders say, like Mr. Piper and Mr. Robertson, I want to shake my head and cry. Their words don’t help, in times like these. Their words convey no hope, offer no comfort, contain no love. Their words are, I think, an attempt to place blame because blame must be placed somewhere, right? There has to be a reason for God to allow such disaster to occur and that reason must be our fault since we are sinful from birth, right? I don’t know, maybe they are trying to defend God.

I suppose that it’s only natural that our very first response, at times like these, is to shake our fists toward the heavens. It’s only natural that God is the first target of our grief, anger, and disbelief when the horrible happens. We feel compelled to curse and shout. That doesn’t make us faithless heathens, or blasphemers or heretics. That just makes us human. Turns out, scripture is full of people shouting the Hebrew (and Greek) equivalent of angry questioning words to God. Even Jesus did it a time or two. And scripture is also full of God responding – again and again – in the wake of a storm. So, we can call names, and doubt and question. And that’s OK. Do you want to know why?

Because God can take it!

This is the important part to remember, I think, for the sake of our faith and our sanity: that God’s ego is not so fragile as to be affronted by our anger and grief. Nor does God’s reputation need defending, least of all by us. Nor does God somehow abandon us, stop loving us, or cast us into outer darkness when we find ourselves in a prayerful place saying ‘how could you let this happen?’

While folks like Mr. Piper and Mr. Robertson see in devastating disastrous

(Continued on page 3

REV. KYLE CLARK

Welcome New Members!



Our 2013 Confirmation Class was welcomed into full membership on Sunday, May 19. They are Aiden Alexander, Allison Matos and Tabitha Zabala.

We are very proud of these young people.



Our Sympathy

Our love and sympathy is extended to the family of long-time member, Betty Gillson.

Membership Care Committee

The Membership Care Committee will meet on Wednesday, June 19th.

They reach out to those who are homebound or are dealing with health issues or bereavement.

If you know someone in need of our care, call Virginia Stanley (647-2618) or Kay Thomas (647-3491).

Poteau F.U.M.C. Report for April 2013
 Average Attendance Figures for April: 134
 2013 Budget Requirements: \$400,000.00
 Needed for Budget Each Week: \$7,692.31
 Needed through April: \$130,769.27
 April Receipts: \$20,344.55
 April Expenditures: \$27,119.27
New Building Fund Figures:
 Deposits: \$1,451,350.68
 Expenditures: \$2,569,767.81

THE UNITED METHODIST NEWS
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 FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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 website: www.poteaufumc.com
 Sunday School 9:30 a.m. • Morning Worship 10:30 a.m.
 Weekly Communion 9:10 a.m. except first Sunday

Bishop	Robert E. Hayes
District Superintendent	Darrell Cates
Senior Pastor	Rev. Kyle Clark
Director of Youth Ministries	Kimberly Hardaway
Director of Children and Family Ministries	Tracy Hoskins
Director of Music Ministries	Steve Clark
Church Secretary	Brenda Ferguson
Lead Nursery Attendant	Jayla Craig
Organist	Wendy Kelly
Custodian and Door Opener	Jason Dering

District web page: www.gbmg-umc.org/mc-dist/

JUNE CHURCH CALENDAR

Worship Bulletin Deadline: 10 a.m. Thursday
Newsletter Deadline: Third Friday of month

- **SUNDAY** •
UMYF (CHAOS), 5 p.m. – 7 p.m.
 - **TUESDAY** •
Cub Scouts, 6 p.m., CFLC
Boy Scouts, 7 p.m., CFLC
 - **WEDNESDAY** •
Celebration Choir Rehearsal, 6 p.m.
 - **THURSDAY** •
Senior Café, 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., CFLC
- 2 Afternoon Worship Service at the Oaks, 2 p.m.
 - 3-7 McAlester District Camp - Camp Egan
 - 8 United Methodist Men's breakfast meeting, 8 a.m., CFLC
 - 15 Free Neighborhood Breakfast, 8 to 10 a.m., CFLC
 - 16 Potluck Brunch to welcome Tracy Hoskins, 9:30 a.m., CFLC
 - 17-21 VBS
 - 19 Membership Care Committee Meeting, 1 p.m., Conference Room
 - 23-28 Youth Force for grades 7-12 at Perkins, OK

MORNING WORSHIP GREETERS

- 2 Peggy Talley and Liz Perry
- 9 Charles and Marilyn Meek
- 16 Jean Gaylor and Andra Burton
- 23 Ben and Judy Curtis
- 30 Curtis and Dorothy James



ACOLYTES

- 2 Luke Wheat and Daniel Ambriz
- 9 Tabi Zabala and Baleigh Quarry
- 16 Wyatt Holt and Nathan Clark
- 23 Kylanna Hardaway and Allison Matos
- 30 Katie Redhage and Morgan Bandy



Prayer Shawl Ministry

Anyone who knows of someone who would like a prayer shawl should call Cindy Brody at 918-385-1542 or the church office at 647-2217.

*They who have steeped their soul in prayer
 Can every anguish calmly bear.*
 – Richard M. Milnes

(Pastor to People, cont.)



Cards of Thanks

events like tornados only divine punishment and holy retribution from an angry god, I see God's tremendous courage and great compassion and outpouring of mercy and love in the efforts of thousands of people who are responding and will continue to respond meeting the needs of our sisters and brothers who have had their world shattered. I see God working in and through workers and volunteers bringing comfort and hope. I see God in the hands of rescue workers and teachers, pulling survivors from heaps of ruin; I see God in a woman's rejoicing at finding her beloved dog; I see God working in the church that opens its doors for displaced neighbors; I see God grieving with stricken parents; I even see God in the anger of faithful people who – like God's own heart – can hardly bear to witness such suffering, but will share it just the same.

I know – in my heart of hearts, and from the experiences of my own faith journey – that God does not enact or enable tragedy. But I also know this – it is sure good to know that if we just need to be mad, we serve a God who can take the brunt of all our angry shouts and fist shaking spilling out, and still love us tomorrow. And the next day. And the day after that.

So I just want to remind you of something I'm certain you already know, God does not require my articulate defenses, any more than God welcomes credit from the Pipers and Robertsons of the world.

And here's something else. Even though people can and have said some appalling and horrible things about God in the past and likely will continue to do so, God will still love each of them tomorrow, too. And the day after that. And probably even the day after that.

And that's where I want to start shaking my fist at God all over again, right?

I really hate when people say dumb stuff (not that I haven't uttered my share of dumb things too), and I wind up spending my day trying to undo their damage. But, as much as I feel called to articulate a compassionate, intelligent, and authentic faith to counteract bad theology and other harmful brands of gospel...God asks only that I preach good news in my time and place; that I serve my neighbors; and that I try to be like Jesus.

God is here. God is there. Good, present, and faithful; whether I say so or not, whether the other guys blame the gays or not, whether we have eyes to see or ears to hear... God is the peace that stills the storm; the shepherd's crook in the valley of death; the lyric poem in response to our shouting and cursing; the joy that comes in the morning, and the love that will not let us go.

So now, having settled within my own mind that God really doesn't need to be defended by me, I can go back to my own personal, internal conflict. Maybe, just maybe there is a sermon in there somewhere!

Shalom,

To Our Dear Church Family,

I have over a year's worth of thank yous to give! From the time of Mom's diagnosis in Oct. 2011 until her recent passing so many of you have been there for us in so many different ways. The prayers, visits, food, sitting with Mom so I could get out and so very many ways you have shown love and kindness. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Now that she is gone we have been blessed by your support once again! All the love, hugs, food, flowers and cards have meant more to us than I can express.

To the women who provided the meal for our family the day of the services, the meal was delicious. Thank you so very much.

We are definitely blessed to be part of a kind and loving church family.

With love and gratitude,
Dee and Keely Carsello

Dear Church Family,

Thank you so much for the wonderful breakfast, cards, gifts, and words of encouragement. The Bible will be of great comfort while I am away from home next year.

It has been a blessing to grow up in the First United Methodist Church of Poteau. I appreciate all your love and support.

Sincerely,
Ronna Bell

News of Youth

By Kimberly Hardaway, Youth Director

UMYF (CHAOS) meets Sunday evenings from 5 to 7 p.m. and is for all youth 6th through 12th grade.

The schedule is as follows:

JUNE

- 2 No Youth Meeting; District Camp staff meeting
- 3-7 District Camp at Camp Egan for 7th-12th
- 9 Welcome Night to 6th graders, 5 to 7 p.m.
- 16 VBS mission night, 5 to 7 p.m.
- 17-21 Vacation Bible School
- 23 No Youth Meeting; Youth Force begins
- 23-28 Youth Force at Perkins, OK hosted by Lost Creek UMC. Leave at 9 a.m. on 23rd and return 4-5 p.m. on 28th.
- 30 No Meeting – YOUTH FORCE RECOVERY!

If church members would like to encourage our Youth Force team with cards and letters, the following is the contact address:

Contacting Campers

You can contact Youth Force attendees in several ways. It's always quite a treat for the attendees to receive a bundle of mail from their home church (hint, hint!). Here is the mailing address:

Camper's Name
C/O Youth Force Perkins
8002 S. Washington
Stillwater, OK 74074

Missions Report

By Terri Martin,
Missions Committee Chair

The monthly breakfast will be June 15th. Come for some friendly fun, fellowship and good food.

April collections were for Women's Crisis Center, we collected 100 pairs of underwear and 3 pairs of socks.

Thank you again Poteau First United Methodist Church for being such a caring and giving congregation.

I know the ladies receiving these donations are very grateful.

We are having a large response so far for the supplies being collected for UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief).

A few people have asked where these supplies were being sent, so to be certain and give you correct information, I checked with the OKVIM (Oklahoma Volunteers in Mission). Kristin, told me they are sent to the UMCOR Depot and then distributed when natural disasters occur, they are used both nationally and internationally whenever and where ever humanitarian relief is needed.

She expressed her appreciation of our collection efforts.

The missions committee met April 24th in conjunction with Kendra Yandell and Intentional Faith Development headed by Tami Matos.

We are working on a project for back to school, similar to what we have done in years past, with some added opportunities for outreach. We have not been able to do this project the last couple of years with the building project, but are excited about organizing it again for this year.

More detailed information will come after we meet again in June. With that said, our "Mission of the Month" collections for June and July will be for this project.

We will be collecting full size bottles of:

Shampoo
Conditioner
Deodorant
Bath soap
Hair brushes

Thank you to Susan and Mallory Mixon, Pam and Thad Ernst for the report and slide presentation during Sunday morning services May 12 from their mission trip to Belmopan City, Belize over spring break. If you missed this presentation, talk with either Susan or Mallory. I'm sure they would be glad to tell you more. They were an awesome representation of work being done for those in need by sharing and showing God's love.

If anyone is interested in future mission trips either locally, within the U.S. or internationally, please contact Susan Mixon or Terri Martin.

"The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed."

Proverbs 11:25 (NLT)



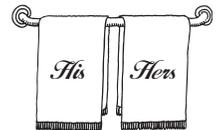
June Birthdays

- 2 R.L. Sockey, Jr.
- 3 Michael Preston and Versile Johnson II
- 4 Dora Baldwin
- 6 Donna Johnston and Lindsay Murray
- 7 Debby Jarrett
- 9 Clifford England
- 13 Phyllis Roberts and Stacey Roberts
- 14 Martha Kidd and Marvin DeSpain
- 16 Nikki Wigginton, Kenny Whitehead and Kyle Holt
- 17 Robin Mason
- 18 Paul Stottsberry and Jon Gaston
- 20 Keith Thomas
- 21 Shanna Johnson, Mary-Catherine Hallmark and Sisnie Brookfield
- 22 Vicki Mason
- 23 Gene Wheat
- 25 Amy Stubbs, Connor Matos and Janet Fox
- 26 Victoria Nichols
- 28 Linda Brown and Jesse Barnes
- 30 Patrick Ford



June Anniversaries

- 5 Ron and Marsha Cofer
- 6 Gene and Dana Wheat
- 8 Brian and Katie Shore
- 14 Dennis and Missy Alexander
- 15 Buddy and Pat Shelton
- 17 Curtis and Dorothy James
- 18 Ronnie and Becky Bell
- 21 Kevin and joni Griffith
- 22 Wayne and Judy Moore
- 24 Ronnie and Christy Oehlschlager
- 25 Ben and Judy Curtis



United Methodist Women of Faith

Dorothy G. James, President

As our summer months near, we wish everyone a great summer. There will be no meetings until Monday, Sept. 9.

On Saturday, April 13 we attended our Spring District Meeting in Atoka. Our unit won the banner for traveling the most miles.

May 2 we had a well-attended National Day of Prayer in our church. Members and friends enjoyed a devotional about prayer given by Rev. Kyle Clark. We prayed and sang songs.

We shared an Indian Taco luncheon with the Sr. Cafe group in the CFLC with good food and fellowship.

Remember our State Conference Meeting Oct. 4 and 5 in Poteau and Fall Festival Nov. 8.

See you in September.