

The United Methodist News

VOLUME 20 NO. 8

AUGUST, 2012

SERVING GOD 119 YEARS

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

Coming in October

World Communion Day, Sunday, October 7 will be a special day for our church.

Jeremy Bassett, Conference Director for Volunteers in Mission will be here as guest speaker. Other activities are being planned for that day.

Watch for all the details in the next newsletter but please make plans now to attend.

What's Inside

Church Calendar.....	2
Finance Report	2
Fundraiser for the Werlines.....	2
Preschool Report.....	2
Children and Youth	3
SPRC Report.....	3
Church Council Report.....	4
Sympathy Note	4
VIM Training	4
Correspondence.....	4
Birthdays, Anniversaries	4
Wedding Shower Weekend.....	5
Correspondence.....	5

PASTOR TO PEOPLE

Watch What You Say

Believe it or not, we Christians have a remarkable talent for sticking our feet in our mouths sometimes, especially when talking with non-Christians (I know, hard to imagine, right?) When searching for words commonly associated with “Christian,” the list ain’t pretty. I think part of this can be attributed to a handful of phrases that, if stricken from our vocabulary (or at least used with far less frequency and far more forethought), might make us a little more tolerable.

Christian blogger/author/musician/speaker Christian Piatt suggests that Christians have a public relations problem when it comes to dealing with folks, particularly folks who are not church folks - you know the un-churched, de-churched, never-been-churched... He offers (for better or worse) some “tried and true” phrases and clichés that many non-Christians (and even a few Christians) find difficult to appreciate and may even do more harm than good when we approach people in discussions on matters of faith.

As you can imagine this has led to much impassioned discussion from folks who both agree and disagree with him. I happen to think such conversations are good and necessary. With that being said, I have condensed and revised Piatt’s list to form my own Top-10 list of things Christians ought not say. These are not intended to tell you, or anyone for that matter, what to believe or not believe about matters of doctrine. Rather, they are offered as food-for-thought about how we talk about the love and grace of God to others. I would love to hear back from you about what you think.

So in no particular order, here are ten phrases we Christians should lose from our vocabulary:

- “Everything happens for a reason” – I’ve heard this a lot. I’m not sure where it comes from either, but it’s definitely not in the Bible. The closest thing I can come up with is “To everything, there is a season,” (Ecclesiastes ch 3) but that’s not exactly the same. The fact is that faith, by definition, is not reasonable. If it could be empirically verified with facts or by using the scientific method, it wouldn’t be faith. It would be theory. A variation of this is “God is in control.” Phrases like these raise the fundamental problem of Theodicy, which most Christians, I think, are not necessarily prepared to address. Theodicy is the dilemma of how to reconcile the belief in an all-knowing, all-loving and all-powerful God with the existence

(Continued on page 5)

REV. KYLE CLARK



AUGUST CHURCH CALENDAR

Choir Fundraiser for the Werlines

The choir is sponsoring a fundraiser for Stan and Pegee Werline to assist with Stan's medical expenses.

On Sunday, Aug. 19 there will be a lunch following morning worship with special guest musicians, a dessert auction and a silent auction.

Everyone is invited to attend, enjoy the food and entertainment and help a good cause.

United Methodist Church PRESCHOOL 	By Tracey Gilliam, Preschool Director
---	---

We are looking forward to another wonderful year of preschool.

Preschool will have orientation for the coming school year on August 9th. The Mon.-Wed. class at 5 p.m.; Tues.-Thurs. class at 6 p.m.; and the Monday through Thursday class at 7 p.m.

Classes for preschool will begin on Monday, August 13th.

<p>Poteau F.U.M.C. Report for June 2012 2012 Average Attendance Figures for June: 155 2012 Budget Requirements: \$397,000.00 Needed for Budget Each Week: \$7,634.62 Needed through June: \$190,865.50 June Receipts: \$35,228.10 June Expenditures: \$30,163.65 New Building Fund Figures: Deposits: \$1,230,054.66 Expenditures: \$2,548,132.57</p>
--

THE UNITED METHODIST NEWS Published by the Communications Committee Carol Baker, Communications Coordinator/Editor FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 109 S. Harper, Poteau, OK 74953 Telephone 918-647-2217 e-mail: rogers2006@windstream.net 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 District Superintendent Pastor Youth & Children's Director Music Director Church Secretary Lead Nursery Attendant Organist Custodian and Door Opener District web page: www.gbmg-umc.org/mc-dist/	Robert E. Hayes Darrell Cates Rev. Kyle Clark Kimberly Hardaway Steve Clark Brenda Ferguson Jayla Craig Wendy Kelly Joe Powers

WORSHIP BULLETIN DEADLINE:
 10 a.m. each Thursday

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:
 Third Friday of each month

• SUNDAY •

UMYF (CHAOS), 5 p.m.

• WEDNESDAY •

Celebration Choir Rehearsal, 6 p.m.

• THURSDAY •

Senior Café, 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., CFLC

- 4 Reedy Gothard's Memorial Service, 10:30 a.m., Sanctuary
- 5 Promotion Sunday
- 9 Preschool Orientation
 Long-Range Planning Committee, 5:15 p.m., CFLC Conference Room
- 10 Youth will attend St. Yootz Day
- 11 UMM Breakfast and Meeting, 8 a.m., CFLC
- 12 Worship Committee Meeting, 11:45 a.m., CFLC Conference Room
- 13 Preschool begins
- 15 Membership Care Committee, 1 p.m., CFLC
- 18 Free Neighborhood Breakfast, 8 to 10, CFLC
- 19 Choir's Fundraiser Lunch for Stan and Pegee Werline following worship.
- 25 Wedding Shower for Alicia Gilliam/Colton Castillo, 2 p.m., Narthex
- 26 Wedding Shower for Samantha Stoughton/Adam Bell, 11:30 a.m. following worship
 Afternoon Worship Service at the Oaks, 2 p.m.

MORNING WORSHIP GREETERS

- 5 Charles and Marilyn Meek
- 12 David and Patty Redhage
- 19 Ben and Judy Curtis
- 26 Janell Darneal and Liz Perry



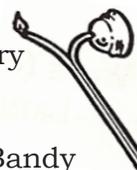
LITURGISTS



- 12 Aiden Alexander
- 19 Adult Reader
- 26 Demi Gilliam

ACOLYTES

- 5 Heather Robinson and Haven Perry
- 12 Connor and Kyle Matos
- 19 Kendrick and Kanaan Hardaway
- 26 Kylanna Hardaway and Morgan Bandy



News of Children and Youth

By Kimberly Hardaway

UMYF (CHAOS) meets Sunday evenings and is for all youth 6th through 12th grade.

The schedule is as follows:

AUGUST

- 5 Promotion Sunday
CHAOS 5 to 7 p.m. Meal provided by Lee/Harris
- 11 St. Yootz Day at Frontier City. Leave at 8:30 a.m.; return between 10 p.m. and midnight. Cost is \$25 which includes 1 meal, transportation, park admission and concert
- 12 Youth Council immediately following worship (No CHAOS)
- 19 Parent/Youth Volleyball Night and potluck meal
- 26 CHAOS 5 to 7 p.m. Meal provided by Burton/Stoughton

...

LOGOS for KIDS resumes Sept. 12th

The Wednesday after school ministry, LOGOS, begins at 3:15 p.m. each Wednesday. It is for ages preschool through high school. In order to enroll, parents are required to attend one of the parent meetings. Parent meetings will be held in the CFLC and are scheduled for 9:30 a.m. Sunday, August 26 and 6:30, Wednesday, August 29.

Returning and new volunteers for LOGOS will have a meeting at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 5. Letters to all volunteers will be sent in August confirming how each is helping and the meeting date.

A WORD ABOUT LOGOS

LOGOS has become a main part of not only our own ministry identity but also one of the main ministry identities within our local community. This past year we attempted to welcome everyone to LOGOS without requiring commitments from everyone. LOGOS is based on commitment from the congregation and the families of those attending.

Allowing these commitments to slide created deficits in the following two ways: 1) enough help to keep the workload manageable for all, and 2) healthy finances to run the ministry. Therefore the LOGOS oversight committee puts forth the following needs:

Volunteer time commitments:

- 1. Clean up team members – once or twice a month commitment (2 to 3 hours each time)

- 2. Shopper - weekly commitment (time varies 2 to 3 hours per week)
- 3. Table setters – weekly commitment (mid-day 1 hour)
- 4. Decorating team – once a month commitment (4 hours each time)
- 5. Cook team members – once a month commitment (4 hours each time)
- 6. Worship skills assistants – weekly commitment (half hour each time)
- 7. Crafts leader – leads station every other week (half hour each time)
- 8. Parent commitments twice a semester

Financial commitments:

- 1. Every family enrolled in LOGOS makes a financial commitment
- 2. Spiritual sponsorships for those LOGOS students who cannot pay full fee.

Staff Parish Relations Committee Report (SPRC)

By Janet DeSpain

As most of you know, our Youth and Children's Director, Kim Hardaway, has resigned. She has accepted a full-time teaching position with the Poteau School System. However, Kim has agreed to continue as part-time Youth Director. This will allow us to continue all the youth activities.

We are happy for Kim and this wonderful opportunity for her and her family. Please let Kim know how much we appreciate all her hard work and dedication to the church, youth and children and how pleased we are that she will continue working with our youth.

Several temporary things are now in place which will allow the youth and children's programs to continue and will provide a smooth transition to the new staff person. We will have all permanent staff in place and duties assigned as quickly as possible.

The SPRC wants to assure the children, youth, and their parents that this committee is committed to our children and youth. We ask for your prayers and patience as we diligently search for the right person to serve as our new Associate Pastor.

Joe Powers has also submitted his resignation effective August 5th. He has accepted a teaching position with the Waldron Schools. Joe's wife, Nancy, is also employed by the Waldron Schools. Let Joe know how much we have appreciated his time with us and wish him well.

Church Council Report

By Susan Mixon

The church council met on June 24; our new pastor was welcomed and he opened the meeting with prayer. Among the topics discussed were:

- Keith Wright presented the April and May church financial statements and discussed the upcoming second capital campaign that will be held to raise the remaining monies owed for the new sanctuary building. The council voted to hire Tyler and Associates to assist our congregation in this follow-up financial campaign. The campaign will begin in 2013. Tyler and Associates was the firm that assisted with our first capital campaign.

- Janet DeSpain indicated that the PPRC has accepted, with regret, the resignation of Kim Hardaway as the full-time director of Children/ Youth Ministry. Kim has accepted a teaching position at Poteau High School but will continue (in a part time position) to lead the church youth until a replacement can be found. The PPRC is working on a new format for the Children/ Youth Ministry that could include an associate pastor and a part time youth person.

- Brian Shore reported that the new fountain has been installed next to the sanctuary building and two new storm doors installed at the church parsonage.

- Finally, Kim Hardaway reported on the many activities of the youth for the summer and stated that the Howe church youth group has been invited to join them on Sunday evenings.

Please join us at the next Church Council meeting (time and date to be announced). Everyone is welcome; it is a great way to learn about what great work is being done by our church staff and various committees. I know I learned an important fact this month - when writing a check to the church, always write a notation on the check what you intend the money to be used for! (i.e., tithe, the new building, the youth fund, etc.)

Volunteers in Mission

For all who may be interested, there will be a VIM (Volunteers in Mission) training in Oklahoma City on September 8th from 8:30 a.m. -4:30 p.m. This will be a team leader training. Please see Brenda in the church office if you are interested in attending. More information can be found on the conference website. <http://www.okumc.org/>



Our Sympathy

The month of July has been a sad month for our church family. We have had several deaths since our last newsletter was published.

Our sympathy is extended to the families of Barbara Owens, Gayle Smedley, Barbara Gillson, Aaron Ridenour, Reedy Gothard and Jane Hammond.

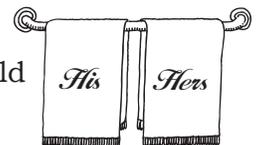
August Birthdays

- 1 Allison Stone
- 2 Vernon Roberts, Jack Hammond and Bryce Holt
- 4 Josie Garrett
- 5 Tanya Brown
- 8 Gary Brown, Sr. and Bob Bullock
- 10 Keith Wright
- 12 Patty Wright and William Slater
- 14 Lloyd Lee
- 15 Genny Dorsey and Clint Lawrence
- 16 Shirley James
- 17 Christie Williams and Emery Kay McDaniel
- 18 Nancy Shore, Derby Whitefield and Waylon Murray
- 19 Jake Thompson
- 20 Matt Stoughton, Kyle Hardaway, and Wendy Kelly
- 21 Mallory Mixon, Haven Perry, and Robert Holt
- 23 Stan Werline
- 25 Lexe Pickle
- 26 Gary Blackshare and Taylor Darneal
- 27 Ryan Clayburn, Virginia Kidd and Janet DeSpain
- 28 Kimberly Hardaway and Peggy Gartner
- 29 Gerry Roberts and Lillian Green
- 30 Tami Holt
- 31 Luke Wheat



August Anniversaries

- 4 Steve and Nancy Clark
- Lloyd and Dana Lee
- 5 Orville and Linda McDonald
- 8 Jim and Jayla Craig
- 9 Stan and Pegee Werline
- 12 David and Patty Redhage
- 19 Shannon and Amy Stubbs
- 27 Ken and Susan Hammond
- 30 Blake and Tori White



Wedding Shower Weekend!

Our church has two wedding showers scheduled in August.

On Saturday, August 25 at 2 p.m. the congregation is invited to shower Alicia Gilliam and Colton Castillo with gifts. They are registered at Bed Bath and Beyond, Kohl's, Target, Walmart, Penney's and Dillards.

Hostesses are Nina Bowen, Misty Haney, Kim Hardaway, and Tami Matos. Please RSVP to Tami Matos at 647-4414. (Call or text).

Then on Sunday, August 26 immediately following morning worship there will be a shower at the church for Samantha Stoughton and Adam Bell. You are invited to gift them with a contribution to their money tree.

Correspondence

Dear Church Family,

My family would like to thank everyone for your support in our family's time of mourning. Thank you for the prayers, flowers, food, calls, cards and help you gave us during the passing of Aaron Ridenour. We would also like to thank all the ladies in the kitchen for the wonderful lunch.

The love and support and sympathy that we receive from our church family are what helps us get through when we feel we cannot go on. You have always been a true and good friend to Aaron and the family.

I know it brought comfort to my mother knowing that we had so many people who care, and for that we cannot thank you enough.

Love, The Ridenour Family

The family of Gayle Smedley would like to express their thanks to everyone for their many expressions of sympathy upon her passing. Your kindness was greatly appreciated.

Dennis and Beverly,
Carla Moses
Clay and Pam Bennett

To My Church Family,

Thank you for all the prayers and concerns while my husband, Mike, has had bypass surgery and is recuperating. He is doing better now. I appreciate my church family so much. Thank you.

Cindy Darneal



PASTOR TO PEOPLE

(Continued from page 1)

of evil and/or suffering in the world. Another thing is that, if you believe that human beings have free will (a central tenet of most Christian thought), it needs to be recognized that that, in itself, is a concession of control by God. When talking about God's role in daily life, we need to be very careful. Telling someone who has suffered greatly and unfairly or been abused, tortured, neglected, etc. that it has happened for a reason or that God was in control during that experience likely is enough to incite that person to turn from the concept of God forever. Better to be quiet, listen and if appropriate, mourn alongside them. But don't ever dismiss grief or tragedy with such a meaningless phrase.

- "The Bible clearly says..." – Two points on this one. First, unless you're a Biblical scholar who knows the historical and cultural contexts of the scriptures and can read them in their original languages, the Bible isn't always "clear". Yes, we can pick and choose verses that say one thing or another, but by whom was it originally said, to whom was it said and what was the social context? Cherry-picking scripture to make a point is called proof-texting, and it's a theological no-no. Second, the Bible can be used to make nearly any point we care to make or prop up any weak argument (anyone want to justify slavery?). Please, let's not use the Bible as a billy club against each other.

- "The Bible says it; I believe it; that settles it." – This one goes along with number 2. If ever there was a top-shelf conversation killer this is it. A person making this assertion is not inviting any opinion, or response, or thought or even conversation. A claim is being made telling others to shut up. Yes, some people take scripture literally. And yes, other folks are more open to interpretation. However it must be conceded that even literalists, interpret and qualify parts of Scripture in some way, like the parts about keeping kosher, wearing blended fibers, stoning adulterers, tossing your virgin daughters into the hands of an angry mob ... you get the point. Regardless of whether you are a literalist or not, such statements as this give the perception that Christians are closed minded and unapproachable and this is not a good thing.

- "God helps those who help themselves." – Let me be clear – THIS IS NOT IN SCRIPTURE. People treat it like it is, but it's not. Ben Franklin penned this in the Farmers' Almanac in 1757 and he may have even quoted it from another source. Be very, very careful when quoting something you think is in the Bible. And even if it is, be very careful in how and why you quote it to/



at people. A lot of people already struggle with what the Bible says or what they think the Bible says. They don't need more reasons to resent or resist scripture; let's not add things that aren't even in there.

- "Have you asked Jesus into your heart?" – As many times as I've heard this, I'm still not sure I really know what it means. Why my heart? Why not my eyes, better yet my head? Questions like this make Christianity sound like a purely emotional experience, rather than a lifelong practice that can never entirely be realized. But yeah, I know, asking someone, "Have you engaged in a lifelong discipline to orient your life toward Christ-like compassion, love and mercy?" doesn't exactly have the same ring to it, does it?

- "There, but for the grace of God, go I." – This suggests that the person who is the object of whatever misfortune you're referring to is not the recipient of God's grace. The thing is (at least as I understand it) grace isn't grace if it's selectively handed out. Relating to someone, and even sharing common experiences, or how you could see yourself in their similar situation is one thing. But making it sound like you're not suffering like they are because you have been given the good gift of God's grace is just, well, unkind. Perhaps it would be better to say "There, but for really good luck, go I."

- "He/she is in a better place." – First let's make this clear up front. Everyone wants to be a source of comfort and compassion to those who have just experienced the death of a loved one. That being said, while this cliché may or may not be true, we have no real way of knowing. We may believe it, we may want it to be true, but to speak with such authority about something we don't actually know smacks of arrogance. "God needed another angel in heaven," is a similar attempt of compassion people make at times of death. Such statements, even when they are offered as well-meaning words of comfort minimizes at best and ignores at worst the grief of the people to whom they are spoken. I know it may sound cold or insensitive but the person who has died is . . . dead. Better to focus on the needs of the living person in front of us. See no.1 for suggestions as to better ways of offering comfort.

- "If you just have enough faith (fill in the blank) will happen for you." – Talk about setting God up! Who are we to speak to what God will or will not do in others' lives? Sure, if you have a story of personal experience to share, ask for permission to share it. But be aware that someone in the midst of struggle may not be in a place to hear it. Regardless, fulfilling a promise like this is way, way above our human pay grade. As my daddy used to say, "don't write checks your

butt can't cash."

- "Are you saved?" – I love to see the looks on people's faces whenever I am asked this question and I respond, "From what?" Regardless of your theological understandings of heaven, hell and judgment, this is a very unattractive thing to say. First, it implies a power/privilege imbalance (i.e., "I'm saved, but I'm guessing you're not based on some assumptions I'm making about you"), and it leaps over the hurdle of personal investment and relationship, straight into the very deep waters of something even more personal - faith. Secondly, it assumes that the person to whom you are talking has a fairly well developed understanding of heaven and hell and judgment as well. There are many religions and philosophical belief systems for which the concept of heaven and hell are completely foreign. If we take the time to learn someone's story, we'll likely learn plenty about what they think and believe in the process. They might learn something about us too. And who knows? Rather than just telling someone what they should believe, we might even discover something about ourselves.

- "Jesus was a Democrat/Republican." OK! I know it's an election year, so this may be nothing more than a weak attempt on my part to take a shot at the self-righteous of both parties. I confess. Please forgive me. Having made confession then, it seems to me that, when pressed, Jesus was happy to keep church and state separate. Remember the whole thing about giving to Caesar what is Caesar's, and giving to God what is God's? And if we choose to, we can pick any number of anecdotes to support claims of Jesus being liberal (caring for the poor, anti-death penalty) or conservative (challenging government authority, practicing sexual purity). But look - Jesus was Jesus, and if it was as simple as pegging him to one of two seriously flawed contemporary forms of political affiliation, I can promise you I would not be a Christian. So can we back off the religious high ground that persons in both parties are trying to monopolize this election year, put our political differences aside and as John Wesley said, join our hands together and worship the risen Christ who is Lord of us all?

There you have it. I'm sure there is something there to elicit a response one way or another from some of you. So, shoot me an email or better yet, come by for a cup of coffee, let's talk. Maybe we can all grow a little bit in our understanding of who God is, who we are as people created in God's image, and in our efforts to live faithfully as followers of Jesus Christ.

Shalom,
Kyle