

THE FLAME



August 4, 2025



Monday, August 4

Staff Meeting 9
Project Transformation 10
Weight Loss Group 3:30
Scouts 6:30

Tuesday, August 5

Coryell Cupboard 8
Men's Coffee Group 8:30
Intercessory Prayer 9

Coryell Cupboard 4

Wednesday, August 6

Bible Study Via Christi 10
Communion @ Via Christi 10
Missions 10
Youth 6

Friday, August 8

Memorial for Juan Ramon Luna

Sunday, August 3

Sunday School 9
Church Service 10
Finance Committee Meeting 11:30

A BIG THANKS to Elaine Costello, Suzi Lenhart, Debbie and David Turner, Montana Turner, and Patti Ziegenhain who moved furniture, bells, tables, and instruments and stored unused items to provide a more efficient use of the space in the music rooms and an area for storage of additional music files from First Presbyterian Church.

Also want to thank those who provided beautiful service music this summer. Kay Anthony, Kay Marshall Grant, Joe & Lisa Lessert, Men's and Women's ensembles, Patti Ziegenhain, Christy Thompson, Betsy Carter, Suzi Lenhart, and Marta Sullivan.

This promises to be a busy year for the music ministry. If you enjoy singing or playing a musical instrument, please let me know. We are always looking for additional musicians!

Choir practice begins on August 20th with the Choir returning to the choir loft on August 24th. Handbell choirs begin rehearsing August 25th.

With blessings,
Marta, FUMC Music Director

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost



• **Luke 12:32-40 (CEB)**



The new school year is quickly approaching and with it many of our Kids programs as well! We will be holding a back-to-school bash on August 15th at 1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. at the Pavilion at the corner of Oklahoma and 6th Street across the street from our churches, First United Methodist/First Presbyterian. There will be food, games, a bouncy house, and a slip and slide, so make sure to bring your swimming suits!

On August 16th, we will have a special VBS day starting at 1:00 p.m. and lasting until 4:00 p.m. There will be a Bible lesson on Moses, snacks, games, music, and crafts.

On August 17th, there will be a special service as we celebrate returning to school at 10:00 a.m.! JAM will officially be returning on August 20th and registration forms will be available for all that are interested at all three events.

Best regards,

Dawn Spaulding

The Connectional Ministry for Mission and the Mission and Service

Ministry Team have responsibility for the connections to mission, disaster response, community engagement and other outreach ministries in our conference and all around the world, which is, indeed, our mission field.

Mission Teams

Volunteers in Mission sent out 45 teams in 2024. Oklahoma teams served in Alaska, Louisiana, New Mexico, Texas and Oklahoma. Teams also served internationally in Rio Bravo, Honduras, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Colombia and Belize. 576 people were sent out to make a transformation of the world! We continue to support Lydia Patterson Institute in El Paso, Texas, McCurdy Ministries in New Mexico and the wonderful team from Lost Creek and the ongoing work in Alaska.

Let's Do This, Oklahoma

Building on the Bridges Out of Poverty program presented at the 2024 Oklahoma Annual conference Day of Learning, "Let's Do This, Oklahoma!" joined with the Rural/Smaller Membership Church Commission to present Communities Impacting Poverty workshops in every district. Churches were encouraged to examine Emotional Poverty and its impact on our relationships with those experiencing poverty. Participants were then able to begin forming a ministry action plan to create a new or augmented mission project in their church. These plans identified the unique needs of each individual community, and included partnerships with other churches and agencies in those communities. CIP Workshop participants were eligible for start-up grants money. Those with new projects also joined a cohort to help fine tune their plans. 57 churches and 157 people are developing ways to best reach out to those nearest to them, hoping to alleviate the hurt of poverty and support ways out of poverty.

WW and Rose Woodworth Estate Committee

The Oklahoma Annual conference and our world-wide connection continue to benefit from the forward reaching stewardship of Rose and WW Woodworth. From the earnings of their estate roughly \$500,000 is available annually for distribution to international mission, New Faith Communities with a focus on ethnic minority local church, national missions and scholarships. The Woodworth Estate Committee seeks to honor the vision and missional intent of the donors in processing grant requests

There are two grant cycles, one in the spring, and one in the fall. Application and application time lines are found on the conference website: okumc.org (under the link to the Office of Missions). 2024 grant recipients include Skyline Urban Ministry, Crisis Care Ministries, Wesley Foundations, CJAMM, the Bridges Out of Poverty Day of Learning, and OKUMC Disaster Response. Funds also helped churches with food insecurity projects, refugee assistance, community engagement in creative arts, homeless support, and assistance with equipment and safety upgrades. International grants were given to Lydia Patterson Institute, Manos Juntos and IMECH Chile.

Global Ministries

Oklahoma churches have renewed or started Covenant Relationships with Global Ministries missionaries. Those missionaries supported by Oklahoma churches and districts include Christian Schlick, Florence Kaying, Fuxia Wang, Heath Jackson, Jane Eesley, Jennifer Moore, John Nday, Ngoy Mulanga Kalangwa, Priscille Malandji, Rosangelica Acevedo-Delgoad, Umba Ilunga Kalangwa.

In 2024, a total of \$415,000 was given from Oklahoma Conference churches and individuals to the global work of United Methodism. Of that amount, \$36,000 was given to the missionaries named above. Nineteen ADVANCE projects were supported at the amount of \$169,000. Finally, \$209,000 was given to GBGM and UMCOR special focus projects. Over 230 churches in our conference contributed in some way to these special offerings and gifts.

Disaster Response

Disaster Response can be a slow and complicated process. At the writing of this report, recovery work has just begun for the communities in Oklahoma that experienced EF3 and EF4 tornados in the spring of 2024. The year has been blessed by the many ways Oklahoma United Methodists have responded with compassion and generosity.

Donations of nearly \$55,000 came from churches and individuals from all over the state. A large portion of that money, in addition to a \$5,000 Solidarity Grant from the United Methodist Committee on Relief's US Disaster Response, was given to United Methodist churches to dispense as gift cards to survivors. The rest is held, designated for recovery efforts in these communities.

Oklahoma United Methodists also served as Early Response Team members, and as Ambassadors at county Multi-Agency Resource Centers. These folks attended training and gave several days of service. They met and assisted survivors with guidance to resources and with clean-up of storm damaged property.

There are three new Long-Term Recovery Committees formed to address and advance these communities' recovery. As money is raised and survivors' needs are identified, projects will become ready for volunteers to help with rebuilding and repair. OKUMC Disaster Response and Volunteers in Mission can help churches coordinate a mission project in any of these communities.

Oklahoma United Methodists responded in 2024 to the disaster crisis following Hurricane Helene and Milton, causing damage and flooding in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. Many of you also gave in response to the wildfires in California. As you know, through our United Methodist connection, UMCOR's US Disaster Response was ready to respond with money and supplies. Each Conference's Disaster Response ministry coordinated together to provide Early Response Teams, shelters, food, and more. Your financial support enabled immediate help, and will enable recovery help for our neighbors' suffering.

Oklahoma UM churches also responded to the hurricanes by assembling Cleaning Kits. 267 kits were collected and transported to our nearest United Methodist warehouse at the Missouri Conference's Office in Columbia, Missouri. The value of these supplies is \$20,000. They will replace those kits sent to hurricane survivors.

Respectfully submitted,
Dana Parker, Lori Foster, Karen Distefano, Bruce Davis

Bartholomew and Jacob. The sun was peeking through the stained-glass windows of FUMC Sunday morning, casting colorful, sleepy patterns across the empty pews. All was quiet, save for the gentle hum of the HVAC and the occasional creak of an old floorboard. That is, until Bartholomew, a bat of discerning taste and questionable navigation skills, decided it was high time for his pre-dawn reconnaissance flight.

As the first early birds (the human kind) began to arrive, Bartholomew found himself swooping through the nave, convinced he'd discovered the world's largest, most echo-y cave. He performed an impressive, if disoriented, aerial acrobatics, narrowly missing the lights. Then he decided to settle down dangling precariously from a very high, very return air vent. One could hear gasps, then a shrieks, and soon the church was abuzz with whispers of "Bat!" and "Oh, dear!"

Enter Firefighter Jacob, whose calm demeanor was just of that as an experienced firefighter. A ladder was procured – the longest, creakiest ladder known to man, usually reserved for changing the highest lightbulbs. Jacob, with the grace of a seasoned tightrope walker (albeit one carrying a towel while his uncle had a box), ascended. The congregation watched with bated breath, some saying quiet prayers, others their cell phones, ready to capture the spectacle.



Bartholomew, startled awake by the creaking and the hushed murmurs, decided this giant, towel-clad creature was clearly trying to steal his prime napping spot. He flapped indignantly, making Jacob ascent even more challenging. Finally, with a gentle

swoop and a surprisingly flick of the towel, Jacob had him!

A collective sigh of relief swept through the church. Jacob carefully descended, the towel held aloft like a trophy handed off to Josh who handed the closed box off to Jose. Outside, in the crisp morning air, he opened the box. Bartholomew, blinking in the sunlight, paused for a moment, perhaps offering a silent "Thanks, pal," before soaring off into the trees, presumably to tell his bat buddies about the peculiar, echo-y cave with the really tall, human. After resounding applause, Church service, thankfully, proceeded without any further unplanned aerial performances.

**Additional August calendar updates:
Autine'e Putnam's birthday, August 14**



Author - Timothy Keller



Was an American [Presbyterian](#) pastor, preacher, theologian, and [Christian apologist](#). He was the chairman and co-founder of [Redeemer City to City](#), which trains pastors for service around the world. He was also the founding pastor of [Redeemer Presbyterian Church](#) in New York City and the author of [The New York Times bestselling](#) books *The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith* (2008), *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God* (2014), and *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* (2008). The prequel for the latter is *Making Sense of GOD: An Invitation to the Skeptical* (2016).

Keller was recruited by his denomination to start [Redeemer Presbyterian Church](#) in [Manhattan](#) in 1989.

Redeemer Presbyterian Church grew from 50 people to a total attendance of over 5,000 people each Sunday as of 2008, leading some to call Keller "the most successful Christian evangelist in the city". The church's emphasis on young urban professionals, whom Keller believed exhibit disproportionate influence over the culture and its ideas, has given the church an unusual makeup for a US [megachurch](#). The majority of the congregation is made up of single adults; it is also over forty percent Asian-American, and has many congregants working in the arts and financial services. In his preaching, "he hardly shrinks from difficult Christian truths, [but] he sounds different from many of the shrill evangelical voices in the public sphere." Keller often critiqued both political parties and avoided taking public stances on political issues, resulting in a politically centrist church.

On July 1, 2017, Keller stepped down from his role as senior pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church. The move was part of a larger vision to shift his efforts from preaching to training the next generation of church leaders and starting new churches in global cities through [Redeemer City to City](#).

To unsubscribe, please send an email to fumcpc.business@gmail.com. Flame articles should be submitted by 5 p.m. Sunday evening.

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