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The Flame (USPS 17) is published once a month, a total of 12 issues per year, by First United Methodist Church, Ponca City, OK.

Hey Youth and Youth Parents, the youth worked really hard on the new meeting rooms. The youth have decided to split the rooms by Boys and Girls instead of the Jr. High and Sr. High. Take a look at the girls bright watercolor room and the boys retro look! They did an amazing job and we are so proud of them.

This year for summer camp we have decided to attend Camp Horizon close by in Ark City! This is a Methodist camp with lots of great experiences. The Jr High camp is called Junior Wonders and the Senior camp is Counselor in Training. Please register at the link below and when you get to payment DO NOT PAY, click on the church is paying option.

<http://www.horizoncenter.org/> to register.

Blessings to all
 Heather and Lindsey



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

JUNE 8-11, 2020

6:00 - 8:15 PM

4 YEAR OLDS - 6TH GRADE

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

200 SOUTH 6TH, PONCA CITY, OK

PRE-REGISTRATION REQUESTED.

ENROLLMENT INFO IN THE LOBBY

OR CALL 762-1681

THE FLAME

Volume 50, Issue 4

APRIL 2020



“O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”

Worship Opportunities

I Corinthians 15:55 NLT

April 5 Palm Sunday

Sunday School	9:00 AM
Worship Service	10:00 AM

April 9 Maundy Thursday (Service at First UMC)

7:00 PM

April 12 Easter Sunday

Sunrise Service	7:00 AM
Worship Service (No Sunday School) or Evening Activities)	10:00 AM

SUBJECT TO CHANGE



Pastor Don Griffin

I have been blessed to live in a country that has provided me with a quality standard of life. What most Americans fail to realize, including me at times, is that we are among the wealthiest people to have ever lived. We have a roof over our heads and climate control that keeps us comfortable and safe from the elements. We have access to plentiful food that provides us the sustenance we need for life. We turn on the faucet and clean drinking water comes out in abundance. We have sewer systems and trash pickup. We have automobiles that provides with the ability to move about without much limitation. We have so many conveniences that most of the world would view as luxuries.

Access to healthcare is another great convenience for most of us while a luxury for a large percentage of the world. Over the past month, we have had our confidences shaken about many of the conveniences we usually take for granted. Someday our children will tell their grandchildren of the pandemic of 2020. They will speak of toilet paper shortages, school closings and time where even

church services were relegated to online streaming. Never in my life have I experienced this. Only

those who lived during the depression would recognize some of the panic and fear we are seeing today.

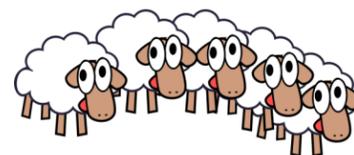
The 23rd Psalm has the psalmist proclaiming, "Even though I walk through the darkest Valley (The Valley of the Shadow of Death), I will FEAR nothing (no evil) for you are with me." Some think unbelief is the opposite of faith, it's not. Fear is the opposite of faith. Fear tells us that all is lost and there is no hope. Fear leads us to do things that hurt others. Fear leads us to not trust the abundance and providence of God, but instead to focus on our frailty. Fear leads us to hoard supplies like toilet paper because we are not sure of them being available next week. They always have been, but for some reason this virus causes us to need excessive amounts of toilet paper. I understand the germ gel and disinfectant cleaners, but toilet paper?

I have always believed that the task of the church, God's people on earth, was to bring about God's kingdom on earth by our actions as we live out our faith. Through our love, we share a bit of the divine with the hurting and broken people of today. In response to this crisis we are in, our church is establishing lists of our members and assigning someone to "shepherd," to call and check on each of you each week. This way those of us who are physically able can take care of the needs of those who are sick or just not able to get out. If you need milk, need a prescription picked up, need something that you cannot do yourself dur-

ing this time we want to help you. Until your shepherd calls and introduces themselves to you, call the church office 580-762-1681 or Pastor Don's cell 580-527-1249. You have nothing to fear. God is here with you and your church family is here for you. During this time of uncertainty, you can be certain of God's love and your church family.

Moving our worship to streaming only was the hardest decision of my career. Sundays are my favorite day of the week and it is because I am in worship of my God with my favorite people on the earth, my church family. I ask you to keep our worship time sacred. Please join us on Sparklight (Cable One) on channel 68 or on Facebook live streaming on our church page. There is a link on our webpage that will take you to our Facebook page. We will provide as complete a worship experience as possible. I will preach the same message as if I was looking at your beautiful faces.

At the height of the Depression, America elected a new leader in Franklin Roosevelt. His famous line, "There is nothing to fear but fear itself" marked a turning point in America in those dark days. We have nothing to fear. Our God is present and will see us through.



SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
			1 3:30 Kid's M&Ms 4:15 Confirmation Class 5:30 P&P 6:00 YMM 7:00 Chancel Choir	2 UMW 1:30 Deborah 7:00 Miriam	3	4
5 Palm Sunday 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Communion Food Sack Sunday 5:00 YMM	6 5:15 Carillon Bells Bill Elliott's Bible Study	7 8:45 Intercessory Prayer 5:00 Care Team	8 3:30 Kid's M&Ms 4:15 Confirmation Class 5:30 P&P UMW Easter Dinner 6:00 YMM 7:00 Chancel Choir	9 Maundy Thursday 7:00 Evening Service	10	11
12 Easter Sunday 7:00 Sun Rise service 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship No Evening Activities	13 5:15 Carillon Bells Bill Elliott's Bible Study	14 8:45 Intercessory Prayer 6:00 Board of Trustees	15 4:15 Confirmation Class 7:00 Chancel Choir	16	17	18
19 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Potluck lunch UMW Sunday 5:00 YMM	20 12:00 Flame Deadline 5:15 Carillon Bells Bill Elliott's Bible Study	21 8:45 Intercessory Prayer	22 5:00 UMW Unit Meeting 7:00 Chancel Choir	23	24	25
26 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship 5:00 YMM	27 5:15 Carillon Bells Bill Elliott's Bible Study	28 8:45 Intercessory Prayer	29 7:00 Chancel Choir	30 8:45 Flame Mailed		

PLEASE NOTE: all activities have been canceled until further notice. Once the concerns over the Corona virus is past we will resume normal activities. Stay Safe!



PRAYER CORNER

The Gate of Everlasting Life

Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of the Lord's resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by your life-giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

— *Book of Common Prayer, 1979 version*



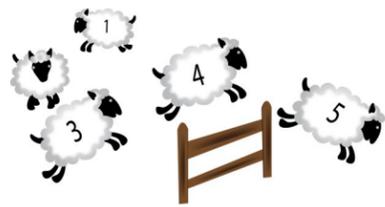
N.E.R.A. Donations

It's time for the First Sunday donations to the New Emergency Relief Agency. Since we may not have service at the church building, you may want to take the food, bags, egg cartons, etc to their store.

NERA is on the NW corner of Central and 1st St just a few blocks West of our own building.

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Matthew Ware, Jr	04/02	Don Griffin	04/15
Tanner Otto	04/04	Colton Schultz	04/15
Alex Biery	04/06	Mary Lou Loret	04/17
Samantha Biery	04/06	Sally Tubbs	04/20
Drew Palmer	04/06	Shawn Gray	04/22
Carole Rodgers	04/06	Karah Mariyappan	04/23
Jaron Meyer	04/09	Carol Bouldin	04/25
Jayne Detten	04/10	Lou Ann Garrity	04/27
Scott Layton	04/10	Shelby Swanson	04/30



NOVELS AT NIGHT

We did have to cancel our meeting this month. I hope some of you enjoyed Haben. I know I was glad to have read this story. It really did inspire me to be brave and to look for solutions to problems. Haben, a woman who was born Deaf/Blind, lived a life of adventure, learning and purpose. This book made me think of times I have not been brave or that I have been in fear even having my sight and hearing. One phrase I particularly liked; sighted or blind, deaf or hearing, each of us holds just the tiniest fraction of the worlds wisdom. Admitting we don't know everything will aid us on this Trek for Knowledge.

Our next book is; *The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek* by Kim Michele Richardson. Inspired by the true blue-skinned people of Kentucky and the brave and dedicated Kentucky Pack Horse library service of the 1930s, *The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek* is a story of raw courage, fierce strength, and one woman's belief that books can carry us anywhere — even back home.

I just finished *Before We Were Yours* by Lisa Wingate. This historical novel was passed to me. I

will pass it around. If you need a book, let me know and I will bring one over to leave at your door. Please be in touch. Miss you my friends.

Gineta



DIDJA???

Everyone knows what a mobile society we live in. Maybe you still live in the same house, but did you cancel your land line or change your mobile phone? Email addresses get changed too. If you fit any of these categories, we need your help. Please send us an email or phone the church office with any changes in your information. We are working on the directory information for our picture directory and want to make sure our information is correct.



Wow! Can you believe it's already April? Spring is in the air.

Palm Sunday, April 5th, will be an exciting day of worship as our children and Kids' M&Ms lead the Palm Processional and sing several songs. Carol Choir (4years old—1st grade) will sing with Ms. Cathie while Wesley Choir (2nd—5th grade) will sing one song on their own and one song with the Chancel Choir, both directed by Joycelynn.

Greetings friends!

As I write this, I am looking at a plaque on my desk that our sweet friend, Alice Bland, gave me several years ago and it's appropriate for the changes that seem to be happening daily right now. It says *"I don't know what tomorrow holds, but I know Who holds tomorrow"*. I always smile and think of Alice when I see it!!

By the time this newsletter is printed, there's a possibility that you may be joining our worship services by Facebook or by watching on Cable. Even in these times of a "new normal" and adapting to the new social distancing guidelines, the work of the church con-

Music Notes

By Joycelynn Davidson

Kids' M&Ms will have their final day on April 8th with a trip to the Ambuck Park. We have had a busy, fun-filled spring with the kids in missions, games, singing and Bible stories.

Special THANKS to all who donated dog/cat food and treats for our trip to the animal shelter. If you haven't stopped by, it's worth the trip. The facility is beautiful and the staff was wonderful with our kids. They always welcome people to spend time with the animals.

Thanks also to those who help on Wednesday afternoons.

Connie Scott continued as our van driver. David & Desta Parks help with games and crafts. Larry is our "patrol officer" making sure the kids get to where they should be. Several of the youth have helped throughout the year and we couldn't do without them.

It has been another successful year with your children in Kids' M&Ms. Thank you for sharing them with us!



BE AWARE! All activities may be canceled due to the corona virus. Please check Facebook for updates.

tinues and I wanted you to be aware of the various ways you can continue to contribute to the ministries of First United Methodist.

We have several options:

By Text: Just text the donation amount to 1-580-324-3101 (no need to include the "\$" sign — just text the numerical amount). You'll receive a text back from Vanco requesting your payment info and the funds will be transferred to FUMC and you'll receive a confirmation text back from Vanco.

Online: On our website, www.fumcpc.org, go to the tab

named "Member Info" and click on "Contributions" and you can donate by paypal, credit or debit card.

By Monthly Autodraft: Call my cell 580-763-2196 and I'll get you set up for a monthly draft from your checking or savings account.

By Stock Transfer: We have an account with TD Ameritrade for easy transfer of stock to the FUMC account.

Cynthia





ADOPT A CHICK AT EAST-ER

Cookson Hills Center is a project of the United Methodist Church. It is the only rural mission program in the Oklahoma area and the only mission program that is a joint effort of the Oklahoma Conference, the Oklahoma Indian Mission Conference, the **United Methodist Women**, and the General Board of Global Ministries. All of the above groups are the means of financial support of the program provided by the Center.

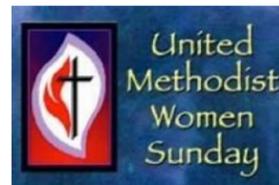
Cookson Hills Center has been a very significant part of the mission work of the United Methodist Women in Oklahoma since 1948. Cookson's primary mission is to serve the Native American people of NE Oklahoma. Cookson Hills serves three of the four poorest counties in Oklahoma. Past director, Meri Whitacker said, "We can't solve all their problems, but we can certainly help them live within the means they have, by providing firewood, helping with nutrition programs, sponsoring a day care so mothers can go to work. We can't give everyone a job but we can make it easier for them to keep a job if they can get one. Our job is to meet people where they are and help them live within the means they have. We can't promise them they'll win the lottery, but we can certainly help them make ends meet, stay warm, eat and get to the doctor if they need that." Another program they have is supplying families with chicks so

they can have food they can raise on their own. It's the old adage "Give a Man a Fish, and You Feed Him for a Day. Teach a Man To Fish, and You Feed Him for a Lifetime."

Program opportunities include: Agricultural programs (garden seeds and baby chicks), Senior Citizen Program, Christmas Store, Embroidery Shop, food pantry, and a thrift store.

It seems that UMW is constantly asking for money but they are really giving you the opportunity to pick a mission and be part of it. At this Easter time the decorated eggs are supporting the artisans in the Holy Lands who are able to make beautiful crosses out of the olivewood that is so prevalent in their area.

This year our local UMW is also supporting the **ADOPT A CHICK** program for Cookson Hills Mission in Tahlequah. For \$3.50 you can "adopt a chick". Cookson Hills will supply the chicks to the families who will then have eggs and chickens to help feed themselves. The goal at Cookson Hills is to give 120 families a dozen chicks to raise. If you feel this is a mission you would like to support, look around the church for "chicks" that you can adopt to help support the mission at Cookson Hills.



April 19th

United Methodist Women in this church are very active and involved in the work of mission and in empowering women, children and youth around the world. We use this Sunday, not only to educate everyone about the im-

portant work that is done by the United Methodist Women but also to celebrate our accomplishments.

One of the connectional ministries and missions of the United Methodist Church that we donated to this year is CJAMM or Criminal Justice and Mercies Ministries. An emphasis of United Methodist Women is to disrupt the school to prison pipeline. We have invited the Honorable April Sellers White, the chair of the board of CJAMM, to talk to the congregation and to share the work that is being done in the United Methodist Church.

Following the service on the 19th we will have a potluck luncheon in the Fellowship Hall for ALL the church. (Yes, we just did it April 8th but we are all going to be hungry again) The UMW will supply the meat (it will be different from the one served on the 8th, I promise) and ask that everyone bring a side dish to share. This will be a good time of fellowship and a chance to visit with the Honorable Judge White. Please plan to attend.



The Honorable April Sellers White grew up in the Drumright Methodist Church as the daughter of Peggy and Jack Sellers. She retired in 2010 as Associate District Judge for Creek County after twenty-seven years of judicial service which included over sixteen years handling all children's cases for Creek County in addition to other dockets. In 2009 Judge White was honored with the Kate Barnard Award for the most outstanding service by a state employee to Oklahoma's women and children.

Judge White is a member of Sapulpa First United Methodist



CONNECTION TEAM 3

Team 3 met in March. We were blessed to have Derek Belase come meet with us. Derek is a minister from the conference office. He works with church development. He came to discuss forward thinking with us. We had a spirited discussion. One of the things we talked about was being sure to communicate what our church is doing. During that part of the talk I took this picture.

That is Derek sitting next to Pastor Don.



That is one of the best lessons we learned this week.

During this time of enforced separation we need to let each other know that God is still at work in our lives and community.. He made us, knows us, loves us and has a plan for us.

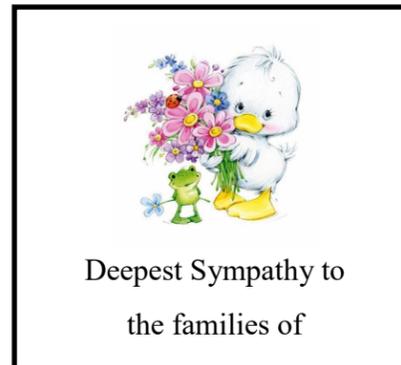
The Story of our church is ours to tell. Tell it with Love and Gusto!

Doc

Church where she serves as Lay Delegate, choir member and class teacher. She serves on the Council Oak District Mission Strategy team and their Lay Servant Committee. Judge April currently chairs the board for Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministries of Oklahoma, Inc. as well as serving on several other state and local boards which focus on children or improving the judicial system. Her favorite job is being Lolli for Gabriel, her two year old grandson.

OTHER UMW NEWS

April 8th Prayer and Praise will be sponsored by the UMW for our Easter Meal. The UMW will supply the meat and asks everyone to bring a side dish to celebrate Easter as only hungry Methodists can.



Deepest Sympathy to
the families of

Church family,

Words cannot express how much love we felt from you all while remembering and celebrating Linda's life. We truly appreciate your many prayers, sympathy, and endless acts of love. Thank you to everyone who brought cards, food, coordinated things behind the scenes, and shared kind words.

Sincerely,

The Gray Family

God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. So we will not fear when earthquakes come and the mountains crumble into the sea.

Let the oceans roar and foam. Let the mountains tremble as the waters surge!

A river brings joy to the city of our God, the sacred home of the Most High. God dwells in that city; it cannot be destroyed. From the very break of day, God will protect it. The nations are in chaos, and their kingdoms crumble! God's voice thunders, and the earth melts! The LORD of Heaven's Armies is here among us; the God of Israel is our fortress.

Come, see the glorious works of the LORD: See how he brings destruction upon the world. He causes wars to end throughout the earth. He breaks the bow and snaps the spear; he burns the shields with fire.

"Be still and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world."

The LORD of Heaven's Armies is here among us; the God of Israel is our fortress.

Psalm 46

