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# THE FLAME

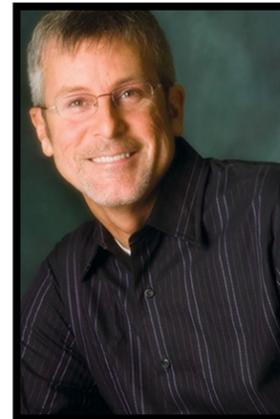
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## Meet the Composer!



### MEET JAY ROUSE

Jay Rouse is one of the premier choral arrangers in Christian music. He has over three hundred and fifty compositions and arrangements published, including over thirty major sacred choral works, fifty best-selling a cappella arrangements, a highly recognized hymn series for choir or piano and solo in-

strument titled Piano Plus, and a number of best-selling solo piano books and recordings. Mr. Rouse is a Dove Award winning producer and has logged many hours on the road traveling in the music ministry. He spent over ten years as musical director and accompanist for Sandi Patty. In addition to his work as a keyboard artist, composer, and arranger he has been the primary producer and conductor for all of the choral and instrumental publications from PraiseGathering Music Group and Gaither Music Company over the last two

decades. Jay Rouse continues to make a major impact on music for the church musician across the nation. We are excited to welcome Jay for this special event.

### You are Invited

Sunday, February 23, 2020  
 2:00 pm Concert

Presented by  
 Chancel Choir  
 and Friends

First United  
 Methodist Church  
 Ponca City, OK

Reception follows concert

### WEDNESDAY ACTIVITIES RETURN

Wednesday activities begin on February 5th.  
 Has your group signed up to serve dinner?

Kids' M&Ms	3:30 PM
Youth Music	4:45 PM
P&P	5:30 PM
WOW	6:00 PM
Chancel Choir	7:00 PM



Confirmation Classes will begin in late February. Contact Pastor Don or the church office for more information.



New Shirts for the Youth Group

Hey youth!! We don't have much this month, but we will have Youth Sunday School every Sunday morning at 9AM, and TYT every Sunday night at 6PM. Don't forget, P&P starts back up this month! Also I am working on something for spring break, so if you will be in town March 16-20 please let me know.

Blessings to all,  
 Lindsey McGee



Youth Lock-In



## A Time of Difficult Decisions



Pastor  
Don Griffin

As an ordained Elder in the Oklahoma Annual Conference, my membership is not in our local church. Though I'm appointed by the Bishop to serve Ponca First Church, my membership resides in the Annual Conference and I am a member of the Order of the Elder. This includes all ordained Elders who are members of the Annual Conference regardless if they are active or retired. We had our annual January meeting yesterday in Edmond and I gathered with my fellow Elders as well as the Deacons and local pastors for worship, lunch and a meeting. The worship was wonderful, the meal was okay, but it is the meeting's difficult subject matter that I wish to share with you.

I'm sure most of you have some understanding of the issues facing the United Methodist Church. Though the issues are more complex, it is usually just narrowed down to the issue of LGBTQ issues and the way they are addressed in our denomination. One extreme position is that those who belong to these communities are outside the teachings of the Bible (historic church) and should be excluded from ordination or license to serve a church or even a leadership position within the local church as a lay person. Those on the extreme right are certainly opposed to marriage of

same sex individuals. The other extreme position is that we are all broken children of God and should be received by love by the local church. All people should be allowed to live a full life including marriage. The church should allow people who are LGBTQ to serve as God calls them regardless if it is in a leadership position in the local church or as a pastor. These are the extremes and most people are not on the hard right or hard left on this or any issue but occupy a more nuanced opinion.

In December, a group of Bishops and leaders from both sides of this difficult issue came together with a renowned mediator to work on resolution. The product they came up with after much prayer and discussion is called the Protocol or more precisely "Protocol of Reconciliation & Grace Through Separation." You can google that document or find it on our conference website at OKUMC.ORG. I will not even attempt to try to go into the great details but want to point out a few things. First, this is not an official act of the church. Only the General Conference, which meets in May 2020, can vote on any binding legislation. Until it is presented there and accepted, it has no standing in the church. Though some are encouraged that this may be the framework to address this complex issue, right now it is just one of many proposals that will be addressed.

If this "protocol" comes to fruition, it would call for the church to be divided into two arms. One would be a new denomination that better fits the more extreme position on the right while the other would be the Post Separation version of our current United Methodist Church. The United Methodist Church would retain the name and the logo. The two would be affiliated loosely but would be separate denominations. This is much too complex to address here, but I am heartbroken over the prospect of the

church (denomination) I love splitting over any issue.

A few thoughts: the first date we will probably have to even consider all of this is 2021 and maybe not until 2024. Regardless of what happens, Ponca First will continue in the Wesleyan tradition you have come to expect. I will be your pastor and we will continue to do the wonderful ministries God has called us to share in. I know it is troubling, but we must trust God and each other to weather this challenge and come out on the other end a stronger and more united church family. Remember what I have been sharing with you; I believe the best is yet to come! Be in prayer about this challenge. Ask for God's divine intervention to keep this from happening and then trust God to see us through the valley even if it does come to pass.

My final thought on this issue for now is about our need to listen. One of our culture's biggest sins is our failure to listen and respect the opinion of the other person. Our love of Jesus and our desire to follow his teachings should empower us to accept and love all people. When someone disagrees with you, remember that person is God's child and treat them as such. We may live in this world, but we do not have to conform to the hate of this culture. We can understand another person's opinion and disagree with it without hating the other person. Our world needs Jesus now! Please join me, sharing Him with the world through our love, acceptance, mercy and compassion.

Pastor Don



"Legalism says God will love us if we change. The gospel says God will change us because He loves us."  
~ Tullian Tchividjian



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
						1
2 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Communion Food Sack Sunday 3:30 MTC Rehearsal 6:00 TYT	3 5:15 Carillon Bells 6:30 Bill Elliott's Bible Study	4 8:45 Intercessory Prayer 5:30 Care Team	5 3:30 Kids' M&Ms 4:45 Youth Music 5:30 P&P 6:00 WOW 7:00 Choir	6 10:00 Ladies' Bible Study UMW 1:30 Deborah 7:00 Miriam	7	8
9 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship 3:30 MTC Rehearsal 6:00 TYT	10 5:15 Carillon Bells 6:30 Bill Elliott's Bible Study	11 8:45 Intercessory Prayer 6:00 Trustees	12 3:30 Kids' M&Ms 4:45 Youth Music 5:30 P&P 6:00 WOW 7:00 Choir	13 10:00 Ladies' Bible Study	14 <i>Valentine's Day</i> 	15
16 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship 3:30 MTC Rehearsal 6:00 TYT	17 12:00 Flame Deadline 5:15 Carillon Bells 5:30 Friendship Feast 6:30 Bill Elliott's Bible Study	18 8:45 Intercessory Prayer 6:30 Novels at Night	19 3:30 Kids' M&Ms 4:45 Youth Music 5:30 P&P 6:00 WOW 7:00 Choir	20 10:00 Ladies' Bible Study	21	22 9:30 MTC Rehearsal 6:00 MTC Banquet for participants
23 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship 2:00 MTC Concert & Reception 6:00 TYT	24 4:00 PM Patches 5:15 Carillon Bells 6:30 Bill Elliott's Bible Study	25 8:45 Intercessory Prayer	26 <b>Ash Wednesday</b> 3:30 Kids' M&Ms 4:45 Youth Music 5:30 P&P 6:00 WOW 7:00 Choir	27 8:45 Flame Mailed 10:00 Ladies' Bible Study	28	29

"Though we are incomplete, God loves us completely. Though we are imperfect, He loves us perfectly. Though we may feel lost and without compass, God's love encompasses us completely. ... He loves every one of us, even those who are flawed, rejected, awkward, sorrowful, or broken."

— Dieter F. Uchtdorf



### News from Team 3!!

Team 3 is a new committee that is reviewing the ministries of the church to try to help maximize our church's effectiveness in ministry. We are just beginning to look at the ongoing and proposed programs. We hope to help coordinate efforts. This is a daunting endeavor and will never be "completed" but we will strive to get some good work done.

We have met twice so far. As items come up in our meetings we will attempt to communicate with the congregation. This is our first report. The main focus of this report will be the Caring Fund and the youth ministry. I will also mention some of the other items we discussed.

We discussed the caring fund last meeting. This is a fund FUMC has that helps with emergency funds for individuals with acute needs. The rules about eligibility and amounts are already set. Becky Hightower is a key person regarding the fund.

The issue is that there is just not enough money coming into the fund to meet the needs. We discussed having special giving with communion, perhaps taking money from Prayer and Praise as it is available, dedicated giving and other mechanisms of funding. Be aware that these issues will be coming up for action fairly quickly... Please hold up this concern in prayer. It is an opportunity for disciple-

ship. The other process coming up for quick action is likely to be the youth ministry coordination. Although much great work is already being done in this area we think there is more to be done. Don, along with this and other committees, is certainly focused on these issues. Coordination of these efforts is a priority. Youth programs will allow multiple opportunities for discipleship. Please hold this concern in prayer.

We discussed getting men together to help coordinate and support some "manly" functions around the church.

A new sign that would be easier to update was discussed.

A renegade member who shall remain anonymous suggested that we have coffee and donuts with tables in the back of the church on Sunday mornings. This caused some heated discussion. Perhaps in the balcony is a better thought.

Members of the committee are Don, Colleen, Doc, Betsy, Terri, Mark, Suzanne, Wayne, Arleen, Bill, Becky (NOT the anonymous member) and Suzi our leader. Any of us would love to get input from the rest of you as we proceed.

This last is from me, I think we should be promoting discipleship, not fire insurance!

In Christ's love  
Doc Slater

### LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Folks, in many of your consultations and church/charge conferences I heard a strong request from you and the laity of your congregations... that you want training opportunities - particularly for administrative committees. As you all know well, our district covers a lot of miles. Because of that reality our District Administrator, Diane Bull and I work hard to offer a number of options for training throughout our district.

Below you'll see information on leadership training that's been sent to you and members of your congregations via email and the NPD E-Newsletter. As of today our registration #s are NOT encouraging. So... I'm writing you to say that "SUNDAY'S COMING". If you and your people really do want training - please put your registrations where your mouths are and urge people to attend.

Thanks so much for your faithful leadership!  
Trish Malloy, D.S.

**Church Leadership Training**  
6 PM to 8PM Dinner will be served  
February 24th

Ponca City Albright UMC  
Registration deadline Feb. 17th  
Sessions being offered include:  
Simplified Structure  
Trustees  
Finance  
SPRC

Contact the church office if you would like to attend.



## Music Notes

by Joycelynn Davidson



**Chancel Choir** is busily preparing for our concert with Jay Rouse on February 23rd. We have had two rehearsals with 50 registered to participate. This is always an exciting time as we bring together singers from across the area. So far we have 10 churches represented.

There is room for more singers if you would like to participate or

know someone who would. We rehearse on Sundays 3:30—5:00 pm. See the front page for more information.

The concert is Sunday, February 23rd at 2:00 pm. Jay and his wife will participate in worship that morning and Chancel Choir will present the newly commissioned anthem "Love Has Made a Difference" during worship.

It is truly an honor to be able to hold this event thanks to the generosity of this congregation.

### HANDBELLS

**Carillon Bells** are rehearsing on Mondays at 5:15 pm. This is such a fun time of ringing, laughing and growing together that

you could actually call it a therapy session. We have welcomed Taylor Otto who is a novice ringer. We are currently ringing 3 octaves and have room for 3-4, ore people to be able to ring the 5th octave. Anyone interested can come give it a try or contact me for some tutoring.

### KID'S M&Ms

Kids' M&Ms starts back February 5th at 3:30PM. Be sure to notify the school if your child will be riding the church van. We have lots Scheduled for this spring so make plans to be here. Dates to reserve for worship are February 9th, March 1st and April 5th. Our final session is April 8th.



### FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS:

Art Mires	2/01	Dennis Sanders	2/14
Seth Griffin	2/03	Caitlin Parr	2/15
Melissa Grubbs	2/05	Khrystal Humble	2/19
Jose Cervantes	2/07	Anisa Layton	2/19
Ed Goodman	2/07	Alana White	2/22
Kristin Rasmussen	2/07	Sandra Martin	2/23
Carol Howe	2/08	Javier Cervantes	2/24
Sandi Hedinger	2/10	Susan Fitzgerald	2/24
Claudia Bellah	2/11	Court Davis	2/27
Max Jackson	2/10	Teri Harris	2/29
Carey Head	2/14		



### PRAYER CORNER

#### *The Words to Say I Love You*

I was there, yet you did not see Me.

The times you did cry I wrapped you in My loving arms and wiped the tears from your eyes.

Every prayer – I heard, and answered every cry for help – I came; I cast down all your enemies and brought them all to shame.

You are My beloved son whom I have set free. I removed your chains of darkness because you believed in Me.

I am in you and you in Me. None can take us apart. Where are the words to express my love? They are written on your heart.

~Jennifer Kulp



#### **NERA and Food Sack Sunday**

I see that the Treasure Chest is about half full. Can we get it to over-flowing this Sunday February 3rd? Besides non-perishable food, they can still use bags and egg cartons and food for those who come in off the street; like Vienna Sausage, small servings of pudding, other small containers with flip tops, energy bars, or ready to eat items

Thanks for your Kindness!



### NOVELS AT NIGHT

We have read some really great books so far and discussed many topics. We were talking about how we all have prejudice of one kind or another and how this can affect our behavior towards others. The last book, *Where the Crawdads Sing*, gave us plenty to discuss. Our next book will do the same.

FEBRUARY book is; *Small Great Things* by Jodi Picoult.

Jodi Picoult's *Small Great Things* is about racism, choice, fear, and hope. The novel is based on the true story of a labor and delivery nurse who was prohibited from caring for a newborn because the father requested that no AfricanAmerican nurses tend to his baby. This is a horrible, emotive book that puts both racism and white privilege on trial in a nail-biting courtroom drama.

Ruth Jefferson is a labor and delivery nurse at a Connecticut hospital with more than twenty years' experience. During her shift, Ruth begins a routine checkup on a newborn, only to be told a few minutes later that she's been reassigned to another patient. The parents are white supremists and don't want Ruth, who is African American, to touch their child. The hospital complies with their request, but the next day, the baby goes into cardiac distress while Ruth is alone in the nursery. Does she obey orders or does she intervene?

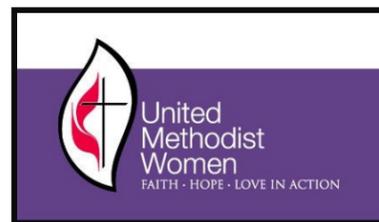
Ruth hesitates before performing CPR and, as a result, is charged with a serious crime. Kennedy McQuarrie, a white public defender, takes her case but gives unexpected advice: Kennedy insists that mentioning race in the courtroom is not a winning strategy. Conflicted by Kennedy's counsel, Ruth tries to keep life as normal as possible for her family—especially her teenage son—as the case becomes a media sensation. As the trial moves forward, Ruth and Kennedy must gain each other's trust, and come to see that what they've been taught their whole lives about others—and themselves—might be wrong.

We meet on February 18th at 6:30PM. See you then.

Gineta



**January 19, 2020  
New member Buzz Nye  
with Daughter Tracie**



### UMW Happenings

2020 is bringing an exciting year to UMW. In the past year, \$5,000 was earned for missions and dispersed to 9 organizations of mission. Five of the missions are Oklahoma United Methodist Connectional Missions which have in the past received apportionment funds but are no longer receiving apportionments. The five that were chosen were Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministries, Oklahoma Indian Conference, Cookson Hills, Project Transformation and Circle of Care. The four Ponca City missions that were chosen this year are Child Development

Center, Living Hope Pregnancy Center, Survivors Network and the Caring Fund at our own church. In the next months we hope to educate everyone as to the work of each of these important missions.

We have plans for UMW Sunday scheduled for April 19, Eastertime projects, and of course, earning more money for missions. A district Spiritual Day Apart is planned February 29th at Tonkawa FUMC.

Stopping the High School to prison pipeline is the focus of UMW this year. There will be emphasis locally and nationally to educate church members as to the problem and what can be done to help stop the problem. It is our duty as followers of Christ to take our heads out of the sand and to see what we can do to help stop a problem that puts Oklahoma as number one. Oklahoma is now number one

in the number of incarcerated people and number one in the number of incarcerated women. We will learn more about how we can help when Kristen Harlin from CJAMM comes to talk to us on UMW Sunday April 19th.

According to

The Sentencing Project  
1705 DeSales Street NW  
8th Floor

Washington, D.C. 20036

Statistics for *Lifetime Likelihood of Imprisonment of U.S. Residents Born in 2001*

All Men, 1 in 9 will be imprisoned

- 1 in 17 of white men
- 1 in 3 of black men
- 1 in 6 of Latino men

All Women, 1 in 56 will be imprisoned

- 1 in 111 of white women
- 1 in 18 of black women
- 1 in 45 of Latino women



**What do you do with left over pecans? Make spiced pecans of course. They are on sale now!**