

THE FLAME

Volume 51, Issue 2

February 2021



Happy Valentine's Day

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

VALENTINE CHALLENGE

Doctors are seeing an increase in depression in people who are home bound, self quarantining or in nursing homes, even among children. Here is the challenge. Since we can't get together for now, plan on doing something nice for someone you know who is basically shut in because of Covid-19. Take them a batch of cookies, a small box of chocolates, or a candy bar. If they are diabetic, how about a small basket of fruit or cheese and crackers. Just a card letting people know they are remembered goes a long way to cheer someone up.



And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Hebrews 13:16



KIDS' M&MS

Kids' M&Ms will return to the Wednesday afternoon schedule on February 3rd, at 3:30 PM.

If your child or grandchild did not participate in the fall, now is a good time to join. The vans will make runs to all the schools to give children rides to church. If you have any questions, you may call Joycelynn or Cathie here at the church.

(580) 762-1681



Pastor
Don Griffin

A Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition

*"I am no longer my own, but thine.
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me
with whom thou wilt.*

*Put me to doing,
put me to suffering.*

*Let me be employed by thee or laid
aside for thee,
exalted for thee or
brought low for thee.*

*Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things,
let me have nothing.*

*I freely and heartily yield all things
to thy pleasure and disposal.*

*And now, O glorious
and blessed God,*

*Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
thou art mine, and I am thine.*

So be it.

*And the covenant which I have
made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven.*

Amen."

Many life-long United Methodist are shocked to find out that their pastor, if an ordained Elder in the church, is not a member of the local Congregation. On June 2, 1993 at Boston Avenue United Methodist Church, I was ordained by Bishop Dan Solomon. On that night, my membership moved from the local congregation into the Oklaho-

A Time for Commitment

ma Annual Conference. I am a member of the Annual Conference and serve at the pleasure of the Bishop and Cabinet. At the beginning of each year, the Elders and Deacons of our Conference are called together for an Orders meeting. Each year, we recommit ourselves to the covenant we share with each other and the churches we serve by praying the above referenced Covenant prayer during our worship time.

This annual meeting is a highlight in my church year. It is an opportunity for me to come into fellowship and worship with those who share my ordination and to recommit myself to the calling of ministry and the service of the church (es) or ministries I am appointed to serve. I invite you to take a moment and pray the above prayer with me as we recommit ourselves to the ministry we share together as Ponca City First United Methodist Church. My membership may very well be in the Annual Conference, but this congregation is the place where my ordination is carried out and each of you are Seth's and my beloved spiritual family and we love you so much.

2020 was an exceedingly difficult year for most all of us as our world was changed by the deadly COVID-19 virus. Our church family has experienced so many challenges. Many of us have had horrible battles with this pandemic foe. We had many wonderful members move from this life into life eternal over the past year including a staff member who had faithfully served for three decades. We will miss her dearly. Several of our staff and members have

struggled and continue to struggle with health issues. Please keep Joycelyn Davidson in your prayers that she will overcome her health challenges. The struggle of figuring out what ministries we should do during this pandemic time and how to do them have been hard on all of us. Some members think we are not moving fast enough in resuming some activities while others feel we are going too fast. How do you please both opinions? This combined with the cultural divisions in our country that seem to be more profound now than at any time in my almost four-decade career as a local pastor or ordained minister.

Yes, last year was probably the most difficult and challenging year of ministry for all of us. If you reread the Wesleyan prayer, you will note the prayer focuses on each of us and our ministry belonging to God to be used wherever we find ourselves in life. Be it wealth or poverty, be it health or illness, God will use us wherever we find ourselves. We sometimes forget that our relationship with God is not all about what we get out of it. American culture may focus on us as consumers, but the Jesus faith is about what we have to offer God and others. In a sense, God uses us to transform the kingdom and our world instead of us using God to our benefit.

Please join me in this wonderful prayer as we work together for the sake of God's world and God's kingdom. It will not be easy.

(cont'd. on page 3)



“Music

Speaks what cannot be expressed

Soothes the mind and gives it rest

Heals the heart and makes it whole

Flows from heaven to the soul”

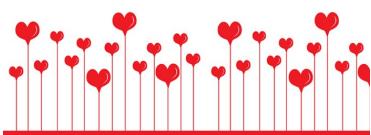


(Cont'd from page 2)

Though it may not be as challenging as last year, 2021 will bring valleys we must face and face them together. At times it will be easy to do the work and other times we will have to force ourselves to keep moving forward. Just remember, we will not take one step or face one millisecond that God is not with us providing the strength and direction if we just embrace His guidance.

God bless & keep you!

Pastor Don



Music Notes

by Joycelynn Davidson

KID'S M&Ms

Kids' M&Ms starts back February 3rd at 3:30. Be sure to notify the school if your child will be riding the church van. We will continue to follow the CDC guidelines for health safety.

Palm Sunday is March 28th. We normally have all the kids participate in a palm processional, but at this time I am not expecting to have choirs singing in worship yet. We will be creative in how we have the children take part so be watching for future plans.



HANDBELLS

Carillon Bells have begun rehearsal for the spring. We will be working on music for Lent and Easter. We have a good group of dedicated ringers who enjoy our time together. If you might be interested in ringing with us, please give me a call or see me after worship.

CHANCEL CHOIR

Chancel Choir will begin rehearsing again soon. I wish I could give you a start date. I will keep you posted as the search for an organist begins.

Valentine is near

I am wishing you were here

My soul waits for you.

Haiku from Wayne Moore.



The UWM/Youth Garage Sale

A great deal of unwanted treasure has been collecting in the bus barn. Plans at this time are for a garage sale to be held in April.

If you would like to make contributions of things to sell, you may bring it to the church or call Connie Scott for pick up.



The Sue Lippert Music Scholarship is being established with memorial gifts received in Sue's name. If you would like to contribute, designate your gift "Lippert Music Scholarship".





Hi friends,

I mailed 2020 contribution statements last week. If you have any questions or if you have not received yours, please call me at 580.763.2196 or send me a note at cynthiaw@cableone.net.

Please don't forget that we have a new mailing address for FUMC **for all mail** including checks, bill payments, letters, cards, etc : **PO Box 71 Ponca City, OK 74602**

(So if you are mailing anything to the church be sure to use the new mailing address & if you use bill payment for your offering, please notify your bank of the new address. Otherwise, we are experiencing a 2-3 week delay in receiving anything that includes the street address.)

Just a reminder of the various ways to make your donations to FUMC in addition to the offering plate:

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, click on the tab named "Donate" 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.

If you need help with any of these, please don't hesitate to call me at 580 -763-2196.

In response to the Stewardship Campaign in December, we have received 42 pledges totaling \$170,720. If you haven't completed a pledge card and you are interested in filling one out, please call the church office and Diane can send you one.

Cynthia



NOVELS AT NIGHT

We are living in a time of change. We have all changed our lifestyle, our face wear and our hygiene habits! Our book group has changed as well. After ten years of leading this group, I am stepping down. Attendance at the meetings has been small if at all. Over the years we have read some great books and have had many readers come and go. I have loved our lively and diverse discussions. What I would like to happen is for you, dear readers, to submit an article about what you are reading, have read, or will be reading. Share your thoughts with the rest of us. I am sure we would all like to know what the Sunday School classes are reading. I am stepping down and counting on you to step up. It did occur to me that I may need to nominate someone for the first article and then they can nominate someone, and so on. I am going to ask Kay Lynn Pendleton to share a book with us next month.



THANK YOU!!!

For many years, Wayne Moore and his daughter, Ramona Ash, have been our chief cooks for our Friendship Feast night. They have decided to retire. Thank you so much to Wayne and Ramona for your dedication to help others.

I also want to thank the four people who have stepped up to cook. Thank you, Bill Bridwell, Desiree Ray, Connie Scott and Marjorie Varee. Friendship Feast is cooking meals for take-out only so cooks are all we need at this time since there can only be four people in the kitchen. Many thanks to a couple in our church who provide the ingredients for the whole meal each month. Also, I have had 10+ women step up to make homemade cookies for the guests.

My heart rejoices because we have so many servants at FUMC who are willing to fill a need to help others. THANK YOU!!

Arleen Jacobson

Friendship Feast Board Member





Plarn Mats for the Homeless (Please bring lots of bags!)

Plarn is the new word for plastic yarn. The plarn is used to crochet sleeping mats which are intended for people who are less fortunate, be that the homeless, refugees in camps, or people in the third world. These crochet mats are remarkably comfortable and offer just enough to create a barrier between the ground and the body, to help retain body heat while sleeping. It's no problem if the mats get wet as they can easily be dried.

The mats are also a cleaner way of sleeping. Bugs don't like them. And when dirty, they can be easily hosed off, shaken out and be good to go again.

They are portable as well. The crochet plastic makes for a very lightweight mat. With the accompanying strap, these crochet mats can easily be carried over a homeless person's shoulder.

Not only are they free to make, each mat will keep 500-700 plastic bags out of the landfill. Humanitarian and eco-friendly, what is not to love?? !!

The UMW invites you to become part of this project. We are asking that you bring your plastic shopping bags to the Mission Barrel in the Welcome Center and then join us at a later date to help make some mats to share. Can't crochet? Maybe you could cut. Curious? Check out this YouTube link. https://youtu.be/yr_WHtGSE Yes! You can help!!!!

UMW Planning Meeting

Members of UMW met on January 16 to plan for 2021 activities. UMW is such an integral part of the United Methodist Church. Being part of UMW is a way to reach out to others, to many more people than if we work alone. UMW as a group is able to feed the hungry, care for the sick, share a cup of clean water to those who thirst.

The Deborah Group will meet February 4, 1:30 pm. Miriam Group will meet at 7:00 pm on the 4th. All are welcome and encouraged to join us. Isaiah 43:1 states that God is claiming us, redeeming us, calling us by name into this life of community.



RADA Sales Continue

If you would like to order RADA knives you can make an order in the Welcome Center office. We will place an order on February 22 if we have a total order of \$35.00 or more. These make great gifts!

Pecans

A few pounds of pecans are still available, nothing better than a Nut for Valentine's Day.



PRAYER CORNER

Gracious God,

My love for you grows daily.

Whenever I witness an act of kindness or receive an unexpected gift, I am reminded of your expansive heart. Even during times of duress, of sadness, or of heartache, I take comfort in knowing that nothing can separate me from your love.

Let this love in me bloom and flower so that I reflect your compassion and mercy in all that I say and do.

In gratitude and grace, I pray.

Amen



Hey youth, this month we will be returning to WOW at 5:30 PM on Wednesdays. We will also continue to have TYT at 5:30 on Sunday nights. With spring break coming up, we will be doing mission work for the church three days that week. I will be sending out more information about spring break soon. I can't wait to see all of y'all at TYT and WOW!

Blessings to all,
Lindsey



New Years' Eve Lock-in:



Games, Food and Fun!



Which is more dangerous, getting hit with a nerf ball, or falling asleep when others are awake with felt tip pin?



The Truth about Monsters

The truth is this,
every monster
you have ever met,
was once a human being
with a soul
that was as soft
and light
as silk.

Someone stole
that silk from their soul
and turned them
into this.

So when you see
a monster next,
always remember this.
Do not fear
the thing before you.
Fear the thing
that created it
instead.

~Nakita Gill



Even a little snow makes great snowballs.





February

2021



SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
	1 2:15 Handbells	2 9:00 Intercessory Prayer	3 3:30 Kids' M&Ms 5:30 WOW	4 UMW 1:30 Deborah 7:00 Miriam	5	6
7 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Communion Food Sack Sunday 5:30 TYT	8 2:15 Handbells 6:30 Youth Council	9 9:00 Intercessory Prayer 6:00 Board of Trustee3s	10 3:30 Kids' M&Ms 5:30 WOW	11	12	13
14 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Children's Church 5:30 TYT	15 12:15 Flame Submissions due in office 2:00 Handbells 6:00 Bill Elliott's Bible Study	16 9:00 Intercessory Prayer	17 Ash Wednesday 8:00 Stephen Ministry 3:30 Kids' M&Ms 5:30 WOW	18	19	20
21 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship 5:30 TYT	22 2:15 Handbells 6:00 Bill Elliott's Bible Study	23 9:00 Intercessory Prayer Flame Published to Web	24 3:30 Kids' M&Ms 5:30 WOW	25	26	27
28 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Children's Church 5:30 TYT						

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

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



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Mother's Day Out

Mother's Day out is back in session with hopes we can stay that way. We began on August 3rd but had to take a short time off because of possible Covid-19 exposure.

All of our teachers came back with the exception of Danna Walker who decided to retire after many, many years at MDO. The kids and all the remaining teachers miss her greatly but wish her the very best on her well-deserved retirement.

We have not been able to have any field trips but do stay busy every day with our everyday activities. We have spent time on the playground when the weather is nice.

We have some new enrollees but still have space for more. If you know of someone who can benefit from our program please let me know or ask them to call the church for an enrollment package.

I would like to thank all of you for your continued support, positive thoughts and prayers during this time.

We can feel the love and concern from all of you.

Bless you!



Give the Children Love

Children in the streets,
 children in houses,
 give them love,
 give them a true home.

They are gifts of the Lord
 to every parent on earth.
 They are precious little ones
 who love with a big heart.

Give them love,
 give them a home.
 For they deserve a life
 they can call their own.



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February 2021

Daily Prayers



for our YOUTH

- Our Sons/Daughters, Grandsons/Granddaughters & all the ones we love.

1

Eternal God, please teach me how to pray for XXX. Reveal the specific things I am to pray about concerning this child You have entrusted to my care.

But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets... ~ Daniel 2:28

2

Loving Father, may Your perfect peace reign in XXX's heart and mind, not anxiety or fear.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,... And be thankful.
~ Colossians 3:15

3

Sovereign Lord, please attune XXX's ears to Your voice. Please convict him to obey, walking as You have directed, even when it makes no sense to him.

...your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it." ~ Isaiah 30:21

4

Mighty God, may the words of XXX's mouth, and the meditation of her heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, You are XXX's Rock and Redeemer.

May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer. ~ Psalm 19:14

5

Awesome Lord, please soften XXX's heart to Your truth. May he know You intimately, confessing You, Jesus is Lord.

If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ~ Romans 10:9

6

Awesome Father, please infuse XXX with a good attitude so she works diligently for You in all her endeavors, striving for excellence not mediocrity.

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.. ~ Colossians 3:23

7

Almighty Lord, please protect XXX's mind from deceptive philosophies which try to negate the infallibility of Your Word; may he reject them unequivocally.

Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense.... ~ Colossians 2:8

8

Adonai, may XXX learn to exercise her faith with the same zeal she is required to exercise her physical body.

For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way... ~ 1 Timothy 4:8

9

Abba Father, may XXX have a joyful heart. May he celebrate in the world because of all the good things You have blessed him with.

... go and celebrate because of all the good things the LORD your God has given to you and your household. ~ Deuteronomy 26:11

10

Jehovah God, please strengthen XXX's resolve to resist all temptations to compromise her integrity by knowingly speaking untruths.

The LORD detests lying lips,... ~ Proverbs 12:22

11

Sovereign Father, may XXX be vigilant, guarding against all spiritual pitfalls. May his conduct be holy and pleasing to You.

Therefore prepare your minds for action. Be sober-minded. ~ 1 Peter 1:13

12

Everlasting Lord, please stir XXX to cast all her painful situations to You. Cleanse her of thoughts of retribution and malice. May she have grace to forgive.

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ~ Matthew 6:12

13

Father God, may XXX be saved by grace through faith. May he understand it is a gift, unmerited favor, not something he has earned.

God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ~ Ephesians 2:8

14

Abba Father, please remove envy from XXX's heart. When discontentment thoughts arise, please remind her of her own blessings.

... I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ~ Philippians 4:11

15

Gracious Lord, when XXX feels discouraged or fearful due to these unsettling times, remind him You are sovereign, and evil is ultimately destined to fail.

Everything I plan will come to pass, for I do whatever I wish. ~ Isaiah 46:10

16

Savior God, may XXX grasp the immeasurable depth and breadth of Your love for her. May she overflow with it, multiplying freely onto other people.

For we know how dearly God loves us,...
~ Romans 5:5

17

Almighty Father, may XXX be strong and courageous, standing firm in his faith through the various twists and turns of his life.

Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. ~ 1 Corinthians 16:13

18

Precious Lord, please help XXX recognize the persuasive temptations designed to lead her astray. Prompt her to surrender to You so she does not succumb.

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ~ James 4:7

19

Loving God, purge all forms of rebellion from XXX's heart. May he not presume on Your kindness, and mercy, may they lead him to repentance.

Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, ... God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? ~ Romans 2:4

20

Holy Father, may XXX be mindful that You are her place of refuge and her fortress. May her trust in You be unwavering.

I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."
~ Psalm 91:2

21

Dear Lord, please infuse XXX with passion for the work You intend for his life. May he follow Your directions so as not to drift aimlessly.

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;... ~ Psalm 32:8

22

Almighty God, may truthfulness be woven in the fabric of XXX's being so when examined, she will be justified and her character uncompromised.

And my honesty will testify for me in the future, whenever you check on the wages you have paid me. ~ Genesis 30:33

23

Everlasting Father, stir XXX to refresh and imprint Your Word on his heart every day to use as a guide in order not to sin against You.

I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. ~ Psalm 119:11

24

Loving Lord, may XXX not be a drunkard, violent, quarrelsome nor a lover of possessions or money. Please infuse her with a peaceful, gentle heart.

...not dependent on wine, not violent but gentle, peaceable, and free of the love of money. ~1 Timothy 3:3

25

Sovereign God, may XXX face challenges with supernatural confidence knowing that victory comes not by his might nor by his power, but by Your Spirit.

'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty. ~ Zechariah 4:6

26

Gracious Father, please keep XXX from harm. Watch over her physically and spiritually. Please bless her going out and coming in, each and every day.

The LORD will keep you from all harm
~ Psalm 121:7-8

27

Blessed Lord, when opportunities to share arise, stir XXX to give generously. Remind him that those who seek You will not lack any beneficial thing.

...they who seek the LORD shall not be in want of any good thing. ~ Psalm 34:10

28

Everlasting God, please grant XXX the perseverance to refine the gifts and abilities You gave her for Your glory, despite any obstacles she may face.

God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. ~ 1 Peter 4:10

