

# THE FLAME

Volume 51, Issue 10

October 2021

*Happy Fall, Y'all!*



“As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.” Genesis 8:22



**Work continues on the pavilion.  
Hopefully the weather will cooperate  
and we can celebrate it's completion  
outside when it is finished.**





Pastor  
Don Griffin

Once I was appointed to a church following the first female clergy in their history. I visited the facilities and my predecessor and her husband to talk about the community and the congregation. They were both very diplomatic and careful with their words, but both indicated that the congregation would accept me because I was a man and that's how they envisioned their pastor. I know this individual did a great job and worked tirelessly but some would never accept her ministry. I immediately realized that if many could not accept her as an ordained pastor, they might very well have difficulty accepting a single man raising his preschool son.

The world has changed so much in my lifetime. I grew up in a home where two parents were present and loving. We were not rich by any standard, but I cannot remember lacking anything I needed. The food on the table may not have been my first choice but it was hot, nutritious and we shared it together as a family unit at the dinner table. Most of my classmates' situations were very similar to my own. Ac-

ording to the latest census data, in the United States one in four children under 18 live in a single parent home. Over one third of those children live under the poverty line. This compares to 1 of 20 children who live in two parent homes. Our vision of what our community looks like may be a past memory and not a current reality.

As I said before, our world has changed so much. Remember what Ponca City FUMC was like in the late 60s through the 70s? I've heard many sharing stories of a full sanctuary and activities so numerous it would be hard to list. Instead of going back Fifty years, I decided to look back 28 years and went through the church directory of that year. Denny Hook was the appointed pastor. I counted five handbell groups and four vocal choirs. Seven adult classes were photographed and a very active children and youth ministry. The church was very active with missions and outreach. There were close to 250 photographed families in that directory. If we examined more closely, I imagine most of our church 25 and 50 years ago was made up of "traditional" family units and community of those time periods was much like what I experienced growing up. Is that what our world really looks like today?

I come to this important statement: The world to which we are ministering has changed just as our church make up has changed.

What has not changed is the good news of God's grace and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit still convicts people of their need to change and guides that process. The church still serves as a conduit of God's love into the community. Where we have seen this break down is the world around us has changed while

we were busy maintaining a system that we found comfortable. Christian growth requires us to step outside our comfort zone. In Matthew 28, Jesus commanded his followers (the church) to "go" to the world and bring this message of hope and redemption. No longer can we assume that people will find us and just assimilate into our normal.

Though it is hard for us to accept, Ponca City FUMC must adapt to our new world to make a difference for the sake of Christ. Recently Ponca City Asbury closed her doors after many years of faithful service. This is not an isolated example; this is a rising trend in United States Churches. Why are so many churches closing? I fear that most people who are struggling to survive just see the church as irrelevant to their everyday lives. Sadly, even our own "church members" often have left active participation in the church because it does not seem to fit them. Our congregation is prayerfully trying to discern how we can reach the unchurched. The reality is it begins with each of us being faithful to our commitment to God and covenant to be in ministry together. The future of Ponca City First is up to God and us. I know God will do His part. Will you?

Pastor Don





By Cathie Gilliland



### 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Bibles!

One of the best traditions of the church is handing out 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Bibles!

We will be presenting the Bibles during church on Children's Sabbath, October 24<sup>th</sup>. The following are the third graders I have on record. If your child is not on the list (regular visitors included), please let me know! I don't want to leave anyone out! We also have two new 4<sup>th</sup> graders in M&M's this year, so we will be including them as well! Come and enjoy this special Sunday with the kids – they will be leading you in another song, before heading upstairs to Children's Church.

*The Bible doesn't tell children to become like adults to be saved. Rather it tells adults to become like children to be saved.*

Ricky Davidson  
Tess Wilkerson

Trent Fleming  
Matthew Wilkerson

Evelyn Helling  
Lucy Wilkerson

Children's Church is now held every Sunday.



**M&M Kids learn how to make 'warm fuzzies'**



## UMW News

### We are one in mission

October 10th is UMW Sunday. Once again our theme is Interrupting the School to Prison Pipeline. Our guest speaker is Robin Wertz who is the Site Director of Exodus House.



Exodus House is an integral part of one of the United Methodist connectional ministries, CJAMM (Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministries). A special offering will be collected to help support this important ministry.

### UMW Monthly Meeting

Thursday, October 7 is our monthly UMW meeting at 6:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. (the Deborah Group and the Miriam Group are combining into one large, energetic and vital group). Please note the time change. This meeting is for ALL women in the church (and even your friends). Trish Goodman is the hostess. We have many upcoming activities planned and we need your help.

### Sack Lunches

The first and third Fridays in November UMW will be making sack lunches to hand out to school age children and others in the community who may not have



UMW ladies and friends work to prepare pears for pear honey & apple butter

much to eat on the weekends. We hope to continue into the following months if we find there is a need. The Friendship Feast does not serve on Fridays and we hope to fill in where needed. We will need help in making sandwiches and in handing out the sacks.

### PECANS

We will be selling pecans again this year. Everyone will have to preorder so we know exactly how many to order. They will again be \$13.00 a pound. Please pick up an order form in the Welcome Center office. We will let you know when they arrive.



### Thanksgiving Dinner

UMW will be sponsoring the annual Prayer and Praise Thanksgiving Dinner on November 17 in the Fellowship Hall. At that time we also will be selling homemade apple butter and pear honey with the proceeds going to the World Thank Offering. Put that on your calendar now and we will have more details later.

### BE JUST, BE GREEN

In UMW we are doing what we can to raise awareness of local and global environmental injustices. One thing that every person can do is educate yourself as to the reality of climate change. There are so many little steps each of us can take to alleviate a very large problem. Rev. Kathleen Stone said, "Climate change is a justice issue, especially affecting the poorest among us — meaning women, children and youth, and especially people of color."

On UMW Sunday our unit will be selling beeswax wraps. Beeswax wraps can be used instead of aluminum foil or plastic wrap and can be used numerous times. A small step but a big impact. These wraps will be \$10.00 for three different sizes.





Hey Youth and Youth Parents,

Is it just me or do the months keep getting shorter and shorter? Well either way we will have a fun month! We have W.O.W every Wednesday from 4 pm to 5:30 pm. I will also try to plan a special event this month; more information will be sent out very soon. If you or your youth want to be a part of the text message group please let me know.

Blessings,  
Lindsey



**I Like Fall**  
Poet: Aileen Fisher

I like fall:  
it always smells smoky,  
chimneys wake early,  
the sun is poky;

Folks go past  
in a hustle and bustle,  
and when I scuff  
in the leaves, they rustle.

I like fall:  
all the hills are hazy,  
and after a frost  
the puddles look glazy;

And nuts rattle down  
where nobody's living,  
and pretty soon...  
it will be Thanksgiving.



The Annual Charge Conference is scheduled at St. Paul's Methodist on Sunday, November 28th. Committee meetings to prepare reports for the charge conference have been scheduled. Your participation and support are greatly appreciated.

**Finance Committee**  
October 19th, 6:00 PM

**Lay Leadership**  
October 26th, 6:00 PM

**SPRC**  
October 28th, 7:00 PM

**Church Council**  
October 31st. 11:15 AM

**Charge Council**  
November 28th, 1:30 PM

Other meetings will be scheduled as needed.





**PRAYER CORNER**

**An Autumn Prayer**

Abba, Father, the trees are ablaze with your glory. The seasons change, but you never do.

You are always beautiful, in the green and freshness of spring as in the golds and reds and chills of autumn.

Make me like you.

Let my life reflect your beauty, season after season, as the calendar of my life turns and turns and turns.

The trees are letting go of this year's foliage.

Help me let go of both blessings and burdens, and surrender them both to your loving care.

Fallen leaves pattern the ground with variety.

So design my own fallings and failings into whatever design will please you most.

In Jesus' name, I pray,  
Amen.



**MENTAL HEALTH DAY**

On World Mental Health Day, 10 October, it will have been more than 18 months since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. In some countries, life is returning to some semblance of normality; in others, rates of transmission and hospital admissions remain high, disrupting the lives of families and communities.

In all countries, the pandemic has had a major impact on people's mental health. Some groups, including health and other frontline workers, students, people living alone, and those with pre-existing mental health conditions, have been particularly affected. At the same time, a WHO survey conducted in mid-2020 clearly showed that services for mental, neurological and substance use disorders had been significantly disrupted during the pandemic.

Yet there is some cause for optimism. During the World Health Assembly in May 2021, governments from around the world recognized the need to scale up quali-

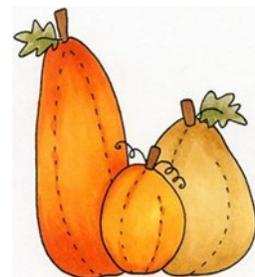
ty mental health services at all levels and endorsed WHO's Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2030, including the Plan's updated implementation options and indicators for measuring progress.

It's time to capitalize on this renewed energy among government leaders to make quality mental health care for all a reality. World Mental Health Day presents an opportunity for government leaders, civil society organizations and many others to talk about the steps they are already taking and that they intend to take in support of this goal.



**OCTOBER HAIKU**

Pumpkins seen in fields  
Announce a new harvest time;  
Bright orange Orbs abound.  
~Wayne Moore



**OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS**

Ernest Jantz	10/01	Dan Flewelling	10/23	Stan Long	10/27
Valerie Huffer	10/03	Stacy McGee	10/24	Suzy Hron	10/29
Darla Church	10/06	Harrison Poet	10/24	Gineta Swanson	10/29
Chris Humble	10/06	Vicki Stokke	10/24	Gene Rodgers	10/30
Ross Kubik	10/06	Barbara Bridwell	10/25		
Bill Elliott	10/08	Sue Kistler	10/25		
Charlie Poet	10/14	Lynn Varner	10/25		
Rod Kutz	10/17	Brett Hightower	10/26		
Diane Pendleton	10/22	Rod Alexander	10/27		





SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Communion Food Sack Sunday Children's Church	4	5 9:00 Intercessory Prayer 6:30 Bill's Bible Study	6 3:30 Kids' M&Ms 4:00 WOW 7:00 Chancel Choir	7 10:00 Ladies' Bible Study 6:00 UMW	8	9
					Oklahoma Annual Conference	
10 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship UMW Sunday Children's Church	11	12 9:00 Intercessory Prayer 6:00 Trustees 6:30 Bill's Bible Study	13 3:30 Kids' M&Ms 4:00 WOW 7:00 Chancel Choir	14 9:00 Stephen Ministry 10:00 Ladies' Bible Study	15	16
17 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Children's Church	18 5:00 Friendship Feast	19 9:00 Intercessory Prayer 6:00 Finance Committee 6:30 Bill's Bible Study	20 3:30 Kids' M&Ms 4:00 WOW 7:00 Chancel Choir	21 10:00 Ladies' Bible Study	22	23
24 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Children's Sabbath Children's Church	25 9:00 Staff Meeting 11:00 'PM Patches'	26 9:00 Intercessory Prayer 6:00 Lay Leadership Committee 6:30 Bill's Bible Study	27 3:30 Kids' M&Ms 4:00 WOW 7:00 Chancel Choir	28 10:00 Ladies' Bible Study 7:00 SPRC	29	30
31 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Children's Church 11:15 Church Council	<p>“Ah, Lovely October, as you usher in the season that awakens my soul, your awesome beauty compels my spirit to soar like a leaf caught in an autumn breeze and my heart to sing like a heavenly choir.”</p> <p>— Peggy Toney Horton</p>					

First United Methodist Church  
 P.O. Box 71  
 Ponca City, OK 74602  
 (580) 762-1681  
 Fax: 580-762-1839  
 fumcpc41@gmail.com  
 www.fumcpc.org  
 Like us on Facebook:  
 PoncaCityFirstUnitedMethodistChurch  
 instagram: fumc\_pc



Our newest member  
 Peggy Jacobs  
 pictured with  
 Betsy Carter and her mother,  
 Frieda McGee.



Pastor Don will be on vacation  
 October 4-10. If there is an emer-  
 gency, he can be reached on his  
 cell phone.

(580) 527-1249



## OCTOBER CHALLENGE

Invite someone to church, or call  
 someone you have missed seeing  
 at church and let them know they  
 are missed!



Although the first Sunday of each  
 month is designated 'Food Sack  
 Sunday' you are welcome to bring  
 non-perishable food items to the  
 church anytime the office is open.  
 Food we collect is taken to N.E.R.A  
 for distribution to those in need.



"October, baptize me with leaves!  
 Swaddle me in corduroy and  
 nurse me with split pea soup. Oc-  
 tober, tuck tiny candy bars in my  
 pockets and carve my smile into a  
 thousand pumpkins. O autumn! O  
 teakettle! O grace!"

~Rainbow Rowell ,



Small acts can change the  
 world! Every donation helps  
 keep our shelves full. This helps  
 us feed our clients and offer  
 more options for them to chose  
 from. We thank you all for your  
 kind hearts. Together we can  
 offer help so no one goes hun-  
 gry.

Sincerely,

Tom Short & Staff  
 New Emergency Resource  
 Agency and Food Resource  
 Center (NERA)

## OUR STAFF

### SENIOR PASTOR

Pastor Don Griffin  
[smugrad93@gmail.com](mailto:smugrad93@gmail.com)

### MUSIC DIRECTOR

Joycelynn Davidson  
[fumcmusic315@gmail.com](mailto:fumcmusic315@gmail.com)

### CHILDREN'S DIRECTOR

Cathie Gilliland  
[fumc.kids@outlook.com](mailto:fumc.kids@outlook.com)

### YOUTH DIRECTOR

Lindsey McGee  
[pcfumcyouth2020@gmail.com](mailto:pcfumcyouth2020@gmail.com)

### MDO & NURSERY DIRECTOR

Jordan Meador  
[mothersdayoutfumc@outlook.com](mailto:mothersdayoutfumc@outlook.com)

### ORGANIST

Debra (Debbie) Rue  
[Cougarue@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Cougarue@sbcglobal.net)

### BUSINESS MANAGER

Sheila Foxworthy  
[sheila.foxworthy@gmail.com](mailto:sheila.foxworthy@gmail.com)

### CHURCH SECRETARY

Dianne Clark  
[fumcpc41@gmail.com](mailto:fumcpc41@gmail.com)

### CUSTODIAL

Larry Davidson  
[ldlarrydavidson@yahoo.com](mailto:ldlarrydavidson@yahoo.com)

# October 2021 - Anti-Bullying Month



## Prayers for our Youth

- our Sons/ Daughters, Grandsons/  
Granddaughters & all youth we love ...

**1** For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. ~ 2 Timothy 1:7

Loving Lord, today, I lift up the school administrators, teachers, and coaches at XXX's school. Please grant them wisdom and courage to properly respond to incidents of bullying and other destructive behaviors.

**2** "Am I my brother's keeper?" ~ Genesis 4:9

Sovereign God, may XXX know, that yes, she is her friend's keeper. May she step up to care for the weak, the afflicted and the victimized in her orbit.

**3** He reveals the deep things of darkness and brings deep shadows into light. ~ Job 12:22

Gracious Father, please shine Your light and reveal any deep things of darkness in XXX's life. Give all who love him the resources necessary to counsel and guide him.

**4** Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people ... ~ Galatians 6:10

Blessed Lord, please infuse XXX with courage to speak up whenever she sees someone being unfairly targeted. May she take every opportunity to do good.

**5** A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of birth. ~ Ecclesiastes 7:1

Everlasting God, may XXX stay aware of his reputation. May he chose to maintain his good name, be known as a person of character with the courage to be a good person.

**6** Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you: he will never leave you nor forsake you." ~ Deuteronomy 31:6

Omnipresent Father, when XXX feels powerless or terrified due to the people she has to stand up to, and does not know how to proceed, please remind her she is not alone as You have promised to never leave her nor forsake her.

**7** Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. ~ Revelation 2:5

Savior Lord, please sensitize XXX so he recognizes his moments of meanness and injustice. Stir him to repent. May pride and peer pressure not prevent him from changing his ways.

**8** The eyes of the LORD watch over those who do right: his ears are open to their cries for help. ~ Psalm 34:15

Eternal God, though life has become so unsettling, we know You are in control. Please answer XXX when she calls out to You for help.

**9** I thank you for answering my prayer and giving me victory! ~ Psalm 118:21

Loving Father, we give you thanks for granting us victory, and answering our prayers for this beloved child.

**10** You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor... ~ Leviticus 19:18

Sovereign Lord, may XXX understand those who love the Lord learn to forgive offences. No matter how justified he feels, may he resist retaliating and bearing grudges. May he learn to love as You commanded and elevate others, not put them down.

**11** Walk with the wise and become wise: associate with fools and get in trouble. ~ Proverbs 13:20

Mighty God, please protect XXX from associating with fools and bullies. May she only be drawn to wise and thoughtful young men and women.

**12** Hate evil, love good: Establish justice in the gate. ~ Amos 5:15

King of Kings, may XXX hate evil in all its forms and love good. May he not follow the masses to do evil but develop a moral compass that stands for justice, even if he must do so alone.

**13** So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. ~ 1 Peter 2:1

Awesome Father, may XXX be careful of what she says. May she put aside all deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander. Please give her a distaste for gossip.

**15** Help him to defend the poor, to rescue the...needy, and to crush their oppressors. ~ Psalm 72:4

**14** Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. ~ Ezekiel 18:31

Almighty Lord, should XXX be indulging in questionable behaviors, including bullying, please turn his heart around. Put a new spirit in him, a heart of repentance that always desires to please You not self.

Adonai, please strengthen XXX's hands and steady her knees so she has the courage to help the tormented, support the needy and stand up to their oppressors.

<p><b>16</b> You are my refuge and my shield; your word is my source of hope. ~ Psalm 119:114</p> <p>My God, my Lord, please protect XXX from being drawn to drinking, drug use and other deviant behaviors to mask his feelings of uncertainty and insecurity. Stir him to turn to You as his shield and refuge, his source of hope.</p>	<p><b>17</b> What a help you are to the weak! ~ Job 26:2</p> <p>Lord of Peace, may XXX be a help to the weak who are around her. Stir her to speak up in the face of injustice and support those marginalized in her orbit.</p>	
<p><b>18</b> The light of the eyes rejoices the heart, and good news refreshes the bones. ~ Proverbs 15:30</p> <p>Majesty, may my child be an encourager, who offers a smile to refresh those who may have lost theirs.</p>	<p><b>19</b> He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. ~ Psalm 147:3</p> <p>Blessed Father, You heal the broken-hearted and bind up their wounds. Please heal the wounds that may have been inflicted on XXX due to angry or careless words or actions.</p>	
<p><b>21</b> Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! ~ Psalm 42:11</p> <p>Merciful Father, when life is not going according to plan, please protect XXX from being downcast and discouraged. Stir him to place his hope in You, not on people, popularity, position or possessions.</p>	<p><b>20</b> Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. ~ Ephesians 4:32</p> <p>Glorious Lord, each time XXX has the choice to be kind or mean, may she choose kindness in obedience to Your Word.</p>	
<p><b>23</b> He reveals deep and mysterious things and knows what lies hidden in darkness, though he is surrounded by light. ~ Daniel 2:22</p> <p>Omniscient God, please shine Your light to reveal the deep and mysterious things in XXX's heart. Give all who love him the knowledge, wisdom, and resources necessary to correct him.</p>	<p><b>24</b> I bless the LORD who gives me counsel: ~ Psalm 16:7</p> <p>Eternal Father, if XXX is being abused or bullied, please give her the grace to forgive and pray for those who are attacking her. Give her counsel so she knows how to respond and whom to discuss the situation with.</p>	<p><b>25</b> ... Please do not let me be humiliated; do not let my enemies triumphantly rejoice over me! ~ Psalm 25:2</p> <p>Awesome Lord, whether young or old, may XXX's enemies not rejoice triumphantly over him. In Your miraculous way, please give him victory over all who do not wish him well.</p>
<p><b>26</b> Let us not become weary in doing good, ~ Galatians 6:9</p> <p>Gracious God, meanness and other cruelties are so prevalent in our society including at school. Please strengthen XXX so she does not grow weary of doing good, and courageously speaks up against abuse.</p>		
<p><b>27</b> Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around ... looking for someone to devour. ~ 1 Peter 5:8</p> <p>Savior Father, may my child stay alert as Satan is on a 24/7 prowl, seeking to turn the inattentive from good to bad. May my child have the self-control to resist all temptations, including the temptation to bully others.</p>	<p><b>28</b> Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit... ~ 1 Corinthians 6:19</p> <p>God of All Hope, please protect XXX from any destructive behaviors that causes harm to his body. May he honor You with his body, not ingest any harmful substances or inflict harm on himself.</p>	
<p><b>29</b> Then the LORD said, "Why have you done this terrible thing? ~ Genesis 4:10</p> <p>Blessed God, I pray that if XXX is a bully, that she will hear Your voice admonishing her, holding her to account. May she be convicted to repent.</p>	<p><b>30</b> And we urge you ... warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak... ~ 1 Thessalonians 5:14</p> <p>Glorious Father, please sensitize XXX so he does not ignore episodes of bullying. Grant him the courage to admonish the unruly, speak words to encourage the disheartened, and assist the weak.</p> <p><b>31</b> "If you repent, I will restore you that you may serve me: ~ Jeremiah 15:19</p> <p>Omnipotent Lord, if XXX has engaged in any behavior of which she is ashamed, reassure her it is not too late for her to repent and be restored with the joy of Your salvation.</p>	