

# THE NEW GATE



## From the Director:



Greetings in the name of Christ!

I appreciate this opportunity to share a little about what is going in the life of CJAMM and I give thanks to God for each and every one of you who work so hard to make CJAMM the ministry that it is.

### What is Happening in the Life of CJAMM

A lot has been going on in the infrastructure of CJAMM. We now have a working Statement of Relationship with nearly every entity whom we define as an “affiliate.” These statements protect CJAMM as well as all of the other prison ministries with whom we associate. We have also tightened up a few of our organizational policies. Our staff and volunteers have always had such a commitment to excellence and continuous improvement and as a part of that commitment they have established some new procedures to ensure that CJAMM is an efficient and well organized agency. Rev. Rick Forthman and Janice Shannon of St. Luke’s Redemption UMC; Darlene Lorenz of the Tulsa Exodus House; and Brian Bakeman, Sandie Weldon, and our own Lesa Rhoads of the Annual Conference Office, should be commended for the amount of work that has gone into this.

I also want everyone to know that in the interest of building a more unified CJAMM amidst the geographic distances, I have started a new preaching circuit where I preach at each of the three Redemption Churches, every quarter. Since the last New Gate, I have been blessed with the opportunity to preach at all three of them and will continue to do so on a quarterly schedule. I have also been blessed to be in the pulpit of an Oklahoma United Methodist Church, sharing a little about what CJAMM does, 3 out of every 4 Sundays.

CJAMM also now has a Facebook page and Twitter feed that are regularly updated. We are also partnering with a couple of rock climbing based non-profits to promote CJAMM. Check out our Facebook page and Twitter feed for more information.

I also wanted to recognize Willow View United Methodist Church of Enid, for contributing to help Mabel Bassett Correctional Center build its first chapel for the ladies housed there. Way to go Willow View!

### How You can Help

As 2014 comes to an end and we prepare to celebrate the Advent season and then the birth of Jesus Christ, I invite us all to reflect upon how blessed we are and the difficulty of being in prison during the holidays.

If you are anything like me, Christmas shopping is a laborious endeavor. After Thanksgiving, we may find ourselves shuffling about in a crowded shopping mall, searching for the perfect gift for every person on our list. Perhaps we end up spending more on one person and then feel obligated to spend a little more on another and soon our holiday budget expands to an embarrassingly large amount. And then, we may face the dreaded question from our loved ones: “What would you like for Christmas?” We may respond with the obligatory “Oh, I don’t need anything,” but we know the people who love us will want to get us something anyway. Of course gift-giving is not, unto itself, contrary to our faith. We love the idea of giving to others. However, amidst the wrapping paper, wreaths, and grievous January credit cards bills, we as a people of faith can’t help but wonder: “Where is Christ in all of this?”

As such, I would like to share with you what I began doing last year for Christmas when confronted with the inquiry of what sort of a gift would make me happy. I began to tell my family and friends, “There is a gift that will help a single mother break the bondage of addiction and crime, give a man who has been in and out of prison the tools he needs to stay out, and give a child of an incarcerated parent hope and happiness. Please make a free will contribution to CJAMM in my honor.” If you would like to do the same thing, please make a contribution to CJAMM and go to our Facebook Page and print off our CJAMM Christmas Card. This can be given to a person for Christmas, letting them know that a donation has been given to CJAMM in their honor.

I give thanks to God for each and every one of you and pray God’s blessings upon your lives.

Your brother in Christ,  
Rev. Adam Leathers

### Calendar of Events 2014

**Christmas Celebration  
For Staff & Board**  
Dec 8 6—8 pm  
First UMC  
131 NW 4th, OKC

### Looking ahead to 2015

**CJAMM Volunteer  
Appreciation Luncheon**  
March 14 11—1  
First UMC, OKC

**New Day Camp I**  
8--11 years of age  
June 7-12  
Camp Cross Point

**New Day Camp Too**  
12-14 years of age  
July 19-24  
Camp Cross Point

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## TULSA EXODUS HOUSE

An Arctic blast of frigid air has settled over Tulsa to remind us that winter is close at hand. Staff and residents joyfully prepare for the upcoming holidays. We have much to be grateful for.



We would like to thank Steve Bear for providing us with another mini-van just in time for Christmas. Steve is a longtime volunteer at Exodus House/Redemption, he keeps the Exodus House and Redemption

vehicles in tip top condition, teaches Celebrate Recovery and drives the bus to pick up residents who attend services at Redemption. Steve has also donated money, time and sweat to make the "Parsonage" (our men's housing facility) a reality. Steve is married to Exodus House Graduate Rhonda Poteet (now Rhonda Bear) who continues to be an important part of our ministry. Rhonda runs 5 woman's transitional living houses in Claremore, works fulltime for Standing in the Gap and teaches "Woman in Transition" classes in various woman's prisons throughout Oklahoma. Wow! What a pair!

We would also like to thank all the volunteers who once again made our reunion a resounding success. A special thanks goes to Pastor Rick Forthman who prepared the brisket. It was delicious! This year we were proud to serve over 125 people. Each year, as

the number of former residents increase, we are humbled by the overwhelming success of our program. These former residents are living proof that the program works.

We would to congratulate Dustin Davis and his sponsor *First UMC Tulsa*, for his graduation from Exodus House. We would also like to congratulate *Sand Springs UMC* resident, Curtis Kelly who participated in this year's *Walk to Emmaus*.

We are always eager to show off Exodus House. Whether you would like a tour or just a visit we'd be delighted to see you! Please call Darlene at 918-231-4013 to let us know when you are coming.  
-----Darlene Lorenz

## OPERATION HOPE PRISON MINISTRY

Operation Hope Prison Ministry staff and volunteers have seen a lot of changes in 2014. Mary Leslie the director of Operation Hope since 2007 retired in August 2014. She is sincerely missed. Brantley Tillery, pastor of Redemption Church since June 2005, was assigned to pastor churches in Walters, OK and Hulen, OK. Replacing Brantley was Rev. Rick Forthman as a wonderful addition to Redemption Church. Pastor Forthman also serves as a board member for Operation Hope. Bob Brooks, Ed Opstein, and Tim Carney began serving as members of the Operation Hope Board of Directors in July.

On July 3, 2014 Operation Hope lost a dear friend and advocate, Cyndy Sexson. We were shocked and saddened with her passing. A tribute to Cyndy is now on the wall of Operation Hope's office.

The Fall Fund Raiser and Charity Golf Tournament sponsored by sportscaster Bob Carpenter are held in October of each year. Contributors and volunteers once again rose to the occasion resulting in very successful fund raising efforts. Without these contributors and volunteers, the programs of Operation Hope would not be possible.

In March, July and October of this year, Operation Hope transported a total of 68 children to Eddie Warrior Correctional Center to spend time with their moms for Play Day.

## LAWTON REDEMPTION CHURCH

As the words of the old hymn say, "Oh, what fellowship, oh what joy divine..." and we have found that at Lawton Aldersgate Redemption Church. Not everyone who is a volunteer, or even those we serve, are happy when changes are made in the ministry staff. However, we have come to find that when we remember to "lean" on those everlasting arms, the joy that comes is beyond anything we can bring about ourselves.

We have had some changes, as is normal for any of the Redemption Churches, in who is attending, however, we are still running between 95-100 people on Sunday afternoons, and around 45-50 on Thursday evenings. We have also added some new volunteers in our clothing room, and have added a Redemption Kids program primarily for Sunday. Although these folks are not badged, yet, we are hopeful that they will apply for that in the future.

We also have one of the volunteers who has been so important in driving the vans and helping with the Bible Study, who has now said he would like to teach a class. He is currently studying up to teach *Life's Healing Choices*, which is something of an opening for the Celebrate Recovery program but can be taught separately. We are excited at the prospect of this happening soon.

Finally, a big shout-out to our own Director, Adam Leathers, who came and brought the word on Thursday, October 16, when I was gone for a seminary required course on "Borderlinks." There were many comments, all favorable, about how much they enjoyed him and how much they got from his sermon. Many were also excited about the idea that our church was the fastest growing in the Oklahoma Conference! They have made that a part of their own mission, it would seem, as we have had a number of new faces come through those doors lately. Thanks, Adam.

Pray God's blessings on each one of you.

Rev. Lory Fahle, Sr. Pastor

## OKC REDEMPTION CHURCH

We would like to extend a warm hug to our newest volunteers: Melody Beard and Richard Giles. Melody is teaching Anger Resolution for our women and Richard is teaching Men Mentoring Men. He is also a great help with transportation. Thank you so much for joining our family ~ you are both such a blessing.

We are also excited that our new Lay Servants, three of whom just happen to be incarcerated, were blessed to attend the advanced certification training. We are so thankful for God's leading of these men. We are proud of Richard Self, Chuck McBride, Jorian McNeal and Bud Manning.

We are continuing our Thanksgiving Dinner tradition this year. We do not have worship and classes on Thanksgiving evening to give our dedicated volunteers an opportunity to spend time



with their families. The past several years we have been bringing the men and women who participate in Choir, UMMen, UMW and those who have become members of the church to share in a turkey dinner. We invite them to invite their families. Each year is an amazing time of sharing God's bounty, His love and His joy. We are most thankful for God's healing and restoring work in bringing these families together for this day.

I know this is said in every article, but it is just so true: we are blessed beyond measure with God's hand on this ministry! It is such an honor to be a small part of the work

Christ does through CJAMM and OKC Penn Ave Redemption UMC. A huge thank you to each of you for your positive influence, your tireless spirit and your ever faithful heart you bring to this ministry. Our volunteers are so faithful and generous in giving of their time, talents and love. We so appreciate all you do. I say this often and will continue to tell you: THANK YOU for your faithfulness, commitment, your heart and your presence! We would not be able to provide the level of ministry we do if it were not for YOU. You definitely bless us ~ but most importantly you bless those we are here to minister to. God bless each of you.  
God's blessings,  
Marcia

## TULSA REDEMPTION CHURCH

Greetings from Tulsa!



Autumn brings the promise of holidays to come. Often this is a stressful season for our people who are separated from family and loved ones. Fortunately our gracious volunteers can be counted on to save the day. This year Naloni

and Al Nordean have offered to provide a Christmas Meal for Exodus House and Parsonage House residents. Boston Ave UMC and Asbury UMC will once again provide Christmas gifts for the children of those in our congregation who are incarcerated. Boston Avenue's Roundtable Class continues to bring the HUGS program to Redemption. What a blessing it is for our clients to receive the gift

of warmth. In addition to the hats, scarves and gloves, the Roundtable Class also serves a hearty meal for all. As always, we appreciate the generosity of the area churches that continue to serve wonderful meals each Sunday afternoon.

Thanks to Reverend Judy Bradford Smith and Reverend Ken Smith for preaching in worship while Pastor Rick served as one of the leaders in the Kairos weekend at the prison in Cushing. Reverend Steve Bear led worship and preached recently when Pastor Rick was in the hospital. We appreciate the willingness of each of these people to share their gifts wherever needed. All three are class facilitators; Judy and Ken teach a Bible Class together and Steve leads a Celebrate Recovery group. Steve is the minister to the Claremore 1<sup>st</sup>

Baptist Church CR group; Ken is a retired United Methodist Minister who is also serving as pastor of The Leonard United Methodist Church.

We were represented recently at the Celebrate Recovery "One Day" training at Southern Hills Baptist Church, Tulsa, by Pastor Rick, Heather Sisson-White and Virginia Gray (volunteer coordinator).

We owe Steve Bear a debt of gratitude for the wonderful Sound and Video system he provided for Redemption Church. Steve along with contributors: James Mullins, Stan & Pat Mills and Rick & Maggi Frothman and volunteers: Eddie Roquis, Samm Vicchio, Kevin Alvarez and Rusty Cook, have brought our church into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We are so proud!

We are looking forward to the joys of the season before us and wish all a blessed Christmas!

Recently, Operation Hope partnered with the Junior League of Tulsa taking a group of children impacted by incarceration to the Tulsa Zoo. It was a wonderful experience and it made a lasting positive impact on both the children and the volunteers. Operation Hope is truly blessed to be a part of a bigger plan to make our community a better place to live.





1501 NW 24th Street  
Oklahoma City, OK 73106

405/530-2015-Rev. Adam Leathers, Director

E-mail: aleathers@okumc.org

405/530-2014 -Lesa Rhoads, Asst. Director-Admin

E-mail: lrhoads@okumc.org

Fax—405/530-2049

[www.cjamm.org](http://www.cjamm.org)

Make an online tax-deductible donation!



If you would like to save CJAMM postage, you can receive the *New Gate* via email. Just send an email to lrhoads@okumc.org. Thank you!

## OKC EXODUS HOUSE

Happy Holidays to all and many well wishes for everyone throughout the season. For many of our residents this will be their first Christmas in a long time and many will be without family of their own. For some it will be the first time they have spent with their children celebrating the holidays. We are very grateful to Church of the Servant for Christmas Grace to our residents and their children and to all of our apartment sponsors who go out of their way to make this time of year special for our residents and their kids also. It is such a bittersweet time for us to see their faces as they share a holiday meal with all of us and open presents for themselves and for their children. I can't begin to express the joy it is just to be a part of it all. We could not do it without all of you being the hands and feet and your generosity to our ministry. We will be having our annual Christmas Party, December 16<sup>th</sup> this year and encourage anyone who may like to come and eat with us to join us from 6-8 p.m. We will also have a small party just for the children on Dec 20<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 PM to do a traditional Christmas with them and share the story of Jesus' birth and the true meaning of Christmas.

Thanks to our apartment sponsors who donated the funds to upgrade and repair our staircases and the Volunteers in Mission for donating their time and expertise to do the repairs we have one set of stairs completed and will be doing the other staircase on November 15<sup>th</sup>.

We had an Exodus House paint party and want to thank all those who came and helped us. We had a BBQ and some fellowship and fun with former residents, current residents and apartment sponsors. We still have some painting left but we expect to accomplish it soon.

We have celebrated 14 graduations and 11 residents have obtained their driver's licenses and all of our residents are currently employed. We continue to stay full and have one apartment under remodel and would like to thank New Covenant UMC for their tireless work to complete it. We invite anyone interested in taking a tour of Exodus House or anyone who would like us to come speak about our ministry to please give us a call. We would love to share our stories and our mission with you!

We would like to thank **all** our apartment sponsors: St. Andrews UMC, Choctaw UMC, Seminole UMC, Yukon UMC, New Covenant UMC, Church of the Servant, New Hope UMC, First Church of Moore, Connect Ministries and Harrah UMC for your commitment to our ministry, our residents and your continued support.

We are especially in need of twin size beds at this time and also full size beds, microwaves, coffee tables, kitchen dining room sets, towels and washcloths and any furniture and household items. For all those who I may have left out **Thank You** so much all for your continued support, your prayers and your many gifts to us. God Bless You!!

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