

A Convicted Church—Part 2: Not content to sit and wait IN RURAL OKLAHOMA, CONGREGATION FINDS ITS CALLING IN PRISON MINISTRY.

For a little country congregation, the Fort Gibson Church of Christ is huge.

Its meeting place looms over a hillside in Oklahoma's oldest town — the site of a military outpost established in 1824. In 1855, J.J. Trott, a missionary from Tennessee, preached the Gospel here. A half-century later — yet still two years before Oklahoma became the 47th state — more than 300 people gathered for "The Big Meeting — Fort Gibson Indian Territory," a revival that birthed the church.

Now big-rig trucks speed eastward from the city of Muskogee on Highway 62, past a newly opened Cherokee casino and a sign that points to the church building on South Lee Street.

It's nearly as big as the casino, complete with circle drive, tall steeple and a lighted marquee sign that invites passers-by to visit. On Sundays, 350 to 400 people gather here for worship.

The church benefits from its location, said Budo Perry, one of the congregation's five elders. Though Fort Gibson boasts a mere 4,155 residents, according to census figures, the surrounding area has become a bedroom community for Muskogee, just across the Arkansas River, and Tulsa, about 45 minutes northwest on the Muskogee Turnpike.

The church could sit in its building and wait for worshipers to come. But for nearly three decades, the congregation's leaders have challenged members to take the Good News to people who need it desperately — the more than 25,000 prison inmates in Oklahoma.

Bob Young, who ministered for the church in the mid-1990s, helped introduce the members to New Life Behavior Ministries, a faith-based curriculum developed by H.M. Motsinger, a Church of Christ member and family therapist in Dallas. Using the Bible, the program tackles substance abuse and other demons that haunt inmates as it seeks to reconcile them with their families and their Creator. In recent years, Churches of Christ in Africa have launched affiliates of the Texas-based ministry.

In Fort Gibson, church members began teaching the curriculum at the Dr. Eddie Warrior Correctional Center, a minimum-security women's prison in Taft, 19 miles east of the church.

Twice per month, church members conduct Sunday worship at the prison. The church helped finance construction of a chapel for the inmates.

"Because of our participation, our members were involved in the design of the building," Perry said, "and that meant the builders included a baptistry."

- Erik Tryggestad and David Chenault —*The Christian Chronicle*, June 2013

PRAYER LIST

- **Pauline Alvarez** (recovering from surgery)
- **Lauren Babb** (health)
- **John Beiler** (health)
- **James Bohannon** (Rex Boggs's cousin—health)
- **Keith Brown** (Wayne Brown's son—health)
- **Jim Carpenter** (Cody Chrismon's great uncle—health)
- **Betty Cox** (Brent Barnick's sister—homebound)
- **Family of Bud Davis** (Sharron Mason's brother)
- **Dixie** (Debbie Faires's mother—Alzheimer's)
- **Jake Faires** (Air Force, deployed to Jordan)
- **Steven Faires, and Lexi**
- **Leon Giesecke** (Jan Moerbe's father—throat cancer)
- **Nelle Hahn** (health)
- **Gordon Hoffman** (Rex Boggs's friend—spiritual and physical health)
- **Debbie Jalufka**
- **Molly Lind** (The Linds' daughter-in-law)
- **Orvan Muelker** (Kathy Winegeart's father—health)
- **Norman Pennock** (Debbie Fougerat's step-father, health)
- **Ada Powell** (Sharron Mason's sister—health)
- **T.J. Reid** (Nelle Hahn's brother—health)
- **Jean Rice** (Rex Boggs's cousin—health)
- **Nancy Tuttle** (Peggy Walls's sister—health)
- **Edwin Weaver** (broken leg)
- **Catherine Winegeart** (Perry's mother—health)

If you have any announcements or prayer requests you wish to have included in the bulletin or to sign up for weekly e-mail updates, please contact Victoria Johnson: 325-518-9205, victoria@gonzaleschurchofchrist.org.

PRAYER UPDATES

Molly Lind, Henry and Pam's daughter-in-law, was moved to a rehabilitation center yesterday and they are hopeful the center will start weaning her from the stronger medication and she will begin therapy soon.

Orvan Meulker, Kathy Winegeart's father, had kidney surgery in San Antonio on Monday. The surgery went well and he is making progress each day. He will hopefully be able to move to the Texan nursing home by the end of the week.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We are glad you are here for Back-to-School Sunday, a special Sunday honoring our children and youth.

Each child and teen should have an information card for our special presentation. Please see Kevin or Victoria if you did not receive one when you came in.

Fellowship Meal

Please join us **next Sunday** for our monthly fellowship meal immediately following morning worship. If you are able, please bring a dish to share.

Singing at The Heights

Please join us **next Sunday at 3:30 p.m.** for our monthly singing at The Heights of Gonzales nursing home.

Wednesday Ladies Class

In September, the ladies will be doing the DVD series *Slightly Bad Girls of the Bible* by Liz Curtis Higgs on Wednesday nights in the auditorium. Please let Jennie Chrismon know if you would like a copy of the accompanying workbook.

Stock the Doc

Let's help **Jennifer Epley**, school nurse at Yoakum, stock up on supplies for the coming school year! **Suggested items include: NEW boys and girls underwear (all sizes), travel-size or regular-size deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, or other toiletry items, and feminine supplies.** You may drop off these items in the Stuff the Bus box in the foyer.

Morning Ladies Class

If you are interested in resuming weekday morning Ladies Class, please contact Jennie Chrismon so that we can discuss times and ideas.

Wedding Shower

You are invited to a wedding shower in honor of **Dawn (Clarke) Almaraz** on **Sunday, Sept. 3, at 2 p.m. at the home of Stacia Sweeney.**

Wednesday Evening Meal & Bible Study

Please join us at **5:15 p.m. this Wednesday** for dinner in the annex. **This week's entrée is sandwiches.** Anyone who is able is asked to bring sides to share, but please do not let that prevent you from joining us. Classes for all ages follow at 6 p.m.

Volunteers Needed: Wednesday Night Meals

Volunteers are needed to prepare the entrée for meals on Wednesday evenings. To help, please sign up in the foyer. **If you signed up to prepare a meal, please send Victoria your menu by Wednesday the week before.**

Volunteers Needed: Communion Prep

Volunteers are needed to prepare communion in the coming months. This task takes very little time and is a great service to the congregation. Please sign up on the large bulletin board in the foyer.

Sunday Night Small Group

There is a small group that meets in the annex each Sunday evening from 6-7 p.m. The Lord's Supper is available.

Tuesday Morning Men's Prayer Breakfast

All men are invited to the annex each Tuesday morning at **6:20 a.m.** for a time of breakfast, prayer and fellowship.

YOUTH ZONE



SATURDAY, AUGUST 26
HIGH SCHOOL CROSS COUNTRY
SHINER & GONZALES @ YOAKUM INVITATIONAL



Jacy Chrismon—Shiner HS Cross Country

Coach Kevin Johnson—Gonzales HS Cross Country