

Legacy Gift Inspires Chandler First Christian Church to Cultivate Camp Calvary Plan

First Christian Church, Chandler, received a gift from a longtime member who passed away in December 1995. Miss Pearl left money and property for the benefit of the church. These gifts have generated excitement within the church family and community. In 2008, funds from Miss Pearl's estate helped build a beautiful, functional fellowship hall/family life center on the church



Camp Calvary sign.

property. Undecided about what to do with the 160 acres of land, it sat unattended for many years, aside from occasional use by a Scout troop for camping.

However, in the spring of 2021, a group of church members began discussing how the 160 acres might be developed to benefit the church family. The church was concerned about the future of the church and they wanted this legacy gift to advance the life of the congregation. They decided to develop the land for their youth program with sights set on having a space for the entire congregation and community to utilize.

Following the original meeting, several men from the congregation decided to begin opening vehicle access to the center of the 160 acres. This was no small task as the untouched property was thick with tall grasses, shrubs, sumac plants, cedar trees and many other tall trees. The men met weekly, weather permitting, with chain saws and hand tools to clear pathways. They also solicited advice and grants from the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC), Oklahoma Education Association, US Fish & Game Department and Oklahoma State University. They were very conscientious about conservation and preserving the natural state of the area especially for local wildlife, native trees, shrubs and grasses.

Work continued through the

summer, fall and winter of 2021 and through spring and summer of 2022. Nature trails were cut to allow the passage of ATVs. In the summer of 2021, the youth group was invited to walk a rudimentary trail that was cut from the dense undergrowth. At the end of the hike, the youth were told the area was theirs and they needed to come up with a name. They named the area Camp Calvary.

In early spring 2022, five Oklahoma State University students from the university's Natural Resource Ecology and Management Department visited the property and developed a detailed management plan for the area. Their first recommendation was to reduce the red cedar and overall tree density to maintain the health of desirable tree species, wildlife and a healthier forest ecosystem. They also recommended prescribed fire burns on a rotational basis to maintain the prairie. The 36-page plan included specific details about tree species and wildlife in the area. It also provided a financial analysis of management of the area and resources, information and equipment for a prescribed burn.

In April 2022, First Christian Church, Chandler received a grant from the Oklahoma Disciples Foundation (ODF) to help fund removal of extensive stands of Eastern Red Cedar as well as prescribed burning of the underbrush and cut trees.

Besides cutting ATV and walking trails, the men built a large fire pit and added picnic tables in a clearing. They also erected a pergola, seats and benches with hand cut tree timber and logs. Youth gathered at the property occasionally through the summer of 2022 and excitement was building to have a church-wide function.

On October 22, 2022, the first



Native tree left while clearing a trail.



(L to R): Kyle Johnson, Private Lands Biologist (ODWC); FCC Chandler Youth; Jason Harriet, Lincoln County Game Warden (ODWC) at Camp Calvary Brush Arbor.

church-wide function was held under the direction of Associate Pastor Lori Smithey. Representatives from the Oklahoma Forestry Department and the ODWC facilitated an "Outdoors Skills" Day Camp. Forestry Ranger Riley Coy guided the youth through several of the trails, helping them identify trees while sharing stories of large and small animals using the woods for their homes.

Kyle Johnson, Private Lands Biologist with the ODWC shared pictures of native grasses and plants during a tour through the grassy areas of the property. The youth then divided into teams for a "Scavenger Hunt" with all teams receiving ODWC backpacks.

ODWC and Lincoln County Game Warden Jacob Harriet took the youth throughout the property helping them to identify various animal tracks around the pond and along the trails. He showed them how to tell the difference between tracks of white tail deer, wild hogs, dogs and coyotes. The youth were fascinated with identifying the tracks.

At the end of the day, everyone enjoyed roasted hot dogs over the fire pit.

The next day, Sunday, October 23, church services were held around the fire pit with over 30 church members in attendance. Following the service, church members walked the various trails and viewed the location of the planned hilltop pavilion. Through fund-raising efforts, hopes are to have the pavilion completed in time for Easter sunrise services.

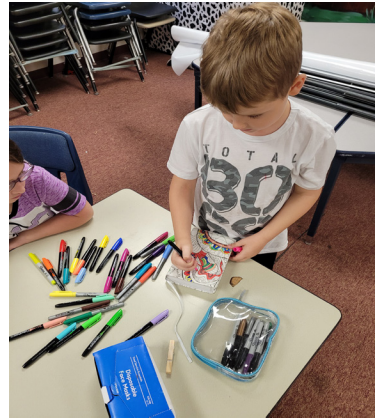
The Miracle of the ODF Grants Program Touching Lives



FCC Midwest City Welcome Home Baskets for families moving from shelters to their own places. Homeless liaisons can't use federal funds for this purpose.



FCC Midwest City Mobile Meals preparation. Since 1973, the church has provided hot weekly meals to those unable to care for themselves.



FCC Duncan's Gabriel's House purchased Bibles for each child in their school program.



Central Christian Church, Enid's Foster Feet program provides new shoes to refugee children in a Tulsa area Disciples tutoring program.



FCC Guthrie "Live Like You're Dying Seminar." Free estate planning seminar with expert panelists.

OKLAHOMA DISCIPLES FOUNDATION
 301 NW 36th Street
 Oklahoma City, OK 73118
<https://okdfdn.org> 405.525.6530

The Foundation newsletter is published quarterly. Email Julie Bowers (jabowers@okdfdn.org) to opt out or advise of any errors, changes, or to update your email and contact information. Every effort was made to ensure the accuracy and completeness of this publication.

ODF STAFF

Eric Gray, Executive Director
 Rev. Kyle V. Maxwell, Minister of Faith & Giving
 Dr. Vicki Rose, Director of Operations
 Julie Bowers, Development Associate



Oklahoma Disciples
FOUNDATION, INC.
 301 NW 36th Street
 Oklahoma City, OK 73118
 Phone: 405.525.6530
<https://okdfdn.org>

Mail this form and check to the Foundation at the address listed above. Gifts may also be made via credit/debit card or by checking account on our [website donation](https://okdfdn.org) page. Or use the Givelify mobile app to donate.
THANK YOU!

- I am interested in establishing a permanent endowment to benefit a heartfelt cause or church mission.
- I am interested in receiving information on making a bequest to the Foundation.

*Gifts to Oklahoma Disciples Foundation are tax-deductible as allowed by law. Gifts may be made to a specific Endowment Fund or to Disciple Club. A list of funds is available on the Foundation website at <https://okdfdn.org>. We are grateful for your gifts, support and prayers.

*!We Wish to Make a Tax-deductible Gift to:
 Oklahoma Disciples Foundation, Inc.*

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City, State, Zip: _____
 Phone: _____
 Email: _____

Yes! Please sign me up for email news updates.

My gift is given in (honor/memory) of:
circle one
 Name: _____

YES! I would like to make a gift to ODF in the amount of:
 \$25 ___ \$50 ___ \$100 ___ Other ___

Please invest my gift in:
 Disciple Club supporting ODF Operations
 Named Endowment Fund as listed below:

(Please list fund name)

Yes, I have included ODF in my estate planning. Please call me to discuss my wishes.