
PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Greetings OPUCC Community,

In this season of Resurrection, I want to share some thoughts about resurrecting the power of scripture for our lives as progressive people of faith. In the class "Saving Jesus" we have been discussing the stages of faith development as explained by Marcus Borg. He teaches that developmentally most people of faith pass through or get stuck in three places; the first is pre-critical naïveté, this is the stage at which we take the stories of the Bible literally-we see them as infallible truth and do not question their authority. The second is critical naïveté, where we begin to question, even disbelieve, the truth of the biblical stories. We question how they can be relevant to us if they are not entirely true. The third is, from what I can tell, the place we want to be-it is called post-critical naïveté. At this stage we have an ability to see the Biblical stories for what they are - very human attempts to articulate experiences of God. When we reach this place developmentally we are able to live with scriptural ambiguity and still choose to have reverence for it as meaningful to us at this time and in this context.

Adam Webber and I had a good discussion last month about the story of the Transfiguration. Adam was struggling, as I think many of us do, with how stories like this one are to be understood. Are they to be taken literally and at face value for the miracle which they appear to be, or are they to be understood entirely as metaphor, or-a third option- can their meaning be derived from somewhere in between?

His concern was that, especially in teaching our young people, if we use an authoritative voice when we are reading the stories or asking questions about the stories as if they actually happened- aren't we only conveying the first of these three options? Whether or not we believe them to be entirely true aren't we representing them as such? How do we learn to speak of the stories of our faith in a manner consistent with our quest to derive meaning

from them without arbitrarily investing them with infallible truth?

These are good questions. After all, faith is ultimately about seeking to make the unknown-known and knowable. These are the questions that help deepen our faith, that help us articulate what we do and do not believe. Ultimately these are the questions that help us trust our weight to scripture without the fear that it will one day betray us. There is a very real faith crisis that can result from remaining too long in pre-critical naïveté - having been taught that the Bible is the whole truth and nothing but the truth, only to find out later that much of it is intended to be read as metaphor, and most of the stories didn't really happen as they were said to have happened. This realization can hit like a ton of bricks. It can be very disorienting, if not disillusioning and downright discouraging. It begs the question, as educated and informed people, should we encourage pre-critical naïveté at all? Perhaps it is a necessary stage of faith development; perhaps it is not - it is hard to know for sure.

I do believe it is possible to move through the three stages of faith suffering only minor disillusionment, but first we have to admit a few things about our beloved religion. A few truths, the first and most important is that if religious institutions are doing their jobs, there should be more questions than there are answers. There need to be more invitations to search for meaning than there are reassurances of absolute truths. Not only do we need to get comfortable with that reality, we need to celebrate that reality. It is not something for which we need to apologize.

By faithfully engaging the questions we are seeking connection with God, connection with each other, connection with the world around us and connection with scripture. In order to connect with scripture we must look for an opening that makes sense. This sometimes happens by becoming aware of the things that don't make sense and tracing them back to the root. It helps to trust a story when we know more about it, when we understand the point of view of the author - why they wrote what they

wrote and for whom. Problems abound when we pull a few lines of Scripture from the context in which a sacred author originally put them. The authors of the Bible did not intend for their work to be employed the way we use it in today's liturgy. Liturgies, as we know them, didn't even exist when our sacred texts were composed. Biblical writings were intended to be read as a whole, not chopped up and offered in bite size hunks.

As a church we are learning how important it is to engage in historical and contextual text criticism. In modern day Christianity we falsely presume each passage we use on Sunday morning should make sense as it stands, but it rarely does. Each scripture passage has a context - a place, an audience, a situation that prompted its writing - that doesn't always come through in the few verses the liturgy gives us.

Resurrecting scripture requires us to move out of critical naïveté to a place where we are willing to embrace the stories of our faith, not despite the questions we have about them but through the questions, with the questions, engaging the questions, living the questions. For that is surely what rescuing Jesus and resurrecting the Bible is all about.

Easter Blessings,
Rev Curran Reichert

INTERPLAY Chicago 2007

Interplay is bountiful this year! Check out all of these fabulous events:

MOVING THE VOCAL BODY

with Curran Reichert & Jane Siarny

Sat. March 31, 1:00-4:00 pm (Chicago)

TALENT SHOW DAY

Sat. April 21, 1:00-4:00 pm (Forest Park)

NEW LEADERS CELEBRATION DAY

Sat. May 19, 1:00-4:00 p.m. (Forest Park)

CHICAGO SUMMER INTERPLAY RETREAT

July 26-28

More information, including reservations, cost and specific locations is available in the church office.

MISSION TEAM

Greetings from the Mission Team,

This year fill your Easter baskets with happy chocolate, happy coffee, and jolly tea! Susan will be placing a new order for all these fair trade items in early April. This is a great way to support small farmers around the world who are struggling to make a living wage. Thank you Susan for all your hard work to make this a mission of Open Prairie. And thanks to all of you who have purchased coffee and other yummy fair trade goodies. Keep it up! Simple pleasures are the best.

We are very happy to report that soon we will be offering a new service to our Gateway neighbors. Once a week Gateway clients will be meeting in the Open Prairie kitchen to plan a meal. They will then head out to do their shopping before returning to Open Prairie to cook. It is such a pleasure to share our beautiful space with others in our community. Whenever I have occasion to show people round our church for the first time they invariably comment on how open and welcoming it feels and how pretty it is with the exposed beams and beautiful floor. What a joy that we have a space that can be a place of worship and study one day, a hall for a rogue's dinner the next and a haven for cooking classes the next.

There are two new films in the Open Prairie library. "An Inconvenient Truth", the Oscar winner for best documentary and "The Future of Food" which was our most recent film screening at Open Prairie. Both are available at the back table in the sanctuary to be signed out.

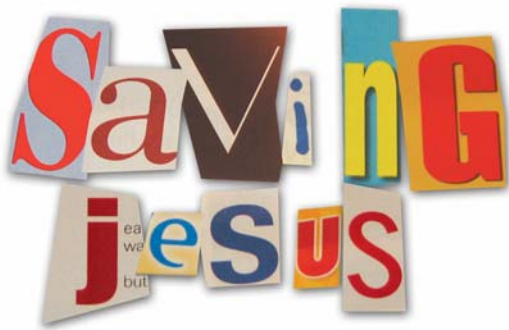
The Food Pantry would like us to collect **Pancake Mix & Syrup** during the month of April. Thank you for all you help during the year in providing food for the pantry.

Peace to you all,
Kelly

*Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle,
and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness
never decreases by being shared.*

-Buddha

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY



Ever feel like Jesus has been kidnapped by the Christian Right? Saving Jesus is a revolutionary DVD-based small group exploration of Jesus Christ for the third millennium. Rev. Reichert will lead our exploration of this contemporary program featuring leading religious voices of our day. The format for each 1–1½ hour session includes conversation around the readings, a 20-minute video segment and guided discussion.

Reading materials are available in advance in the church office.

CALENDAR & WEEKLY TOPICS

Most weeks, there will be two opportunities to attend class -Sunday afternoon (bring a bag lunch) or Tuesday evening at 7:00 p.m.

9 &10. Killing Jesus, Part 2 The Atonement

Sunday, April 1st

Tuesday, April 3rd

11. The Resurrection of Christ

Sunday, April 8th only

12. Why Jesus Is Worth Saving

Sunday, April 15th

Tuesday, April 17th

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

| | | |
|-------|----------|---------------------------|
| 04/01 | 12:30 pm | Saving Jesus, week 9 &10 |
| | 6:00 pm | Sr. High Round table |
| 04/03 | 6:00 pm | Prairie Circle |
| | 7:00 pm | Saving Jesus, week 9 & 10 |
| 04/04 | 8:00 am | Prayer Group at Autrey's |
| 04/05 | 7:00 pm | Maundy Thursday Service |

| | | |
|-------|----------|--|
| 04/07 | 8:00 pm | Easter Vigil (until 12:00 am) |
| 04/08 | 6:30 am | Walk to the Cross |
| | 8:00 am | Pancake Breakfast |
| | 9:30 am | Worship |
| | 12:30 pm | Saving Jesus, week 11 |
| 04/11 | 8:00 am | Prayer Group at Autrey's |
| 04/12 | 6:30 pm | Choir at Webber's |
| 04/13 | 9:00 am | Red Cross mtg. at church |
| 04/15 | 12:30 pm | Saving Jesus, week 12 |
| 04/17 | 7:00 pm | Saving Jesus, week 12 |
| 04/18 | 8:00 am | Prayer Group at Autrey's |
| 04/19 | 6:30 pm | Choir at Webber's |
| 04/22 | 6:30 pm | Earth Day Movie "Nobility" Katrina team to New Orleans |
| 04/25 | 8:00 am | Prayer Group at Autrey's |
| | 7:00 pm | Church Council |
| 04/26 | 6:30 pm | Choir at Webber's |
| 04/28 | 7:30 pm | Coffeehouse |
| 04/29 | 10:30 am | Jubilee Sunday, to Pilgrim Park |
| | 4-7 pm | Potato Bar & Festival of the Arts Katrina Group returns |

STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE

Thanks to the generous giving spirit of members and friends of Open Prairie, the special offering given on March 18th for One Great Hour of Sharing offers hope and well-being to people in our nation and around the world.

I recently read generous giving described as "happy money" – knowing that our money is used for the benefits of improving the life of our church, our communities and people of our world.

It's a good feeling knowing that we choose to handle our personal finances so we can support our church and its many opportunities to grow in the faith. As you know, being a generous person is one of life's great joys.

See you in church,
Patricia Wilson

FYI: The Illinois Conference recently informed OPUC that our congregation has exceeded our OCWM goal for 2006. Because of faithful stewardship our congregation helped the Illinois Conference raise over 1.9 million dollars last year. This money has helped the church's wider mission by establishing new congregations like God Can Ministries and our own Open Prairie.

HOLY WEEK EXPERIENCE

First United Methodist of Princeton is presenting the **Journey to Jerusalem**, a walk-through experience for all ages. The program is approximately 90 minutes long, there is no admission fee, and you may attend between the following times: Fri. April 6th, 5 & 8 pm and Sat. April 7th, 1 & 4 pm.

CHRISTIAN ED

Sunday School Teacher Schedule:

April: 1st: Becky
8th: Wendy
15th: Dawn
22nd: Kathy
29th: Wendy
May: 6th: Becky
13th: Wendy
20th: No Sunday School, Childcare will be provided
27th: Dawn

Mark Your Calendar

The last day of Confirmation will be April 15th for this year. We will end the year with a lifesize jeopardy game with prizes so please plan to attend. We will meet at 9:30 in the youth room just like normal.

The Youth Choir will be singing in church on April 1st. If you are a member of the youth choir please get a copy of the music from Angie.

The next Youth of all ages outing is being planned. Watch for more information in the coming weeks for an announcement of location and date. If anyone has any suggestions of places they would like to go or things they would like to do that could be either a youth or intergenerational outing the CE Team is ALWAYS looking for suggestions.

Mark your calendars now for May 20th. We will be honoring the Sunday School Teachers, Dawn, Kathy, Angie, Becky, and Terri, as well as honoring our Graduating Seniors Tara Jagers and Emily Kauffman during worship. The youth choir will sing and there will be other surprises so please plan to attend and show these folks how much we all care about them and the work they have done for Open Prairie and the community.

OPUCC EASTER WEEK OPPORTUNITIES

Be sure to note all of our upcoming Easter events.

Sunday, April 1st: **Palm Sunday Service**
(Bring greens to worship)
Thurs. April 5th: **Maunder Thursday Service**
7:00 pm
Sat. April 7th: **Easter Prayer Vigil**
8:00pm – Midnight
(Sign up for 30 min. shifts)
Easter Sunday **Walk to the Cross**
6:30am at Pilgrim Park
Pancake Breakfast
8:00-9:00 am/\$4/person
(Under 10 free)
Easter Worship Service
9:30 am

Don't forget to order your Easter lily by Sunday, April 1st. Lilies are \$8.00/plant and may be picked up after church on April 8th.
Order forms are in the church office.

HAPPY APRIL BIRTHDAYS!

April 1 John Zearing
April 5 Fern Webber
April 8 Trishia Jones
April 10 Cherie Martin
April 17 Sasha Ernst
April 17 David Hornbaker
April 18 Sheridan Ernst
April 19 Clinton Johnson
April 19 Creal Zearing
April 24 Joe Waterhouse

Note: if you have any additions or corrections, please let Ami know.

SPRING 2007 WORK PROJECT TRIP

Hurricane Relief Mission Trip
New Orleans, Louisiana
APRIL 22-28, 2007

Sign-up now to be a part of this life-changing experience. A sign-up sheet is available in the church office or contact Steve Gunning for more information.

SUMMER CAMP ~ IT'S FOR EVERYONE!

Camp...Not Just for Kids!

Do you remember how much fun you used to have when you to camp as a kid? Well now you have a chance to go back as an adult. There are numerous opportunities for exploring your old camp days by participating in different camping experiences that are designed specifically for you're your interests and needs. For example have you ever thought about how great it would be to take your Grandchild(ren) to camp with you? Well here's your chance. Both Pilgrim park and Tower Hill offer three different Grandparents and Me! Camp opportunities where grandparents show up with their grandkids and spend two and half days doing all of those fun camp activities. You can teach your grandkids to fish, go hiking, play parachute games, sing songs, roast marshmallows over the campfire, do arts and crafts, swim, walk the labyrinth, and yes even take a nap all in the very plush hotel style accommodations of Pilgrim Park or Tower Hill.

Other camping options for adults are centered around specific interest areas. For example a fall retreat that is called Harvest Colors looks at activities revolving around spiritual centering and the changing of the season. The leaves are usually at their peak colors during this weekend retreat. It is a time when you can get outside and enjoy nature at its finest. All of the camp programs are led by highly trained camp directors who volunteer their time and energy to ensure you have a positive camp experience. If you want to know about other camps please pick up one of the Outdoor Ministries Camping brochures located in the lobby of the church. If the price is a burden, don't worry, the church has scholarship dollars available for financial assistance. No one will ever be turned down from going to camp based on financial need.

Experience God in the wonderful world of the outdoors by leaving all of life's troubles behind and simply open your heart and mind to the possibilities of what God has in store for you.

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### **INKJET RECYCLING PROGRAM!!!**

The OPUCC Sunday School Youth are now collecting empty inkjet cartridges for recycling. We receive up to \$4.00 for each cartridge recycled. Cartridges can be deposited in our collection bin located underneath the bench in the lobby area.

Simply place your old cartridge in a plastic sandwich bag and deposit it in our collection bin. Most businesses simply throw their empty cartridges in the garbage so check at work to see if they would donate their would be garbage. The acceptable cartridges are listed below. Please note that no large laser cartridges are accepted with this program.

**In addition to raising money for our camper scholarship program, recycling inkjet cartridges has a positive impact on the environment. Consider the following: Nearly 1 million inkjets are thrown into our landfills every day. Less than 5% of the cartridges produced are recycled. It takes 1000 years for the plastic to decompose.**

**Questions about the program can be directed to Wendy. Thanks for your support and for taking time to make your world a better place.**

|                             |                          |                         |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| HP 21 (C9351AN)             | Canon BC01               | Lexmark 12A1970/5       |
| HP 22 (C9352AN)             | Canon BC02               | Lexmark 12A1980/5       |
| HP 93 (C9361W)              | Canon BC05               | Lexmark 15M0120         |
| HP 92 (C9362W)              | Canon BC20               | Lexmark 17G0050         |
|                             | Canon BC23               | Lexmark 17G0060         |
| HP 98 (C9364W)              | Canon BX3                | Lexmark 138400H/C       |
| HP 51625A/G                 | Canon PG40               | Lexmark 1380619         |
| HP 51626A/G                 | Canon PG41               | Lexmark 1380620         |
| HP 51629A/G                 | Canon PG50               | Lexmark 10N0016         |
| (16,17)                     |                          |                         |
| HP 51633M                   | Canon PG5                | Lexmark 10N0026 (26,27) |
| HP 51640A                   |                          | Lexmark 18L0032 (82)    |
| HP 51645A/G                 | Okidata 52109301         | Lexmark 18L0042         |
| (83)                        |                          |                         |
| HP 51649A/G                 | Okidata 52109302         | Lexmark 31 Photo        |
| HP C1816A                   |                          | Lexmark 32 Black        |
| HP C1823D                   | OnlyCompaq 337709        | Lexmark 33 Color        |
| HP C6578A/D                 | Compaq 337710            | Lexmark 34 Black        |
| HP C6614A/D/N               | Compaq 337711            | Lexmark 35 Color        |
| HP C6615A/D                 | Compaq 337714            | Lexmark 71 Black        |
| HP C6625A                   | Compaq 337715            | Lexmark 1990/5          |
| HP C8765WN                  |                          | Lexmark #1              |
| HP C8766WN (95,135,343,855) | Sharp UX-C70             | Black                   |
| HP C8767WN (96,130,853)     | Dell 7Y743               |                         |
| HP C9363W (97,134,344,857)  | Xerox 8R7880/Dell 7Y745  |                         |
| HP C9368AN                  | Xerox 8R7881             | Dell J740 Color         |
| HP C9369WN (99,138,348,858) | Xerox 8R7883/Dell J740   | Black                   |
| HP C6628HP C6656            | Xerox 8R712591/Dell A920 | Black                   |
| HP C6657AN                  | Dell A920 Color          | Apple M8041G/C          |
| HP C6658AN                  | Dell J4844 Photo         | Apple M3240G/C          |
| HP C8727A                   | Dell M4640               |                         |
| HP C8728AN                  | Dell M4646               |                         |

# FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS & POTATO BAR

The fourth annual Open Prairie Festival of the Arts will be held here at the church on Sun., April 29th from 4-7 p.m.

A silent auction will be held with church members offering unique and priceless items for sale. If you have an item, large or small, for the silent auction, please contact Kathy Hornbaker at 659-3432 or e-mail [kathy@hornbakergardens.com](mailto:kathy@hornbakergardens.com).

Church members and friends will provide musical entertainment throughout the Festival. A list of the performers will be released in the near future.

A delicious baked potato bar will be available with numerous toppings, served and provided by the Sr. High Youth Group. A variety of desserts will also be served.

All donations will go to the Sr. High Youth Group's 2007 summer mission trip to the Appalachian South Folklife Center in Pipestem, West Virginia.

## HEALTH TEAM MINISTRIES

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### *Summer Safety Tips*

- \*Pay close attention when swimming in open water. Always be aware of possible undercurrents and undertows.
- \*Avoid extended exposure to hot, humid weather. Heat stress can set in which can lead to heat stroke.
- \*Take frequent breaks when working or playing outside.
- \*Wear loose fitting clothing.
- \*Wear a hat to protect your face from the sun.
- \*Stay well hydrated, avoid alcohol or caffeinated drinks.
- \*To help keep those pesky bugs away, avoid using scented soaps, wearing perfume/cologne or hairspray.
- \*Skateboarders and bicycle riders should wear helmets and other protective gear.

## CHURCH CONTACTS

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