

Why Sunday Morning?

There are many questions to be lived with during a search process as the opinions and experiences of members of the congregation are sought, as a profile is prepared, as candidates are considered and interviewed, and as decisions are made. While the designated search committee is confidentially busy, the congregation is not meant to be idle. There is plenty for an expectant congregation to attend to as well. One of the most important congregational tasks is to reconsider and recommit to life as a gathered and worshipping people of God. The time of a search is an appropriate season to remember the importance of our Sunday morning life together? Why is it that we show up at 25 E. Marion Street for 10:30 am service on Sundays? And why is each one of us so critical in that showing up?

Scripture would offer at least three fundamental answers to this simple "why." Two are from the Old Testament and one is from the New Testament. Sabbath practice, what has become Sunday worship in the Christian community, is rooted both in the creation story's rest on the seventh day and in the commandment to remember the Sabbath given after the ancient Hebrew people had been led out of the house of slavery. Sabbath is about rest and freedom. In fact when our Jewish neighbors begin their weekly Sabbath observance, two candles are lit. One is a candle of rest, and the other is a candle of freedom. A third layer of meaning emerges from our Christian formation in resurrection. Through the prism of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, our weekly celebration is about the new thing God is doing beyond the bounds of every experience of dying and death.

Rest, freedom, and new life -- these are three threads woven together into the fabric of our life as a worshipping people. Can we take a countercultural step out of the rhythms of

busyness, production, consumption, and proving ourselves to rest in the goodness, guidance, and grace of God? Do we seek to find fuller freedom in that which is greater than all our human successes and power plays? Do we find our waiting place in the new thing, the unexpected life, the way where there has been no way that holy love makes possible for us and through us.

We gather with people in all times and places. We gather to tap and gain understanding about the sturdy strength of rest, freedom, and new life with God. See you in church. Is there someone you might invite to visit and find a welcome among us?

Martha

News and Notes

We celebrate with Nikki Kromphardt who will begin another assignment with Americorps in Washington state on August 17. Nikki, you will be missed. We can't wait to hear about your new adventures.

Barb Ollila has just returned from two weeks of training with her new guide dog Sandee. We look forward to seeing the two of you out and about around Princeton. Just remember that Sandee is a working dog and shouldn't be petted while on duty.

Our three recent high school graduates -- Abby Beneke, Evan Hale, and Sallee Zearing will begin their college careers in the next month or so. Our love and prayers go with you.

We continue to hold with thanks and in prayer the members of the search committee: Molly Blogg, Mimi Cofoid, Sarah Cooper, Paul Ernst, Carol Kuhnert, Ron McCutchan, and Barb Ollila.

If you would like to send Brian a note his address is:

Brian Taylor
Fickler Camp
P.O. Box 515
Yosemite, CA 95389

August Calendar of Intercessory Prayer

August 1 -- all who are frightened by new beginnings
August 2 -- those cleaning up in the wake of destructive summer storms
August 3 -- people whose love is not returned
August 4 -- new teachers preparing for the fall
August 5 -- workers who have recently lost jobs
August 6 -- the staff who has run Pilgrim Park this summer
August 7 -- everyone who has contributed to this year's Festival 56
August 8 -- the lonely
August 9 -- seekers who do not feel at home in churches they have visited
August 10 -- any who are learning to make due on less
August 11 -- families who are stretched across several continents
August 12 -- our search committee
August 13 -- people who have lost children during pregnancy, at birth, or in infancy
August 14 -- victims of gossip and slander
August 15 -- police officers who keep us safe on highways and at large events
August 16 -- unnamed factory workers around the globe who sew our clothing
August 17 -- Americorps workers
August 18 -- healers
August 19 -- those who can't find support in their suffering
August 20 -- any with the shock of a difficult diagnosis
August 21 -- people who struggle with the changing capabilities of their aging
August 22 -- growers of food and flowers
August 23 -- each one we are connected with through Fair Trade products
August 24 -- survivors after a violent or sudden death
August 25 -- everyone who is helping in preparations for a potential flu pandemic this fall
August 26 -- storytellers whose tales change lives
August 27 -- people who are largely unseen day after day
August 28 -- any who lend creative and consistent leadership to transform our ongoing national conflict over race
August 29 -- the meal makers
August 30 -- animals who provide good company
August 31 -- students returning to school

Memorial and Honorary Gifts

Open Prairie has started a new program in which donations may be given to the church in honor or memory of a loved one, special event, or occasion.

Donation ideas could include:

- **Special birthdays or Anniversaries**
- **Graduations**
- **To say "Thanks"**
- **or just because you love someone!**

A "Wish List" of church needs will be listed in the newsletter and the gifts may be dedicated to those items.

Current Wish List

Cork strip for Sunday school room
Storage shelves in storeroom
Trays for dishwasher/ new kitchen island

A Letter from Dan Kuhnert:

Dear Friends and Open Prairie Family,
I am writing this letter to inform all the church family how my life is going so far here in this correctional facility. All in all it is not too bad. We get to be in the day room an hour before breakfast (served at 8am, lunch is served at noon and dinner is served at 5pm.) We can be in the day with the exception of 11-noon, and 4-5pm – those times we inmates must be in our assigned cells for what is referred to as institutional count. That is how the correctional officers know how many inmates are currently housed here at Dixon. Meals are served in the Central Dining Hall at the same time each day.

As inmates we are allowed to have up to 20 approved phone numbers on our calling list and all calls can be monitored or tape recorded. Additionally a call costs around \$10 to call from here to Princeton. I currently have one number on my approved list. If anyone would like to call me on the phone please let me know so that I can add your number to my approved list. Also we as inmates must have everyone who we want to visit with in the visiting room pre-approved and we must even name an attorney if they need to meet with us about a legal matter. I currently have one pending. As an inmate we only can have 20 names on our visiting list and mine is full at this point. Mine mostly contains family and friends of mine that I ride snowmobiles with.

Well I better end this letter so I can get it in the mail but I will say one last thing – I really appreciate all the cards and letters I have received and hope to continue to hear from everyone. Please keep me in your prayers as well as my parents who really need your support during this difficult time.

Yours truly, Daniel Kuhnert
P.S. God is still speaking



If you have time to jot a note, Dan Kuhnert would enjoy hearing from you.

Daniel Kuhnert R72534

Dixon Correctional Center 2600 N. Brinton Ave.
Dixon, IL 61021

Aug. 28 Sherri Henneberry
Aug. 29 Lou Zearing



August CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Aug. 4	10am & 6:30pm	EAT group
Aug. 5	8:00 am	Prayer group @ Autrey's
Aug. 5	6:00 pm	Prairie Circle
Aug. 6	6:30 pm	Choir @ Church
Aug. 11	10am & 6:30pm	EAT group
Aug. 12	8:00 am	Prayer group @ Autrey's
Aug. 12	7-5 pm	Red Cross
Aug. 13	9-5 pm	Church Closed
Aug. 13	6:30 pm	Choir @ Church
Aug. 18	10am & 6:30pm	EAT groups
Aug. 19	8:00 am	Prayer group @ Autrey's
Aug. 20	6:30 pm	Choir @ Church
Aug. 23	8:00 am	Search Committee
Aug. 24	7:00 pm	Church Council
Aug. 25	10am & 6:30pm	EAT groups
Aug. 26	8:00 am	Prayer group @ Autrey's
Aug. 27	6:30 pm	Choir @ Webber's
Aug. 30	8:00 am	Search Committee

Mission News

School days are just around the corner! With that in mind, your mission team is inviting everyone to donate school supplies for needy area youth. Right now your local stores are having sales on school supplies. Please consider picking up an item or two to drop in our "School Days Box" which will be located in the foyer at church. If you are not able to deliver the school supplies to church, I will be happy to pick them up for you! Just call me at (815) 646-4118. You may also pick up a supply list (available at the big box stores) and fill a backpack with the listed supplies a Princeton student will need. Each grade level is listed with the supplies a child will need for each grade. Just pick a grade! Or just pick up a bottle of glue, a box of markers or crayons! Your mission team will sort and assemble and deliver to our local schools! Thank you so much for your continued generosity! I know first hand how thankful a child and his/her parents are to have new school supplies!

Here are some items that are needed:

Elmers white glue, Crayola crayons (24), Crayola classic markers (broad line), scissors, pencils, big pink erasers, 1" binders, notebooks, Prang watercolors, glue sticks, Kleenex boxes, dry erase markers, small girls underpants, small boys underpants, small tennis shoes, Clorox wipes, hand wipes, gallon-size freezer bags, quart-size freezer bags, snack-size baggies.

For the month of August the Bureau County Food Pantry is collecting bath supplies. Please consider donating if you are able! A big "Thank You" to Hal and Margaret Autrey for delivering our food pantry items each month!

The mission team will be asking for volunteers to help prepare and serve lunch at the Conference meeting on Saturday, November 14th at the church! Please mark your calendars now!

Enjoy the rest of your summer!
Susan

FOOD PANTRY FOR AUGUST

Shampoo, Toothpaste/toothbrushes, soap



Aug. 1	Barb Schiff
Aug. 3	Linda Ernst
Aug. 4	Mary Davidson
Aug. 10	David Gray
Aug. 12	Alice Beneke
Aug. 14	Stephanie Hale
Aug. 19	Ben Fisher
Aug. 19	Ashley Kasperski
Aug. 19	Becky Perkins
Aug. 20	Sue Stumpf
Aug. 23	Jared Jagers
Aug. 24	Suzie Stalter
Aug. 25	Jana Allott
Aug. 27	Scott Roberts



Prairie Circle News

There will be no meeting of the
Prairie Circle in August.

Search Committee Update

As you know, the search process for a new pastor is underway and the seven of us on this committee are excited to be moving right along. Our chairperson is Mimi Cofoid and our recording secretary is Ron McCutchan. We have met twice and have begun to gather information needed to complete our church profile. This is the first chance OPUCC has had to undergo this process, and although we are a young church, there is still much to think about and evaluate in order to properly represent our church in a 20 page profile. And we need your help. The committee has prepared a survey for the congregation, which you will be receiving soon. All of these questions are based on questions we need to answer in the profile, so please take the time to think these through and respond. We are also planning to have a congregational meeting sometime this fall, where we can have small group discussions to hear more from all of you. Although we are making progress, we are still very much at the beginning of this process, and we expect it could take 18-24 months before we call on a new pastor. We will continue to keep you all informed as to what we are doing and where we are in the process. On the tail of Martha's request that the congregation leave the committee alone to let us do our work, we would like to further explain that by having you refrain from questioning individual committee members about what is being said or done, we are better able to make sure that everyone is receiving the same information at the same time. Please know that your input is welcome and necessary, we will make our best efforts to make sure all your voices are heard. Thanks for your patience and support!

Molly and the Search Committee

Church Council News

The next Church Council Meeting will be Monday,
August 24, 2009 at 7:00pm.
A copy of the current Council minutes is hanging on the
bulletin board in the Church office.

TIPS FOR EXERCISING DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS

Health Ministries would like to share some helpful tips when you are exercising during the summer months.

1. First and foremost drink plenty of water
2. If your feet get sweaty change your socks
3. When the temperature and the humidity together are greater than 160 consider exercising indoors to prevent dehydration and heat stroke.
4. Exercise in the coolness of the morning or evening
5. Wear light weight and light colored clothing
6. Always apply sunscreen
7. Protect your eyes with sunglasses that are UV rated for protection

Enjoy the rest of your summer, get some exercise and stay healthy from your Health Ministries team.

Open Prairie to host Prairie Association Meeting

Mark you calendar for November 14th, 2009. That is the day Open Prairie will host the Prairie Association Annual meeting. This is a huge honor for OPUCC and it will take the efforts of every single member to make is a success. Greeters, breakfast prep, set-up, clean-up, childcare, lunch, music, programming...start thinking now about ways you can help. And when you are asked to join a committee, SAY YES!!!

There is always room at our writing and study tables on Tuesday morning and Tuesday evening for new folks to join. If you haven't been a part of either *Enough At Table* groups but have thought about it, know you are welcome. The morning group meets at 10 am and the evening group at 6:30 pm.

Love Life, Live Green

Have you gotten your Love Life, Live Green reusable grocery bags filled with recipes and products to make your own green cleaning products? As most of you know OPUCC is selling these bags which were designed by our very own Stephanie Hale. The bags contain a spray bottle, a container for your soft scrub, a microfiber cloth and a recipe book to make your cleaning products. The cleaning products are wonderful and are good for the environment. The bag itself is also biodegradable so when it is worn out it too will not harm the environment. The bags cost \$12 or two for \$20. We ordered 100 bags to start with and have only about 15 or so left, so hurry and get yours if you haven't done so already. You can get your bags at OPUCC or by calling Becky Perkins or Mimi Cofoid. If you have any questions please feel free to give us a call. Thanks to those of you who have already purchased your bags. All proceeds go to the general operating budget. Remember, LOVE LIFE, LIVE GREEN!

Open Prairie Christmas Market

On Saturday, November 21, 2009, Open Prairie will be hosting an "open house" in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce's Open House for the merchants in Princeton. The plan is for OPUCC to create a German Kristkindl Markt at the church. (Christ Child Market or Christmas Market).

We will be open from 10:00 am to 3:00pm that day, and feature food; live music; kiosks selling baked goodies, art, crafts, Fair Trade coffee and chocolate; hand made and imported Christmas ornaments. We will also be serving bratwurst, soft pretzels, stollen, lebkuchen, mulled cider, coffee, and whatever else we are up to!

We invite other artists or artisans who would like a venue for marketing their items to reserve a kiosk space in our multi-purpose room. They will be asked for a donation if they sell anything.

A core committee will convene soon to plan this event. We will need crafters, bakers, cooks, musicians, servers, guides, folks to dress as Father Christmas, and gofers. And it's not too early to start getting ready now.
More later....Sarah Criner, Chair.



News from Christian Education

The summer Sunday School classes for July are project oriented and built around the theme "Green Prairie." In keeping with this theme the children prepared and served strawberry/blueberry shortcake, made from locally grown berries, on July 5th. What a wonderful way to celebrate the birthday of our country. The children put their imaginations and artistic skills to the test when they created their own recycling containers. Each container has its own personality as well as likes and dislikes. The children even created a list of what the recyclers will eat...cans, bottles, newspapers, etc. On Sunday, July, 26th the children served as good stewards to Open Prairie and the surrounding neighborhood when they spent the Sunday School hour picking up shingles that had blown off the theatre during the storm Friday evening (July 25th). The children tracked the direction of the storm, followed the shingles, and all told collected more than 30pounds! The final July project was a "Happy Thought of The Day" book, created by Katrina and reproduced for each of our shut ins. Isn't it wonderful to know that those who can no longer join us for worship are reminded of the love and concern of our children every day of the week?

Many thanks to the Health Ministries team for delivering the books. Fern, Danielle, Fox, Katrina, and Becky attended camp at Pilgrim Park during July. Each of the children is now old enough to attend a full week of camp. When you see one of our campers, please take a moment to find out about her/his exciting week.

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