

OPEN PRAIRIE UCC – January/February 2005 News

CORRESPONDENCE

✳️Dear Ladies of UCC,
Thank you for the gifts at Christmas this year! I really appreciated them a lot! Thank you from the bottom of my heart! God loves you, too!
Sincerely,
Miss Debra Gray

✳️Kelly,
Thank you for the jeans, sweatshirt and boots. They will come in handy. I work in the cold for my job. Thanks again.
Fred Eggres

✳️Dear Open Prairie UCC,
Thank you for the gifts you gave me for Christmas. You have made me very happy. Thank you and Merry Christmas.
Tony Full

✳️Dearest OPUCC Family,
Thank you for the beautiful flower arrangement at my Dad's funeral. It was gorgeous and I took it home to enjoy as well! With love, Susan Hale

✳️To Everyone at Open Prairie UCC
Freedom House gratefully acknowledges your generous contribution on behalf of the victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. We cannot begin to thank you for your well wishes and the wonderful Christmas tree! It's brightening up a client's room as we speak. Thanks again and God bless. ☺
Stephanie Cartwright

✳️Dear Kelly,
On behalf of the staff and customers at Gateway Services, Inc., I want to thank you for the generous donations of Christmas gifts given to those we serve. You were

well organized and coordinated a very successful gift giving campaign. Because of your efforts and those of your congregation, adults and children with disabilities had a brighter Christmas.

The faith communities within Bureau, Marshall and Putnam counties reach out continuously and embrace the needs of others in real and practical ways. Your congregation is on the embodies 1John 3:18, "let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth."

Christmas reminds us of the warm and caring communities we have and churches like yours are a perfect example of what it means to love in deed and truth.

Thank you again for the gifts, your continued service throughout the community, and especially for your support of the mission of Gateway Services, Inc.

Sincerely,
Lesley A. Gonigam
Outcomes Coordinator
Gateway Services, Inc.

Dear Friends:

Thank you so very much for the gift of \$167 to Faith in Action. This project grew from the serious and very real need of people with disabilities to have meaningful relationships in their lives. The reality nationwide for individuals with disabilities is they lack relationships outside of the ones they have with paid staff. While the paid staff in our agency are exceptional, we realize all people need and deserve friendships. This is why we developed the Faith in Action project – to help people with disabilities make and maintain friendships.
(continued)

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The Faith in Action project is dependent upon private gifts, donations and grants to keep our project going. Your thoughtfulness and generosity is a real blessing to us. All of us involved in Faith in Action appreciate your church's expression of support.

This financial gift is an investment in the lives of those we serve. Through Faith in Action, we are helping to meet the social and spiritual needs of persons with developmental disabilities, one person at a time. It isn't complicated to make a difference in the lives of the people we serve. It simply takes people willing to give of their time to be a friend, and it takes the financial support of the people and churches who support the vision to keep the project going.

*Again, thank you to the church and you for your willingness to be so supportive of people with disabilities. We are grateful for your giving. Together we **can** make a difference!*

*Sincerely,
Lesley A. Gonigam, Project Director
Faith in Action of Gateway Services, Inc.*

ASH WEDNESDAY GATHERING

Let us begin our Lenten practice together at 8 pm Ash Wednesday, February 9th, at the Prouty Building. We will gather for fellowship at 7:30 pm with discussion beginning at 8 pm. We'll come together in a circle to share singing, prayers, and discussion of Lenten themes.

Notice of Special Congregational Meeting on February 6, 2005, immediately following worship

Re: **Receive report and recommendation by the Building Committee for purchase and remodeling of a new Church Home, followed by a congregational vote.**

The Building Committee has diligently researched many options for more permanent facilities over the past year. Please come learn of their recommendation based on their research and thoughtful consideration. Their proposal offers a facility to meet our immediate needs for worship, child care, Christian Education, office and administrative space, fellowship, and community programming.

If the committee receives Congregation's approval, the building owner and OPUCC will apply for a conditional use permit at the February 8 City Planning Commission meeting and the February 14 City Council meeting.

We will also be discussing the developing financial plans for the building at our February 6 meeting. We encourage everyone's attendance so that all may be fully aware of the progress and plans of Open Prairie.

Per our provisional by-laws, this special meeting is called by the Moderator and requires a two week written notice to the membership. Technically, only members of record may vote however OPUCC very much wishes all our participants to attend and voice their thoughts and opinions, encouraging full transparency in the financial workings of the Church.

Sincerely,
Alan Forristall, Moderator

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Congratulations OPUCC! You sure do know how to spring into action. The Tsunami Relief Concert on Saturday the 22nd was a smash hit, thanks to your commitment and hard work. The 18-25th of January is traditionally set aside in the Christian Calendar as a week to celebrate Christian Unity. Saturday night was a beautiful slice of such unity. When Katie and I arrived to Princeton one year ago, (February 6th will mark our one year anniversary with OPUCC, yippee!) if someone had told me that one year later, folks from the Baptist Church, the Lutheran Church, the Methodist Church, Hampshire Colony and more, would gather with us to support a common cause, I would have said "well, that's pretty optimistic." But look what a year has done. Saturday night we all came together and offered our very best on behalf of our brothers and sisters in need. With God's help we raised over to \$2,000 for the people of Southeast Asia. That gives me a lot of hope. We are capable of so much when we act together in love.

Paul's message to the Corinthians (vs.1:10-18) is of vital importance to us today as we continue to find our way as a new church. Paul reminds us to, "be united in the same mind and the same purpose." Let us be encouraged to be united in love, serve God and serve one another. You are doing a great job Open Prairie -- keep up the good work!

What's Next?

You are invited to partake in the Lenten journey in a very special way this year. I am thrilled to have discovered a wonderful book that will act as our companion during this special liturgical time. The book is called The Cup of Our Lives by Joyce Rupp. Rupp provides readers with daily meditation opportunities as well as group reflection topics. If there is interest, a weekly reflection

group will be established to meet following worship services during Lent (please let me know if this is something that holds interest for you). I will be using the book to prepare all six services for Lent and am encouraging OPUCC folk to purchase a copy of the book for themselves. Having your own copy of the book will afford you a fuller connection to the worship services as well as an opportunity to deepen your own spiritual practices. The books have been ordered from Green River Books and will be available for purchase beginning the first Sunday in February. The cost is \$15 a copy. Full scholarships are available by contacting the church office in advance.

Karyn Vaughn has graciously offered to provide the now famous "40 Lenten Words" as a spiritual exercise to aid in our journey through Lent. This year Karyn will also work closely with Joyce Rupp's book, choosing words that work together with Rupp's daily meditations. These words will be available to us at the Ash Wednesday gathering.

In addition, I will be offering a Lenten Small Group devoted to the exploration of scripture and prayer. The group will meet for just one hour on Thursday nights at our home beginning March 2, from 7-8pm. Scripture will be provided. Please bring a journal and writing utensil. All are welcome.

Beloved Ones, I implore you take advantage of this time to go deeper with God. As always, Spring will be a busy time for everyone. What better way to begin it than with both feet firmly planted in a healthy spiritual practice? The best way to grow our community is from the inside out.

God Bless each one of you,
Rev. Curran Reichert

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MISSION TEAM

Greetings from the Mission Team,

We wish to extend a tremendous thank you to everyone who took an ornament from the Giving Tree and bought gifts for our neighbors at Gateway. Dad (Hal Autrey) and I delivered sixty-five packages to Gateway in December. Both our cars were filled to the brim. What fun!

The Open Prairie sweatshirts and t-shirts look smashing on everyone; very distinctive, very classy, very beautiful. Thanks to everyone who helped make that project possible and to everyone who bought one...or two. If you have not paid yet we'd appreciate your doing so, as we are still a bit short.

Our beautiful God is Still Speaking banner languishes in the closet no longer! Thanks to Steve Taylor it will be up and flying this Sunday.

Thanks to the vision, talent, and energy of Curran, Adam, and Ron, we held our first ever benefit concert January 22nd to help raise money and awareness for the victims of the devastating December Tsunami. We hope to make a benefit concert an annual January event in Princeton.

Everyone was very generous in December bringing contributions for the Food Pantry. We made many trips delivering the goods. Keep it up, if you please. The Food Pantry would like us to give soup and crackers for the coming month.

We are working on some exciting projects for Freedom House and the PADS shelter in Peru about which we will keep you posted.

Our next Mission Team meeting will be on February 8th at Kelly Autrey-Webber's house at 7 pm. Please feel free to come. We'd love to have you.

Peace,
Kelly Autrey-Webber

MEN'S GROUP

"GET GOD IN THE GAME: A POKER GROUP FOR GUYS!", an adult men's fellowship, meets on the first Wednesday of the month from 7-9 p.m. – that is February 2nd! All levels of skill are welcome. For more information and this month's location, please talk to Terry Williams at 872-5308 or at church.

FELLOWSHIP TEAM

CIRCA '21. If you signed up for the March 13 trip to see "Joseph", please get \$36.50 to Lynette Ivey by February 6th. Lynette will send one check to Circa 21.

Pizza Hut will donate 15% of lunch and dinner sales to Open Prairie for the first Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of each month from November 2004-May 2005. Mark your calendar for *FEBRUARY 7th, 8th, AND 9th and eat pizza!!* Coupons are available at church on Sunday mornings.

The Fellowship Team challenges everyone to *PACK THE PLACE* at Pizza Hut on Wednesday, February 9th at 5 p.m. Bring your friends, neighbors and family!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP\$ FOR UCC MEMBERS. Scholarships are available for the 2005-06 academic year.

- Enrolled in an accredited college or university in the United States
- Under the age of 25 years
- Entering sophomore, junior, or senior year of study
- Maintaining at least a C average or equivalent

For applications and information please contact:

Minister for Grants, Scholarship & Resources
Parish Life & Leadership Ministry Team
Local Church Ministries
United Church of Christ
700 Prospect Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44115-1100
E-mail: scholars@ucc.org

1ST ANNUAL RUMMAGE SALE AT PILGRIM PARK on MAY 6TH & 7TH

All proceeds will be used to help fund the summer camping program at Pilgrim Park Camp, including purchasing program supplies and helping to scholarship campers.

Donations for the sale will be accepted at the camp November 15, 2004 through April 15, 2005. All donations of gently used items for the rummage sale will be accepted including, but not limited to household items, furniture, toys, games, kitchen supplies, clothing and other miscellaneous items. If you are unable to get the items to the camp, please contact the camp at 815-447-2390 and a staff member will arrange for a pick-up to be made.

1ST UCC IN SHEFFIELD invites us to their Saturday morning community coffee on February 5th at their parish hall. They will be serving their famous fresh-baked cinnamon rolls from 7-10 a.m.

WOMEN TRAVELING WITH JESUS... then now and tomorrow. A conference-wide Lenten breakfast for women--offered through the ministry of Women In Church and Society Illinois Conference UCC. Saturday, February 19 at 9 a.m. at 1st Congregational Church in Lee Center, Illinois. Come to hear stories, sing some hymns, and share a meal. Cost \$3.00. To register, pick up a form on Sunday morning at church or give Marcie at call at 659-3432.

THE CLOSET is always looking for volunteers. There is an immediate need for men on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 9-1 or 1-4. They also need cashiers who could commit to one day a week or month for Friday and Saturday shifts (9:45-1:00 or 1:00-4:00). The Closet is challenging each area church to find two volunteers for these times who would together only have to commit to two days each month. The Closet is also a great place for high school students who have community service graduation requirements to volunteer. Thank you and God Bless.

CHRISTIAN ED

Tanya Williams and Terri Zearing continue to provide Christian education for the young children in church. Projects have included making food, reading books, craft projects and/or sometimes drama. This takes place during the church service.

The Jr. High, or the "Confirmation Class", meet every Sunday morning 9:30–10:15 with Kathy Hornbaker. Paul & Mary Jane Goble have been the mentors for this class. On November 5th, the kids were invited to the Gobles' home for a breakfast of pancakes, sausage, bacon, deviled eggs, and many juice choices. Discussion included Paul & Mary Jane's dating days, marriage, their teaching jobs and where they have lived. Plans are in the works to do a "baking with Mary Jane" video.

Youth Group News. On Sunday, December 5th, the Sr. High Youth Group served an Italian Meal of spaghetti, mostaccioli, lasagna, veggie lasagna, garlic bread and ice cream with chocolate syrup, following an afternoon worship at Pilgrim Park. Our thanks to everyone for your generous support.

On December 11th, at 2 p.m., some of the youth group gathered at the Prairie Arts Center and enjoyed Dexter Brigham's production *A Christmas Tree in Terminal C*. We then walked to the Zearing home and began baking and icing many sugar cookies. Other cookies and candies were prepared, also. These goodies were sold during the Advent Workshop on December 12th.

On January 16th the youth gathered at the Hornbakers for pizza and vegies. We discussed the Celebration Service for Terry

Adams that was held that afternoon from 2-4 p.m. Terry, age 38, was a teacher at PHS who lost his life to a brain tumor. More discussion followed about the upcoming mission trip to South Dakota.

SUPER BOWL SUBS! PLACE YOUR ORDER NOW!

Open Prairie Sr. High Youth are selling 7" sub sandwiches for Super Bowl Sunday on February 6th. We are making the tasty Avanti-style sub of ham, salami, and cheese with bread we order from Avantis!! These sandwiches will freeze great, so stock up your freezer! All proceeds will go toward our Mission Trip to Cherry Creek, South Dakota, in July of 2005. Sandwiches/bread will be ready for pickup following worship at the Prouty Building that Sunday. Delivery will be made if requested. Order forms are available at church on Sunday mornings are give Marcie a call at the church office 659-3432.

PRAIRIE CIRCLE

Prairie Circle will gather on Wednesday, February 2nd at 6:00 p.m. at the Prime Quarter. The salad bar only is \$7.95 or you can add a baked potato for \$8.95. You can also order a full meal if interested. Please contact Kathy Hornbaker at 659-3432 for more information.

NEW MEMBER SUNDAY

New Member Sundays will now take place on the 2nd Sunday of the month. We will be welcoming new members on Sunday, February 13th. If you are interested or have any questions, please contact Rev. Reichert.

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HAPPY BIRTHDAYS

1/10	Bill Beneke
1/11	Terri Zearing
1/19	Johnna Jacobson
	Bill Ollila
1/24	Peggy Hackley
	Margaret Autrey
1/28	Rich Hornbaker
1/29	Tony McCombs
2/02	Curran Reichert
2/04	Gene Humke
2/05	Becky Sapp
2/12	June Harmon
	Maggie Beneke
2/14	Karyn Vaughn
2/17	Bruce Croisant
2/21	Prudence Yagmin
2/23	Susan Hale
	Michael Zearing
2/24	Douglas Land
2/27	Ginny Martin
2/29	Carol Kuhnert

Note: if you have any additions or corrections, please let Marcie know at the church office.

USHER/GREETER SCHEDULE

Jan 2	Bob & Lynette Ivey
Jan 9	Beneke Family
Jan 16	Lori Pettee, Trishia Jones
Jan 23	Janis Land, Amy Stalter
Jan 30	Gene Sears, Jim Humke
Feb 6	Donna Chelin, Creal Zearing
Feb 13	Hal & Margaret Autrey
Feb 20	Sue Stumpf, Jan Milles
Feb 27	Kuhnert Family

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday Mornings

10:30 am Worship at Prouty Building

1/30	6:00	pm	Sr. High Round Table
2/02	8:00	am	Prayer Group
	6:00	pm	Prairie Circle
	6:30	pm	Choir Practice
	7:00	pm	Men's Group
2/05	9:00	am	Worship Team Meeting
2/06	11:30	am	Congregational Meeting
			Super Bowl Subs!
2/08	7:00	pm	Mission Team Meeting
2/09	8:00	am	Prayer Group
	5:00	pm	Pizza Hut!
	8:00	pm	Ash Wednesday Service
2/13			New Member Sunday
2/15	7:00	pm	Christian Ed Team Mtg
2/16	8:00	am	Prayer Group
	6:30	pm	Choir Practice
2/22	7:00	pm	Council Meeting
2/23	8:00	am	Prayer Group
	6:30	pm	Choir Practice

CHURCH INFORMATION

Church Office:

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Princeton IL 61356
(815) 659-3432

mail@openprairie.org

Marcie Jaggars, Secretary

Rev. Curran Reichert

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revreichert@openprairie.org

Church Web Site:

www.openprairie.org