

From the Moderator

Reverend Dr. Martha Brunell has accepted the call as Interim Pastor here at Open Prairie United Church of Christ. She will begin her appointment on Tuesday, July 1 and her first Sunday service will be Sunday, July 6th.

Pastor Brunell was ordained in 1978. Besides serving her congregations she has worked in Hospice care and hospital chaplaincy. She has been on the staff of Eton Seminary teaching courses and preaching. We are looking forward to her service at Open Prairie.

I would like to thank the members of the council who served as the Interim Search Committee: Kelly Autrey-Webber, Wendy Brown, Mimi Cofoid, Alan Forristall, Susan Hale, Ron McCutchan, Roger Perkins, and Patricia Wilson. The Committee spent many hours reviewing candidate profiles, doing telephone and in-person interviews, and held long discussions to find the most appropriate candidate for Open Prairie.

In addition I would like to thank the congregation for your interest, your support, and your patience during this process.

Pastor Brunell will be moving to Princeton from St. Louis and she will be looking for a rental unit in the Princeton area. She has a dog and a cat and will need a pet-friendly place to live. If anyone knows of a home or an apartment that is available to rent please let Martha know or contact the church office with your information.

*From your Moderator,
Bill Ollila*

Prairie Circle News

Prairie Circle will NOT meet in July. Please check the August Newsletter for information on our next meeting.

Greetings from Martha

Hello Everyone at Open Prairie,

I am delighted to be joining you this month as your interim minister. I arrive in Princeton, as did the earliest settlers here, with origins in the northeast. I grew up in upstate New York and southern Vermont, went to college in Vermont, and then to seminary in Massachusetts. I come from a New England line of teachers, nurses, carpenters, sailors, and Atlantic boat builders. Most of my thirty years in ordained ministry has been spent in Saint Louis. I hold a Masters of Divinity from Andover Newton Theological School (Newton Centre, MA) and a Doctor of Ministry in Preaching from Aquinas Institute (Dominican School in Saint Louis, MO). I am a writer, an avid reader, and I love to hike.

My ministry has taken me to a series of edges and places of transition. I have served congregations in Missouri, Massachusetts, and Vermont. Most of my parish life has been in a marginal urban setting in Saint Louis. In the mid-90's I was one of two founding directors of Lydia's House, a transitional housing program for abused women and their children. I have also spent fifteen years as a chaplain in end of life care with hospice and with the ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) Association, Saint Louis Chapter. Along the way I have taught consistently in community settings and as adjunct faculty at Eden Theological Seminary and Aquinas Institute of Theology. Varied edges and places of transition together with two interim stints in 1976 and in 1990-1991 are the background I bring to you on this edge and transition of your interim season.

I have two young adult daughters of whom I am fiercely proud. Amanda is 24 and works as a bi-lingual family case manager with the Winnebago County Department of Health in Rockford. She is a certified doula, birth assistant, and is currently pursuing a Masters

in Public Health. She travels elsewhere in the world as often as she can. Molly is 21 and a senior at Ohio Wesleyan University in Delaware, Ohio. She is completing a degree in elementary education with minors in dance and Spanish. In a year she hopes to be setting up her first classroom in an urban setting. They will both visit in coming months.

Throughout my ministry I have learned so much in the midst of very different people asking questions of faith across the flow of ordinary struggles and joys. I wonder what learning lies ahead at Open Prairie and am privileged to be spending this time with you.

Martha Brunell

July 24 Amy Stalter

~~~~~  
**Just Checking!**

Have you checked out a DVD, book, CD, or a copy of Curran's thesis recently? If you are finished using the item please return it to the church office so that other members may enjoy it. Thanks!

**Stewardship and Finance**

Ever notice how there's never enough time to do nothing? Often summer is the time when we intentionally take time to do nothing. I recently spent two weeks (vacation?) in the Houston area and was busier than I would have been if I'd stayed home. I arrived home exhausted, so now I'm taking some downtime out the each day.

While in Houston, however, I missed experiencing the drenching rains that have devastated the Midwest. You may have received an email regarding a Disaster Alert sent from The Rev. Cally Rogers-Witte, Executive Minister, UCC Wider Church Ministries. It stated that the UCC has pledged support to assist in long-term recovery efforts (clean-up and rebuilding). However, immediate relief efforts are coming from One Great Hour of Sharing grants being shared with Conferences and local UCC congregations in the affected areas.

If you contributed to the One Great Hour of Sharing special offering taken at Open Prairie in March, then you have helped to secure relief to thousands stricken by these storms. In addition, the United Church of Christ has issued a \$200,000 emergency appeal and a call for volunteers. If you wish to contribute financially or donate your services, go online to [oghs@ucc.org](mailto:oghs@ucc.org).

So, at a time when we are striving to do nothing, in God's love let's remember to do something – prayers, service, contributions – to relieve the suffering of our mid-west sisters and brothers.

**JULY CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

|         |         |                             |
|---------|---------|-----------------------------|
| July 2  | 8:00 am | Prayer group @ Autrey's     |
| July 2  | 9:00 am | Church office OPEN          |
| July 3  |         | Church office CLOSED        |
| July 3  | 6:30 pm | Choir @ Webber's            |
| July 5  |         | Youth Group mission trip    |
| July 9  | 8:00 am | Prayer group @ Autrey's     |
| July 10 | 6:30 pm | Choir @ Webber's            |
| July 12 | 5:00 pm | Festival 9 ¾                |
| July 16 | 7:00 am | Church reserved – Red Cross |
| July 16 | 8:00 am | Prayer group @ Autrey's     |
| July 17 | 6:30 pm | Choir @ Webber's            |
| July 23 | 8:00 am | Prayer group @ Autrey's     |
| July 24 | 6:30 pm | Choir @ Webber's            |
| July 31 | 8:00 am | Church Office closed        |
| July 31 | 6:30 pm | Choir @ Webber's            |

**😊 HAPPY JULY BIRTHDAY**



~~~~~

July 2	Wendy Brown
July 7	Payden Aronson
July 10	Mimi Cofoid
July 12	Barb Ollila
July 13	Tina Aronson
July 14	Scott Bickerman
July 20	Paul Goble
July 23	Victor Borst

God is still speaking. Spread the love.

Patricia Wilson, Chairman

~~~~~  
**Mission News**

**GREETINGS FROM YOUR MISSION TEAM**

I hope you have had a chance to enjoy the beautiful weather! Thanks to everyone who has donated to the food pantry. This month the food pantry is requesting Peanut Butter and Jelly.

Your mission team has been busy preparing for the Harry Potter Festival July 12<sup>th</sup>. The Open Prairie sponsored "Honey Dukes Sweet Shop" is a wonderful opportunity to have some good fun and work together for a good cause! This is the Mission and Outreach team's big fundraiser for the year. If you have not signed up to donate needed items, or work part of the evening, please do so! Thank you for all you do!

Once again, as part of our mission, we are purchasing organic, fairly-traded coffee, tea and chocolate from Equal Exchange, as part of the United Church of Christ coffee project. Each purchase helps develop farmer coops around the world. Your purchases also include a donation to Open Prairie's Mission & Outreach ministries. Thank you for your continued support of this project!

Your mission team will be working on a mission project for the recent flood victims in the Midwest. We will have more information later this month. Also look for special offerings for flood relief victims at Open Prairie. There is more information available about helping the flood victims on the UCC website [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org).

If you have a passion for mission and/or outreach activities, please see Susan or Kelly! We welcome one and all to this exciting team!

Blessings,  
Susan

**FOOD PANTRY FOR JULY:**  
*Peanut Butter & Jelly*



~~~~~  
Christian Education

Sunday School Schedule:

- July 6: OYSS: Nikki
YYSS: Dawn
- July 13: OYSS: Becky
YYSS: Kathy
- July 20: OYSS: Wendy
YYSS: Dawn
- July 27: OYSS: Nikki
YYSS: Dawn

A Note from Christian Education:

Your Christian Education Team is working hard throughout the summer as we have a number of activities happening for the youth. First and foremost eleven people (7 youth and 4 adults) will be leaving OPUCC at 6:00 a.m. on Saturday, July 5th and will be traveling to Wichita, KS to stay the night only to get up and leave the next morning for Alamosa, CO - the final destination! On the mission trip folks will be working with the San Luis Valley Habitat for Humanity to build solar passive adobe homes. The youth will be taking tons of pictures and are looking forward to sharing their trip experiences including how a home like this can be built during the worship service on July 20th.

Youth will be returning late on Sunday, July 13th. We ask that you keep us all in your prayers as this is a long journey but what a truly amazing experience! If you have any snacks that you would like to share with the youth for their journey feel free to drop them off by the church no later than Wednesday, July 3rd. Thank you Open Prairie for all of your support as the youth would not be able to attend this trip if it had not been for all of your fantastic fundraising efforts.

Summer Camp is just around the corner for five of our younger youth! July 14-19, Danielle Hughes, Fern Webber, and Katrina Rudolph will all be attending Spirit Camp at Pilgrim Park. July 17-19 Fox Webber and Becky Hughes will be attending Tenderfoot Camp at Pilgrim Park. It would be great if you could drop them a note during that week. In order to do so please send camper mail to:

Campers Name
Spirit Camp or Tenderfoot Camp
26449 1340 N Ave
Princeton, IL 61356

If you cannot send it out in time feel free to give it to any of their parents prior to the date they leave and they can drop it off at camp to be distributed throughout the week. It is such a great experience for a youth to be called up to receive their camper mail with notes from their church family who love and adore them. Please don't forget to support our younger youth as they continue to nurture their faith through the love of the outdoors.

Finally Open Prairie, I want to extend a personal thank you to all of you who have been there to support the Christian Education program. In the last 2 and half years the program has prospered and grown considerably. There are more youth attending Sunday School, the senior high youth are doing more activities outside of the congregation, the younger youth are all attending camp, there is a steady schedule of Sunday school teachers, a nursery is being developed, children's bulletins for Sunday mornings are being printed, quarterly trips are being planned for the younger youth, a work trip for adults to help Hurricane Katrina victims has been established and continues to grow, and many other things continue to happen as Open Prairie evolves into the next generation of churches.

Congratulations to you for your open mindedness and willingness to try something new by creating this position and then standing behind it to make it a reality.

As we look ahead at the next step in the life of Open Prairie it is time to consider finding someone new to fill the shoes of Director of Christian Education. Karen and I are looking at other employment opportunities and it appears that we will be relocating at the end of summer. We are planning to go to Tahoe, CA and get married the last week in July at which time we will search for housing. Assuming appropriate housing has been found, she will transfer and I have already accepted another position and we will be moving around the first part of September. We ask for your prayers and blessings on this very transitional time in our lives.

My hope for you Open Prairie is that you will continue to grow and will soon see the need to make your Director of Christian Education position a more permanent fixture within the congregation. This is a great chance to expand the position and add other responsibilities as you see fit to make this program whatever it is that you would like for it to be. Dream big and remember to step outside of your walls and reach far beyond them to accomplish new goals and to share that extravagant welcome with everyone!

Peace and Blessings to you,

Wendy

Church Council News

The next Church Council Meeting will be Tuesday, July 29, 7:00 pm.

For Your Information

If you would like to reserve the Open Prairie facilities for an event please contact Ami Chamberlain in the church office. The church has developed a Facilities Use Form that must be filled out and returned to church before the event. This will ensure the date is available and the facilities are clean and ready for your event.

~~~~~  
If you would like to borrow equipment or items from the church you will need to fill out the appropriate form. Please call Ami for more information. Thanks!

|

Church Office:  
25 E. Marion Street  
Princeton, IL 61356  
(815)872-5150  
mail@openprairie.org  
Office Open Tue. /Thu. 9:00 – 5:00 pm  
Church Web Site: www.openprairie.org

Open Prairie UCC  
25 E. Marion Street  
Princeton, IL 61356

