
PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Calling all Dreamers!

I have just returned from the "Mix in '06," the national gathering of UCC (United Church of Christ) and DOC (Christian Church, Disciples of Christ) where over 3,500 women gathered to celebrate their faith and share dreams with one another. It was an amazing experience complete with dynamic speakers, lively worship, and mission opportunities. That part didn't surprise me, having served on the planning committee for the last year or so, I watched how hard these women worked to create this event and I went into it expecting that it would be nothing less than spectacular. And indeed, down to the last detail, the conference as a whole was a work of art. There were, however, a number of things that I did not expect to move me as they did.

The first was the very tangible reality that we are so much stronger when we work together. This was the first time the UCC and DOC have ever partnered on such an event. Because of this partnership we were able to bring women from around the globe to offer keynote presentations, we were able to enlist world class musicians to offer a concert unequal to any I have experienced, and perhaps, most importantly, we were able to dissolve the barriers unintentionally created by our own denominational affiliations. Within hours of being together we, mostly women and some brave men (including John Thomas our National Minister and President); were no longer DOC or UCC, we were one in Christ. What came out of that unity was a profound sense of possibility, shared goals, and attainable dreams. Together we dreamt about peace, we dreamt of an end to warring factions that promote division and foster hatred, we dreamt of fundraising to end world hunger. Why, in one offering alone, the group raised almost \$30,000.00 to support the women's ministries within both the UCC and the DOC. There was an equally abundant offering taken on our last day together to support the global

mission work shared by both denominations. These offerings will make it possible for those who were in attendance and those in the local church to actively live out our dreams in the world.

On a more personal level, I was struck by the deepening of relationships between the women from our own congregation and the women from Naperville (the church where Katie serves). There were 10 of us from each church, which in and of itself is remarkable. Together we dared to dream of new projects and new ministry opportunities inspired by what we heard and learned at the "Mix". I can't wait to see what bubbles up in both of our congregations. One such opportunity that grew out of the "Mix" is the chance to reach out to the women of the Gulf Coast Region, specifically those living in inner city New Orleans. Along with Susan Hale and Katie, I have been invited to lead a healing retreat in New Orleans the last weekend in July. The event is being sponsored by the National Disaster Relief Ministries of the UCC, but there will be opportunities for our church to create goody bags, registration packets, and dream up other creative ways to let our sisters in the Katrina affected Region know that they are not forgotten. Keep your ears open for details, and contact Susan Hale if you have any ideas. All dreamers are welcome to participate.

In the words of Jean-Luc Picard, "things are only impossible until they're not." It is my hope that those who went to the "Mix" will inspire the rest of us to become conscious of our dreams and together we will work to make God's dreams become a reality.

In Christ,
Rev. Curran Reichert

A “DREAMER’S” VIEW

The mix in 06 Women’s Event, Dream on Sisters, finally arrived June 21 -25 in Indianapolis. During registration, we each received a handmade Bolivian tote bag. Each color on the bag represented a different ethnic group. They are beautiful. My initial feeling walking into worship was overwhelming. Over 3,500 UCC & DOC women of faith from around the world were worshipping together. Women were given a chance to tell their stories. It was empowering. After a while, I began to feel as though I have been asleep my entire adult life to women’s issues outside of my safe environment. Great emphasis was placed on PEACE & JUSTICE.

The worship services were filled daily with amazing music, led by our own dream weaver, Curran. The spirit was definitely alive. We were so proud of you! Worship was filled with inspiring speakers and an alter area that words can’t explain the beauty. AWE! In the first worship service, we each wrote our dreams on colored ribbons. Throughout the course of the event, two women weaved the multicolored ribbon together to create a beautiful alter cloth used in our final worship service. It was very moving to see.

Ten women from OPUCC attended, Michelle, Susan, Carol M., Mary Jane, Mimi, Margaret, Kelly, and Kelly’s Aunt Doris. We spent time with Katie and the girls from Naperville and we can’t leave out Curran’s Mama. Patricia, Kathy H., and Wendy joined us for the day on Saturday. We had moments of laughter and dancing and moments of tears and exhaustion. The Interconnectedness we experienced with each other will not be forgotten. We were building community. We each attended our own workshops ranging from global interfaith and justice to interpersonal communication and wellness. We usually met back up for meals. At each meal, approximately \$800.00 was collected for the Indiana Women’s Prison. If you see someone wearing a kite pin, it is a symbol for our awareness to remember our sisters in prison.

A keynote speaker was John Thomas, Pres. of UCC reflecting a few of his dreams for the

church. A few of his remarks.... Dream with me, sisters of a church on a persistent, painful, yet promise filled journey from respectable religion to evangelical faith. Log on to news.ucc.org for more details on his remarks. The test of our experience will be how we take action with the wisdom we accumulated. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. Thank you for the scholarships that allowed so many of us an opportunity of a lifetime. Peace to you all,
Angie

MESSAGE FROM THE MODERATOR

I would like to thank Paul Ernst, Courtney Sapp, and Al Forristall, who have served as church council officers, as well as the other committee leaders. I’m looking forward to working with Susan Hale, secretary and Al Forristall, treasurer, as well as other council members this coming year.

For those who may not know me, I would like to tell you a little about myself. Barbara and I have lived in Princeton for 27 years. A part of our family is Georgia, our golden retriever, Barb’s seeing-eye dog.

We moved from Sioux Falls, S.D. where we resided for 10 years. There I was employed by the State Service for the Visually Impaired. Barb and I met at the Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind, where we both worked in the field of rehabilitation. We celebrated our 40th anniversary earlier this year.

In Princeton, I was in charge of Vocational training and evaluation at Gateway Services for 17 years. After retiring from Gateway, I have continued my involvement with the Lions Club. I have been a member of that organization for 37 years.

Another interest of mine is ham radio. I have been licensed since the age of 13. I talk with other “hams” locally, nation-wide and occasionally, internationally. As you may have observed once I become involved, it’s hard to get rid of me.

I am looking forward to serving as your moderator. Feel free to get in touch with me regarding any questions or comments you may have.

Bill Ollila

CORRESPONDENCE

Hello from Vermont.

I was raised in the Hampshire Colony Church, Sunday school, choir etc. My family left Princeton in 1968. I am very active in my UCC church here in Vermont. I have been receiving the Tower Clock newsletter regularly. I recognize the picture of the building, and I recognize some of the names, but I do not recognize my church. I tried to read between the lines a few years ago, but it was never clear what happened. A recent Tower Clock identified the Evangelical Association. My investigation of the EA web site leads me to believe I should have moved my heart west a few blocks on Marion Street. Sigh.

So I searched the web for- Princeton Illinois UCC- and found you, my old church.

I am thrilled to find your web site. I was worried that it has not been updated recently. Just like my church here- thrills and worries. If you have an email list, put me on it- rayfieldvt@aol.com. I am fine looking at the website, saving paper and postage. You are welcome to visit the site I try to maintain for our church here- WaitsfieldChurch.com.

If any of my old Sunday school teachers or friends are around, and to all church members and friends, greetings from the mountains of Vermont. I continue to run my family's book shop and teach part-time at St Joseph College. My four daughters range from 1 to 21 years. I gave up editing our church newsletter last year after a stroke, but still sing in the choir, update the web site, maintain the clock and bell in the steeple, serve on the Welcoming/Inviting/Good News Committee, and so on. My wife Holliday is on the Council. If anyone wants an inspirational and informative blog about a successful recovery from stroke buoyed up by family, friends, church, and community support, they can visit RickRayfield.com. Stroke is the second largest killer world-wide, and third in the USA. I was lucky, but also fortunate Everything from my pastor anointing me with oil to my daughter's Sunday School teacher giving me a half hour of physical therapy over the phone on Easter to get my recovery jump-started conspired to help me regain functioning. The stroke was a cardiovascular fluke; the recovery was

a bulldozer of caring, encouragement, resources, and concern. My left side is weaker, my life is stronger, my faith is deeper. I do not know the details of the HCCC split. But you have been in my prayers, and mentioned aloud during prayers and concerns in our church here. Without knowing details, I know it took courage to walk away from a building to keep a church alive. I am sure it is taking faith to keep it going. I am sure it has raised tempers and frustrations, and deep feelings have been injured. I will continue to pray that the healing power I experienced is available to you so that the wonderful work of the Open Prairie UCC can continue. It's nice to have a name to attach to those prayers. It seems odd perhaps, some 38 years later, to still feel a connection to people whose names have changed, whose generations have shifted, who do not know me. Surely there is the connection of all who believe in a Creator, and in the body of the Church as given life by Jesus. But there is also something to recognize as real in the power of a body of people called a church, and it is to that real church that I felt a connection as soon as I saw the web site and newsletters of your activities. You are my roots, and I send you my respect and love,
Rick Rayfield

Dear OPUCC Family and Friends,
I received the wonderful package that everyone sent! It was a great surprise that was handy during finals week when I needed to unwind a little. Keep doing what OPUCC does best, which will benefit all in the end!
In Christ's Love,
Scott Roberts

Members and Friends of Open Prairie Church,
Thank you for the generous donation of produce you have made to the Bureau County Food Pantry thru the Coneflower Farm. We are very grateful for your support.
Thanks again,
Judy Fiste

Dear Open Prairie Friends,
On behalf of the clients and staff at Freedom House, thank you very much for your generous gift of the lovely flowers and perennials planted by your church members. What a wonderful addition to our courtyard that serves as a safe place for our clients to relax and enjoy the outdoors. Thank You!
Sincerely,
Cheryl Smith

Everyone at OPUCC,
I would like to thank everyone for your support and the special church service for graduates. I would also like to thank you for the gifts I received at the service. I really appreciate being a part of the Open Prairie Youth Group. Thanks again,
Jared Jagers

GREETINGS from the MISSION TEAM

Greetings from the Mission Team,

Happy summer to you all. What a glorious summer it has been so far. Beautiful!
We are thrilled to welcome Susan Hale to the Mission Team as our new co-chair. Susan's beautiful energy and luminous spirit is always a joy to work with. Welcome Susan!
July will be an exciting month for the Mission Team, while August will be a time of rejuvenation and long term planning for the fall. The Harry Potter Festival is coming up! Bring family, bring friends, grab a stranger, and join us downtown July 21st for a night of wizarding delights. Last year was an amazing success with the festival bringing 5,000 people to town all dressed in their wizard best. Once again I was reminded what a delight it is to live in a small community. This year we have a host of new events planned including a life size wizard chess game, a Moaning Myrtle dunk tank, and of course, chocolate frogs. Open Prairie will again transform the Prouty Building into Honeydukes Sweet Shop and will be selling a myriad of delicious delights. This is the Mission Team's main fund raiser for the year so please come and give us your support and have a frog or a rat.

July 30th is a Jubilee Sunday. We will meet at the church at 9:30 for juice and goodies before heading out for a work session at Pilgrim Park. We had a lovely time in the fall so do come dressed for work and fun.

Thank you for your donations to the Food Pantry. This month they are requesting peanut butter and jelly, and for August please bring in shampoo, soap, toothpaste, and toothbrushes. If you see Margaret and Hal Autrey give them a pat on the back because they are the noble souls who faithfully haul all the donations to the food pantry. Thanks Mom and Dad.

The Mission Team is responsible for cleaning the foyer and the bathrooms each week so if you see a Mission Team member you might say thanks as well. Affirmation, Affirmation! We are always happy to welcome new members to the Mission Team so don't be shy. We are a rather jolly lot.

Peace to you all.
Kelly

STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE

Good news from the Stewardship and Finance Team! Our *Strengthen the Church* Special offering totaled \$724. Thank you for giving so generously. This offering will continue to support leadership for new and revitalizing congregations. Open Prairie has been a recipient of more than \$50,000 in leadership grants for the past three years, so it's great to be able to give back to this important offering. Our next Church's Wider Mission special offering will be *Neighbors in Need* scheduled for September 24th.

I thought you needed to know that June has been a stressful month financially for Open Prairie. Several large bills came due: health insurance, life insurance, extra payroll and Social Security. If you need to catch-up your financial pledge to Open Prairie, summer might be a good time before cold weather gas bills and holiday shopping arrive. Your support is a blessing.

Hope to see you in church,
Patricia

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

7/19 8:00 am Prayer group at Autry's
6:00 pm Pizza/Worship planning
7/20 5:30 pm Organic box pick-up at
Webber's
6:30 pm Choir cancelled today
7/23 9:30 am Summer Worship Time
Teens responsible for service
11:00 am Church Picnic/Hornbakers
7/26 8:00 am Prayer group at Autry's
6:00 pm Christian Ed Team Mtg
7/27 5:30 pm Organic box pick-up at
Webber's
6:30 pm Choir cancelled today
7/30 9:30 am Jubilee Sunday/Pilgrim Park
8/02 8:00 am Prayer group at Autry's
8/03 5:30 pm Organic box pick-up at
Webber's
6:30 pm Choir at Webber's
8/06 9:30 am Summer Worship Time
8/09 8:00 am Prayer group at Autry's
8/10 5:30 pm Organic box pick-up at
Webber's
6:30 pm Choir at Webber's
8/13 9:30 am Summer Worship Time
8/16 8:00 am Prayer group at Autry's
8/17 5:30 pm Organic box pick-up at
Webber's
6:30 pm Choir at Webber's
8/20 9:30 am Summer Worship Time
8/21 Youth Trip/Magic Waters/Rockford
8/22 Rain Date/Youth Trip/Magic Waters
8/23 8:00 am Prayer group at Autry's
8/24 5:30 pm Organic box pick-up at
Webber's
6:30 pm Choir at Webber's
8/27 9:30 am Summer Worship Time
8/29 7:00 pm Church Council Mtg.
8/30 8:00 am Prayer group at Autry's
8/31 5:30 pm Organic box pick-up at
Webber's
6:30 pm Choir at Webber's
9/03 10:30 am Regular Worship Time
returns today

HAPPY BIRTHDAYS

July

2 Wendy Croisant
7 Payden Aronson
10 Mimi Cofoid
12 Barb Ollila
13 Tina Aronson
14 Tanya Williams
Scott Bickerman
20 Paul Goble
21 Caleb Grant
23 Victor Borst
Lori Pettee
24 Amy Stalter
26 Kim Bettaso

August

1 Barb Schiff
3 Linda Ernst
4 Mary Davidson
6 Thomas Jones
8 Travis Olson
12 Alice Beneke
14 Stephanie Hale
16 Terry Williams
19 Becky Perkins
Ben Fisher
Ashley Kasperski
20 Sue Stumph
23 Jared Jaggars
24 Suzie Stalter
27 Scott Roberts
28 Steve Matthews
29 Lou Zearing

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



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

Summer Worship Time

**9:30 AM - All Sundays in July
and August.**

July 30 is Jubilee Sunday.

CHURCH INFORMATION

Church Office:

25 E. Marion Street
Princeton, IL 61356
(815)872-5150

Church Administrator: Peggy Walley

Hours - Wed. 9-5, Thurs. 11-5, Fri. 9-12

mail@openprairie.org

Rev. Curran Reichert

308 Park Ave W

Princeton, IL 61356

(815) 872-1661 church phone

(815) 872-1515 home phone

revreichert@openprairie.org

Church Web Site:

www.openprairie.org