

OPEN PRAIRIE UCC – May 2004 News

WHAT'S HAPPENING!

Opportunities to Connect!

Prairie Circle meets the First Wednesday night of every month and has supper together. This is open to all the women of Open Prairie and their pals. The restaurant changes from month to month, for current location and more information call Donna Chelin at 875-2060.

Join the **Choir**, we have a ball. We rehearse every Thursday evening from 6:30-7:30 at the Autrey-Webber house. Call Ron McCutchan for more information at 879-2032.

Senior High Youth Group open to all senior highers and their friends. The group has regular round table discussions, work projects, and culminates in a ten-day mission trip to an Indian Reservation in South Dakota. Contact Kathy Hornbaker for more information at 659-3432.

Sunday School for pre-school through 8th grade. Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. Jr. Highers are part of the Confirmation Class. Each young person connects with a mentor from our church family. Some things we do together... attend a retreat, take a world religion tour, visit an inner city church, and more!

A **Contemplative Prayer Group** gathers on Wednesday mornings at the Autrey's home. We share a reading or prayer, listen to a Tibetan singing bowl, and meditate quietly for about 25 minutes. We close our group with a circle prayer. Talk to Kathy Hornbaker at 659-3432 or Margaret Autrey at 879-9074 for more information.

Opportunities to Grow!

Help wanted! Open Prairie is looking to establish a men's circle. We are looking for a leader. The group can meet as often as you like at anytime of the day. If you are interested please call Rev. Reichert at 872-1661.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Church Women United sponsors May Friendship Day on Friday, May 7th at Hampshire Colony Church. A coffee hour begins at 9:30 a.m. followed by the service at 10:00 a.m. Margaret Autrey will represent Open Prairie taking part in the service.

The Granville UCC announces a Salad Luncheon to take place on Thursday, May 13 from 11 am to 1 pm. \$6.00. Carryouts available. Call (815) 339-6562 for more information.

NEW SMALL GROUP

Starting on May 18th on Tuesday evenings from 5:00-6:30 a new small group opportunity called *Spring Cleaning* will meet at the Pastor's Place. Join us for an opportunity to examine the old and the new visions we have of God. A chance to develop personal spiritual practices that are about who we are now. The group will meet for six weeks through June 22nd. Bring a journal and some sort of writing utensil. You are welcome to attend any or all of these sessions.

PRAIRIE CIRCLE

Prairie Circle meets on the first Wednesday of each month for supper at 6:00 p.m. Our next meeting will be May 5th at 6:00 p.m. at Ye Olde Underground Inn. Please call June Harmon to make a reservation.

GRADUATION SUNDAY

Our high school and 8th grade graduates will be recognized at worship on Sunday, May 16th. Please plan to be there as we celebrate with our young people!

OPEN PRAIRIE UCC – May 2004 News

FELLOWSHIP TEAM

✂The mentor program for new OPUCC members is up and running. Thank you to those of you who have volunteered to serve as a mentor. All of our volunteers are currently in action! As our church membership continues to grow we will need additional mentors. Please prayerfully consider this 2-3 month commitment to serving the new folks in our congregation. Contact Lynette Ivey, Becky Perkins or sign up at coffee hour if you are willing to mentor a new member.

✂The after church Coffee Hour is a great place to become acquainted with the OPUCC family. We are in need of volunteers to help the Fellowship Team provide this service each week. If you have not had a chance to serve as coffee hour host you may do so by signing up after church next Sunday. If you are hesitant to take on this task please consider inviting a friend or member of the Fellowship Team to act as co-host. It's easy, it's fun, and can be done without baking a thing!

✂Margaret Autrey has agreed to serve as our first church "cheer" lady and will send get well and thinking of you notes as requested. Please contact Margaret with the names and addresses of OPUCC family and friends who would enjoy hearing from us.

✂The Fellowship Team will provide a Gourmet Popcorn Bar for the Newcomer Night to be held at Rev. Curran's on May 14th at 7:00 PM. If you would like to know more about OPUCC please plan on attending this event.

✂Our next meeting has been scheduled for June 9, 7:00 PM at the Perkins.

STAR CHART

Please note that Victor Borst is still preparing a start chart each month. Copies are available on Sunday mornings at worship.

BOOK GROUP TO MEET

The newly formed Open Prairie Book Group will meet at the Perkins' (406 N. Euclid Avenue) on May 16th at 7:00 PM. We will be discussing Slaughterhouse-Five by Kurt Vonnegut. All are welcome to attend. Ron McCutchan promises the discussion will be lively! Hopefully the group will select a book(s) for future discussion(s). For more information please contact Becky Perkins or Ron. Join us if you can!

PASTORAL RELATIONS NOTICE

The Pastoral Relations Team will meet on Sunday, May 16th immediately following worship.

CHURCH INFORMATION

Temporary Church Office:
22937 1140 N Ave
Princeton IL 61356
(815) 659-3432
mail@openprairie.org

Marcie Jagers, Secretary

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

OPEN PRAIRIE UCC – May 2004 News

CHRISTIAN ED

The First Annual Festival of the Arts and Potato Bar was held on Sunday, April 25th.

What a wonderful afternoon we all had in the Pilgrim Park dining hall. The entertainment was awesome including: jugglers, duets, solos, poetry,, reader, mimes and bands. We were blessed with such talented groups and individuals.

The potato bar kept everyone's tummies full while the festivities continued.

The silent auction brought some competitive bidding from 6-course meals to a stained glass cross to 3 hours of yard work by the youth and Donna Chelin's caramels.

A live auction took place throughout the evening with such items as a 6-layer chocolate malt cake, a dvd player, a painting by Mary Win Walter Norris, and many more items.

A new event this year was the Blue Light Special Table. Tickets were sold for \$1 and each time your name was called you could choose one item from this table.

Thanks again to everyone who contributed to this wonderful event in any way they were able.

The youth group earned \$4,025.50 as of April 27th – from this one fund raiser!!!!

Note:

To those who bought plants at the silent auction here are a few tips from Kathy:

- Fertilize once a week
- Keep the soil damp – don't overwater.

SILENT AUCTION RESULTS:

- ❖ Dinner for 6 catered at your home provided by Ron McCutchan & Beth Forristall - \$80
- ❖ Two, 1-hour massages provided by Beth Forristall - \$100
- ❖ Caramels provided by Donna Chelin
 - Vanilla with pecans - \$40
 - Chocolate - \$35
 - Vanilla - \$45
 - Chocolate - \$30
- ❖ 3 hours of yard work provided by Matt, Tom & Jared - \$45
- ❖ Violin music for your special event provided by Constance Deal - \$70
- ❖ 1 dozen eggs per week for 10 weeks provided by Ray Kuhnert - \$45
- ❖ Chocolate chip pecan pie provided by Donna Chelin - \$20
- ❖ 2 tickets to Fiddler on the Roof bus tour provided by Citizens 1st National Bank - \$53
- ❖ 3 hours of yard work provided by Creal, Stephanie, Carl & Matt - \$60
- ❖ Friday night movie basket – popcorn, movie rental coupon, etc... provided by Lark Fisher - \$25
- ❖ 3 nights of babysitting provided by Creal Zearing - \$80
- ❖ Hand-made wooden stool provided by Don Schiff (*we must admit we don't know who bought this – could someone let us know?*)
- ❖ 1 dozen warm chocolate chip scones, fresh squeezed orange juice & coffee/tea/latte delivered to your home provided by Terri Zearing - \$25
- ❖ Dinner for 6 provided by Steve Gunning - \$135
- ❖ Home-canned jar of blackberry preserves & lime pickles provided by Lark Fisher - \$30
- ❖ 3 hours of yard work provided by Steve Taylor - \$60
- ❖ 1 month of easy/modified yoga provided by Karyn Vaughn - \$50
- ❖ 2 hand-made dream catchers provided by Dan Kuhnert - \$35, \$20
- ❖ 6 course French meal for 6 people provided by Linda Ernst - \$175
- ❖ Stained glass cross donated by the Dana Thomas Gallery - \$80

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

We have so much to be grateful for as we waltz into May; the church is growing, our spirits are soaring, and the Holy One is alive and well at Open Prairie United Church of Christ!!!

We have had several wonderful weekends in a row that have included two joyous Easter celebrations at Pilgrim Park (the early service was blessed by our friends from Sheffield joining in the fun), an Installation that lifted the rafters with joy and preaching that blew our socks off by the Rev. Dr. Jane Sphar (there are tapes floating around if you were not able to attend and wish to see it, let me know) and a visit from Rev. Rebecca Voelkel, Interim Coordinator of the UCC Coalition for LGBT concerns. I don't know about you but a highlight from the last few weeks for me was the Festival of the Arts which drew a tremendous crowd and garnered much financial support for the Youth Group's upcoming trip to South Dakota. The arts were beautifully displayed by Dana Collins, the food was lovingly prepared and served by our youth and plenty of adult helpers (special thanks to Kathy, Sallee and all the members of CE) and the entertainment was out of this world! Thank you so much to each of you who helped make all of these events so successful.

Katie and I are off to Montreat Conference Center for the Annual Recreations Workshop (ARW.) This is Katie's second year on the Board of Directors for this annual get together in the Beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina.

Katie will be teaching two computer courses for Christian Educators who want to integrate technology into the lives of the congregations they serve. I will be teaching the Art of Improvisation to Youth and Recreation leaders who are wanting to infuse some more freedom/laughter into their programming. I am

sure we will have a detailed report of our adventures upon our return on May 9th. Just so you know, if you need anything call Marcie and she will know how to get in touch with me and if there is an emergency Barb Ollila will be covering while I am away. I look forward to being back with you for Mother's Day.

Many of you have asked to see a written copy of Keith Phillips comments from the Installation, so I am including those words of support.

God Bless, Curran

Words for Rev. Curran Reichert's Installation at OPUCC 4/18/04

A couple of months ago I received some email from other members of my church, the community church of Mill Valley, California, Outlining your (OPUCC'S) travails.

It struck me you were suffering a plague of unfair ugliness, and I was called to come offer support of some sort. So, like some latte powered Sr. George, (Tre Californian) I wanted to come help slay dragons of injustice.

But, even as I suited up, I knew I was missing something. It's my experience that God speaks in Two voices, first, the quiet voice of discernment, and the second can be mistaken for an old Wily Coyote cartoon, in which he/she just drops anvils on your head until you get the message. I decided to come here and see which voice God chose.

I should have brought my acme umbrella for God is clearly speaking with anvils here. But given his/her sense of humor, God's message has nothing to do with what I thought I'd hear. After a "too short" day among you, I think I know what I was missing when I first thought to suit up for battle.....

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The Holy Spirit is at work in Princeton, in a way that matters to Christians everywhere. God is using some transient ugliness to connect us all some eternal truths. Evident behind that petty ugliness is an invitation to essential Christianity. And, just as God did 2000 years ago, God is using flawed people, like all of us to make His/Her points. And His/Her points are “you are blessed” and “All are welcome”.

So, here’s my count down of your blessings.

First, Church is a community, not a building. Where in the Bible does it say, “Jesus and the disciples stopped off at the rectory?” You were blessed in losing your building so you could discover your community. And speaking to you this past day it is clear you have a community in Open Prairie. Clearly this trade of building for community was a fair one.

Second. Jesus built his church around the marginalized, and to the consternation of the establishment. You’ve been blessed by rejection. Public rejection allows others that feel Christianity has not welcomed them to see that Christianity has a welcoming face, and you are that face. I believe that your uniqueness in this community makes you God’s face in this community. GOD BLESS YOU.

Third, you’ve been blessed with the least likely lightening rod for a pastor. Whatever Katie and Curran are, I don’t think they are threatening. So, when today’s storms pass, as they will, Princeton will have changed for the better for having been able to place such friendly faces on lifestyles once feared.

In summary, Jesus made two demands and a promise. He demanded we love God and love our neighbor. Not that we interpret God and judge our neighbor. The people of this congregation seem to be on the right path. In return for meeting those two demands we were given the promises that, imperfect as we are we’d succeed.

I know Open Prairie will succeed. And in so doing you give Christianity the face it needs, not conservative and judgmental, not liberal and irrelevant, but contemporary and caring. It’s a joy to see it happen, and a pleasure to see it happen with Curran as pastor. I hope to take that magic back to my home church.

So, in appreciation of the faith and commitment you have shown, in solidarity with your Christian mission and in confidence of certain success, I bring the greetings of a host of Curran’s and Katie’s Bay area family and friends. To God’s agents in Open Prairie, whatever the future brings, know we are with you in prayer and conviction. Thank you.

KEITH PHILLIPS

Member of the Community Church of Mill Valley - the church that ordained Curran

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday Mornings

9:30 am Sunday School at Prouty Building
10:30 am Worship at Prouty Building

5/05	8:15 am	Prayer Group
	6:00 pm	Prairie Circle @ Underground
5/06	6:30 pm	Choir Practice
5/11	6:00 pm	Stewardship Meeting with Rich Pleva at Pastor’s Place
5/12	8:15 am	Prayer Group
	7:00 pm	Worship Team meeting
5/13	6:30 pm	Choir Practice
5/14	7:00 pm	Newcomer’s Gathering
5/16	10:30 am	Graduation Sunday
	11:30 am	Pastoral Relations Meeting
5/18	5:00 pm	“Spring Cleaning” Group
5/19	8:15 am	Prayer Group
5/20	6:30 pm	Choir Practice
5/25	5:00 pm	“Spring Cleaning” Group
	7:00 pm	Church Council Meeting
5/26	8:15 am	Prayer Group
5/27	6:30 pm	Choir Practice

MISSION TEAM

✎ Our Mission Team invites your support of our local Food Pantry. For the month of May we will collect fruit juices. Please bring your donations to worship on Sunday mornings. Thanks for your support!

✎ Open Prairie UCC, as a part of Church Women United, is once again sponsoring the **Tools of Hope and Blanket Program** during the month of May. This program is carried out by Church World service to help people during various kinds of disasters and in areas of extreme poverty around the world. This program creates a rainbow of help and hope each time the right tool is placed in the hands of people in need.

A simple truth: Ordinary things-things we often take for granted like blankets - clean water-education- tents -garden tools - seeds - can make a world of difference for people devastated by tragedy, as well as those working to build a better life for themselves and their communities.

Your gift of \$5.00 can wrap a child in a warm blanket. \$15.00 can provide a hoe, shovel and rake for a rural family, \$75.00 can buy a wire chicken coop and batch of chicks for a women's cooperative, \$175.00 can shelter disaster victims in a family-size tent.

Be part of this beautiful rainbow of caring. Give a **Tools of Hope and Blanket** gift today. Special collection envelopes were provided on May 2, but donations may be made throughout the month of May. Please note "Blanket Sunday " on your check. Thank you.



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