

## OPEN PRAIRIE UCC – May 2005 News

### WORSHIP NOTES

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On **Sunday, June 5<sup>th</sup>**, we will join our friends from 1<sup>st</sup> UCC in Sheffield for an outdoor worship service at the Hennepin Canal Parkway near Sheffield. Our choir will be singing at this service! Worship will begin at 10:30 am followed by a picnic and games at about 11:30 am. A grill (charcoal, etc) will be provided. You are asked to bring something to grill, if desired, a dish to pass, place settings and drinks. The park offer opportunities for fishing, hiking, biking, and has a playground for the younger folks. There will be no worship service at the Prouty Building on Sunday, June 5<sup>th</sup>!

On **Sunday, June 12<sup>th</sup>**, we will attend the worship service as the culmination of the Illinois Conference UCC annual meeting in Peoria at the Ramada Convention Center. We will plan to arrive by 9:30 am with the worship service beginning at 10:00 am. New church starts in Illinois, in particular OPUCC, will be honored at this service. Our choir will be singing. Rev. Reichert has planned this worship service with Rev. Dr. Ozzie Smith of Covenant UCC in South Holland and Rev. Marilyn Pagan of Good News Community Church. There will be no worship service at the Prouty Building on Sunday, June 12<sup>th</sup>.

On **Sunday, June 26<sup>th</sup>**, Bishop John Selders will be our guest preacher at worship. Bishop Selders is the founding pastor of Amistad UCC in Connecticut. He is a Grammy award winning musician and an amazing preacher. Mark your calendars now...you don't want to miss this!

**Worship Time Changes.** For the months of July and August our worship time will change to 9:30 am

### CORRESPONDENCE

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◆OPUCC Family,  
Thank you for your sincere remembrances of our family during the time of my mother's death. Your cards, calls and spoken words were uplifting to myself and Linda. The ivy is lovely and is a reminder of mom's presence in our home. Bless you all.  
-Paul & Linda Ernst

◆1<sup>st</sup> United Church of Christ in Sheffield will host their monthly Community Coffee on Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup> from 7-10 am in their parish hall.....featuring their famous fresh-baked cinnamon rolls!

◆Granville UCC announces their annual Salad Luncheon on Thursday, May 12<sup>th</sup> from 11 am to 1 pm - \$6 per adults.

◆1<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL RUMMAGE SALE at PILGRIM PARK on MAY 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>  
8 am to 4 pm both days

◆The following e-mail note was received in response to our announcement of the new building purchase:

*I am sooooo excited for you! I'll be praying for you at this and when Prairie Association meets. God is still speaking in Princeton! Yippee and hooray! Rev. Gene Kraus*

### PRAYER GROUP

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A weekly contemplative prayer group gathers on Wednesday mornings at 8 am at the home of Hal & Margaret Autrey at 1320 South Church Street. We share a reading or prayer, listen to a Tibetan singing bowl, and meditate in silence for about 20 minutes. We close our group with a circle prayer. All are welcome!

### SPIRITUAL GROWTH

#### *Small Groups*

After a wonderful three-week session exploring the theme of loneliness in scripture, I am pleased to offer three more small group opportunities. All groups will meet on Wednesday evenings from 7-8 pm at the Pastor's place.

May 11, 18, 25 the focus is "Belonging," a contemplative reflection on relevant scripture and the theme of belonging.

August 10, 17, 24 the focus is on "Gentleness," we will explore this important scriptural concept and how understanding it might better connect us to God and to one another.

October 12, 19, 26 topic TBA but go ahead and mark the dates in your calendars.

Making time to engage in intentional exploration of spiritual matters is one very important way Open Prairie will continue to grow a healthy and happy community from the inside out. I strongly encourage you to make time to participate in one or all of these small group opportunities.

May God continue to bless each of us with insight and the capacity to grow,  
Rev. Curran Reichert

"The Cup of Our Life" book group continues to meet through the 29th of May following Sunday morning worship. All are welcome to participate for any or all of the discussions.

### ILLINOIS CONFERENCE MEETING

In addition to attending the worship service of the conference annual meeting on Sunday the 12th of June, you are also invited to come for the whole meeting. We are in need of two adult delegates and one youth delegate. Please contact Rev. Reichert if you are interested. Registration forms will be available at worship on Sunday mornings or you can register online at [www.ilucc.org](http://www.ilucc.org) by clicking on the annual meeting link. The registration deadline is May 21<sup>st</sup>.

#### **Illinois Conference 2005 Annual Meeting June 10-12, 2005 Peoria, Illinois**

##### *Friday*

- 1:00 Registration
- 2:30 Workshops, "A" Session
- 4:00 Workshops, "B" Session
- 5:30 Dinner
- 7:00 OPENING WORSHIP  
Katelyn Roedner, preaching  
Time of Remembrance (Necrology)
- 8:30 PLENARY 1
- 9:30 Reception/Fellowship  
Youth Activities (see flyer)

##### *Saturday*

- 7:00 Breakfast
- 8:30 PLENARY 2  
Ron Buford, Keynote Speaker
- 12:15 LUNCH
- 1:45 WORSHIP
- 2:00 Special Conference Visioning Event
- 5:00 DINNER
- 7:00 Visioning Continues
- 9:00 Still Speaking PARTY!

##### *Sunday*

- 7:00 Breakfast
- 8:30 PLENARY 3
- 9:20 Speakouts
- 10:00 WORSHIP

### PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Beloved Community,  
Greetings and grace to each of you. It is time for an Open Prairie update.

So much has happened already this spring, that it is even hard for those of us in the middle of it to keep track of it all. Blessings abound! Last Saturday, at the biannual Prairie Association gathering, Open Prairie became the newest church to officially receive standing in the United Church of Christ!

Nearly a dozen folks from Open Prairie attended the meeting. Prior to the vote to accept Open Prairie into the UCC, Ms. Kelly Autrey-Webber, chair of the original Search Committee that started this whole adventure, and Mr. Al Forristall our tireless Moderator, offered a few reflections on our journey as a new church. This was followed by the OPUCC Choir under the direction of the fabulously talented Mr. Ron McCutchan offering a song called, Sing Out Gladly/Munezero. The music reflected well our deep sense of gratitude for this milestone in the life of our congregation. Happily, the vote for our acceptance was unanimous.

Following the event, Rev. Dr. Rich Pleva, Prairie Association Minister, fearless leader and constant supporter wrote:

“Congratulations on Open Prairie's acceptance as a church with full standing! I know it was a formality, but I could see that many were genuinely touched - both folk from Open Prairie and from some of the other churches. The family is enriched and made stronger for Open Prairie's inclusion into the association!”

We continue to be blest with unwavering support from the Prairie Association and the Illinois Conference as a whole. After a recent

visit to OPUCC to preach, Rev. Dr. Jorge Morales, our saint in the Illinois Conference office overseeing all things New Church related, wrote:

“I truly enjoyed being at Open Prairie, experiencing worship with my sisters and brothers there and witnessing the power of the Spirit in the ministry and witness of the saints in the congregation. My greetings to all of them. I am blessed with the opportunity to be engaged in ministry with you.”

Rev. Dr. Morales is the Associate Conference Minister in the Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ for Stewardship, Evangelism and Church Development. He is an important voice for helping new and revitalizing churches in our conference to attain the money and support needed to develop and sustain healthy congregations. To date OPUCC has received over \$32,000 from the LEEAP Grant, thanks to Jorge and his dedicated team of evangelists.

But wait, there is more good news! Not only have we purchased a building that we will soon call our new church home, thanks to generous donations from those both within and outside of the church, we were able to buy it outright for \$86,000. Terrific huh?! Now we will just need to raise another \$130,000 for renovations. We are not worried however, because surely God has shown us that where the Spirit is, there will be a way. Our goal is to have the building completed by mid-August and to Celebrate/Dedicate the new space on September 18 of this year. Mark your calendars and plan to be a part of the excitement in some way.

Speaking of milestones, Palm Sunday was a special day for our Open Prairie family as we welcomed and installed Rev. Katie Morrison as our new Parish Associate. She will

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continue to offer her gifts to the congregations as she has done for the past year, but now she does so with a proper title. And just yesterday, I received the news that Open Prairie has been chosen as a recipient of the National Leadership Subsidy Grant. Below you will see Rev. Nancy Nelson Elsenheimer's letter to that effect. Nancy is an important part of the Church Development and Renewal Evangelism Ministry Team. A group who's support made it possible for members of OPUCC to attend the Evangelism Event in Atlanta last summer and is making a way for several of our folks to attend Synod and a celebration of New Church Starts in Atlanta this July. Nancy writes:

"It is now official. We voted to enter into covenant with the Illinois Conference and Open Prairie UCC in the amount of \$44,000 over the next three years! There was much excitement about the ministry of Open Prairie UCC and I look forward to working with you all as you continue to grow and flourish."

The grant is designed specifically to support leadership within the congregation. We have not yet settled on exactly how the money will be used to further God's purpose but feel certain that our commitments to mission and outreach will lead us to wise and fruitful choices.

Thank you for your love and prayers. They continue to grow us into community. May your spring be blest, Rev. Curran Reichert

### **BLANKET SUNDAY**

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 that we often take for granted like blankets, clean water, education, tents, garden tools, seeds.....can make a 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 can wrap a refugee child in a warm blanket, \$15 can provide a hoe, shovel and rake for a rural family, \$75 can buy a wire chicken coop and batch of chicks for a women's cooperative, \$175 can shelter disaster victims in a family-size tent.

Be part of this beautiful rainbow of caring. Give a ***Tools of Hope & Blanket*** gift today! Please make checks payable to Open Prairie with a memo: blanket Sunday. Becky will total our contributions and send one check from our church. Thank you!

### **BUILDING TEAM**

By now everyone should have received their announcement of our Open Prairie "new home" at 25 East Marion, and the Capital Campaign needs. We hope to have 100% of our membership participate in some way, even its not in a direct financial manner. We'll definitely need prayer, we'll definitely need some fundraising ideas (and workers), and for those who are able, contributions now or over a period of up to three years. Please complete and return your pledge today. Thanks!

-Building Capital Campaign Committee

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### MISSION TEAM

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Greetings from the Mission Team,

Freedom House will be holding the dedication of their peace garden on Friday, April 29th. We hope to give them a hand on the Tuesday before by helping them plant their flowers. It should be a fun time. There are few things I like better at this time of year than getting my hands in the dirt to plant flowers. Especially after reading the newspaper with its relentless gloom, to plant something in the earth seems a fitting way to fight back with something stronger than despair.

This summer, on July 15<sup>th</sup> Open Prairie will be participating in Festival 9 3/4, the shindig in honor of the new Harry Potter book which is being released at midnight on that day. We will be turning the Prouty Building into Honeydukes Sweet Shop. We will need people to bake and brew butterbeer among other wizardy things. If you would like to be involved, please let me know. It will be a blast!

The food pantry would like us to contribute fruit juices for the month of May. Please keep those donations coming.

Peace to you all.  
Kelly Autrey-Webber

### CONEFLOWER FARMS

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The first delivery of fresh produce from Coneflower Farms will be on Tuesday, May 17<sup>th</sup>. Pickup will always be on Tuesdays at 5:00 p.m. at Curran & Katie's back porch – even if they are out of town.

### AN INVITATION

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All Are Invited To A Recognition Party  
for Wendy Croisant  
as she leaves her position at Pilgrim Park

Sunday, May 15, 2005  
2:00 – 5:00 p.m. at Pilgrim Park  
Presentation at 3:30 p.m.

Please call or e-mail reservations to Pilgrim Park by May 9, 2005 so we may have plenty of food.

*A monetary love-gift may be given in appreciation to Wendy by sending donations to the Outdoor Ministries Office. Please make notation "In honor of Wendy Croisant".*

-Outdoor Ministries Office  
26449 1340 N Avenue  
Princeton IL 61356  
(815)447-2390 odmregistrar@hotmail.com

### HAPPY BIRTHDAYS

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5/04	Katie Morrison
5/13	Roger Perkins
5/15	Carl Carman Jan Milles
5/21	Mary Jane Goble
5/22	Nikki Kromphardt
5/23	Kevin Hale Rebecca Hughes
5/27	Evan Hale

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

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### ANNOUNCEMENTS

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#### **GATEWAY SERVICES PHONE-A-THON 2005 SEEKING VOLUNTEERS FOR A HEART-FILLED, FUN-FILLED EVENT!**

WHEN: MONDAY, MAY 9,  
TUESDAY, MAY 10,  
THURSDAY, MAY 12

Nightly schedule:

5:45 p.m. – light buffet dinner  
6:15 p.m. – Phone-A-Thon orientation  
6:30 p.m. – Calling begins  
9 p.m. – Calling ends for the evening

*PICK MONDAY, TUESDAY, THURSDAY  
OR ALL THREE NIGHTS!*

WHERE: Citizens First National Bank, 606  
S. Main, Princeton, Trust Department  
Building (behind main branch). Use north  
side door. Ring bell.

WHY: TO RAISE \$35,000 FOR  
GATEWAY. The Annual Phone-A-Thon is  
the major way Gateway raises money from  
our individual supporters each year. These  
funds are used for expenses that are not  
covered by government fee-for-services  
programs. The money we raise is essential  
to maintaining our program of high quality  
services and supports for persons with  
disabilities.

Please join Gateway staff, board members,  
and friends in making our 2005 Phone-A-  
Thon a truly enjoyable and rewarding  
event!

TO VOLUNTEER, CALL SARAH  
COOPER, 875-4548, EXT. 30. THANKS  
FOR YOUR HELP!

### CHRISTIAN ED

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**WE WILL BE HONORING** our high school  
seniors during worship on Sunday, May  
15<sup>th</sup>. Please join us as we celebrate with  
the following young people:

Scott Bickerman  
Ben Fisher  
Nick Forristall  
Ashley Kasperski  
Douglas Land  
Tony McCombs  
Scott Roberts  
Joe Zearing

A “bring your own picnic” lunch will be  
shared following worship at Zearing Park  
and we will have the annual “blessing of the  
bikes”. Please plan to join us for this very  
special Sunday of celebrations and  
blessings!

The Youth Group extends many, many  
*THANKS* to everyone who helped make the  
second annual Arts Festival and Potato Bar  
the most successful ever! To date, the total  
raised that Sunday afternoon is \$4,700.  
Thank you, thank you, and thank you!

### **IN CASE OF EMERGENCY**

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Rev. Doug Zimmerman will be on call for  
Curran while she is away from April 29<sup>th</sup>  
through May 7<sup>th</sup>. His contact information  
is...Church 815-454-2786, Home 815-454-  
2290, Cell 815-866-2390.

## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

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### **Sunday Mornings**

10:30 am Worship at Prouty Building

5/02	thru	5/04	Pizza Hut Days
5/04	8:00	am	Prayer Group
	5:30	pm	Prairie Circle/Pizza Hut
	7:00	pm	Men's Group
5/05	6:30	pm	Choir Rehearsal
	8:00	pm	Building Team
5/06	9:30	am	May Friendship Day
5/10	7:00	pm	Team Meetings
5/11	8:00	am	Prayer Group
	7:00	pm	Small Group
5/12	6:30	pm	Choir Rehearsal
	8:00	pm	Building Team
5/15	10:30	am	Senior Sunday
	12:00	pm	Picnic @ Zearing Park
	2:00	pm	Wendy's Party
5/18	8:00	am	Prayer Group
	7:00	pm	Small Group
5/19	6:30	pm	Choir Rehearsal
	8:00	pm	Building Team
5/24	7:00	pm	Church Council Meeting
5/25	8:00	am	Prayer Group
	7:00	pm	Small Group
5/26	6:30	pm	Choir Practice
	8:00	pm	Building Team
5/27			OPUCC bake sale at Lunch in the Park

### **USHER/GREETER SCHEDULE**

May 1	Donna Chelin & June Harmon
May 8	Jim Sears and Gene Humke
May 15	Angie Hughes & Janis Land
May 22	Lark Fisher
May 29	Becky Perkins & Jan Milles

### **PRAIRIE CIRCLE**

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Prairie Circle will gather on Wednesday, May 4<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm as part of "Pack the Place" night at Pizza Hut. No reservation necessary!

### **MEN'S GROUP**

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"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 May 4<sup>th</sup>! All levels of skill are welcome. For more information and this month's location, please call Terry Williams at 872-5308.

### **SUPPORT GROUP**

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Bureau Valley Area Hospice offers a Grief and Loss Support Group each 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month at 2:30 pm at the chapel in Perry Memorial Hospital. For more information, please call 815-876-3375.

### **MAY FRIENDSHIP DAY**

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May Friendship Day is scheduled for Friday, May 6<sup>th</sup>. Registration begins at 9:30 am with the program beginning at 10 am at the 1<sup>st</sup> United Methodist Church. This event is sponsored by Church Women United. Please contact Jan Milles if you have any questions at 875-4073.

### **CHURCH INFORMATION**

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Church Office:

Marcie Jagers, Secretary

22937 1140 N Ave

Princeton IL 61356

(815) 659-3432

[mail@openprairie.org](mailto: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](mailto:revreichert@openprairie.org)

Church Web Site:

[www.openprairie.org](http://www.openprairie.org)