

SEMI-ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING - MARCH 19, 2006

If you missed the meeting, please pick up a copy of the various Team Reports from the Church Office at your convenience. The congregation enjoyed a delicious meal provided by the Council while receiving oral reports from the various Teams and Pastor Curran.

The following officers/chairs were elected and will assume their respective offices on June 1:

Bill Ollilla-Moderator,
Susan Hale-Clerk,
Paul Ernst-Treasurer,
Rebecca Sapp- Financial Secretary,
Wendy Croisant-Christian Ed.Team Chr.
Patricia Wilson-Stewardship Team Chr.,
Kelly Autrey-Webber and
Susan Hale-Mission Team Co-Chrs.

The Worship and Fellowship Teams do not yet have chair persons.

Thank you to all the outgoing officers and chairs for your efforts in the past year, and to the new folks who so willingly stepped forward! We also welcomed our new Administrative Assistant, Peggy Walley and her husband, Denny. Peggy is off to a great start and has been a great support person in the church office.

Alan Forristall

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Reverend Curran Reichert is on vacation and study leave. She will return May 13. In case of emergency contact Barb Ollila at 815-875-4315.

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Members of OPUCC,
I'd like to sincerely thank you for your kind words and prayers following the passing of my father, Frank Bouxsein, Sr. They were very comforting to my sisters and me. A huge thank you goes to the women of the Fellowship committee for providing a great luncheon following the service. It was wonderful. And lastly, a heartfelt thank you to Curran for a very meaningful and spiritual graveside service. We appreciated her help through it all.
God bless you,
Frank Bouxsein

Dear everyone at Open Prairie,
Greetings from Montpelier, VT! Things are going pretty well here. I'm keeping busy both at the Basement Teen Center and with activities both at Bethany UCC and my community choir. My church choir here is fun, but it's nothing at all like singing with the choir at Open Prairie; they're into stuff that's a little (sometimes a lot) more traditional. I'm also writing the story for a murder mystery dinner that we'll use as part of a fundraiser for the Teen Center's summer trip to Washington DC. Last month I also moved into my own apartment. I had previously been renting a room from Esther, a very nice woman, fellow choir member and Raging Grannie, but she has lots of people coming to stay with her and she needed the room I was renting. My new apartment is decent, and it's about a five minute walk from where I work. I'm planning on finishing my AmeriCorps service by August, and I'll be home for about a month before I start a second year of service. You can reach me at this address until the end of July:

31 East State St., Montpelier, VT 05601
Have a wonderful spring everyone. You're in my thoughts and prayers.

Lots of love,
Nikki Kromphardt

WORSHIP TEAM

English Country Dancing at OPUCC on May 7, 2006!

The evening service program for May 7 will be a Playford Dance and Concert. John Playford was the 17th century publisher of *The English Dancing Master*—a collection of songs and dance instructions that remained popular even into the early 19th century. The dances one reads about in Jane Austen are English country dances—many straight out of Playford. In the early 20th century, Cecil Sharp "re-discovered" English country dancing, and founded the modern English folk dance movement in both Great Britain and in the United States.

Worship at 4:00;

Meal at 4:45;

Dance & Concert at 5:30.

This would be a great opportunity to bring a guest (or guests) to Open Prairie!

TOOLS AND BLANKET SUNDAY

Church Women United is sponsoring the "Tools and Blankets Program", formerly known as "Blanket Sunday", during the month of May through Church World Service. Open Prairie UCC will participate as a member Church of CWU. This event is also recognized as a "Wider Mission" activity by United Church of Christ.

CWS "Tools and Blankets" provide the right tools at the right time, making a difference in the lives of children and families the world over, whether faced with an emergency or struggling to keep

food on the table. Gifts to "Tools and Blankets" can provide blankets, tents and other emergency shelter items in the wake of disaster. Refugees returning home can be helped with tools to rebuild and seeds to replant fields. Families living in drought-plagued areas are helped to dig wells for clean, safe drinking water, and for water to irrigate crops and gardens.

When disaster strikes, CWS is there. During 2004-2005 help was provided after the tsunami in Indonesia, the devastating earthquake in Pakistan, and the hurricanes that struck the U.S. Gulf States.

When people struggle under the crushing burden of extreme poverty, CWS is there, too, thanks to the support of caring people and congregations across the country through the "Tools and Blankets Program". Your support provides a rainbow of caring to those in need in some 80 countries around the world.

See what a difference we can make together! Please use the envelopes provided (available in the church office) to give a "Tools and Blankets" gift today, or send to the Church office at 25 E. Marion St., Princeton, IL 61356. If you write a check, please make it payable to "Open Prairie UCC, and note on the check "Tools and Blankets". Thank you!

Open Prairie Circle
And
The Mission Team

STEWARDSHIP TEAM

The Open Prairie Stewardship Team, under the leadership of Chr. Patricia Wilson, has conducted somewhat of a renewal and refocus. As part of that process, we have attempted to better define the role(s) of the team. The following are some thoughts in that regard:

Some definitions in context of church money matters:

Stewardship -management of property, finances, and/or other resources

Finance – management of revenues, public or private

Budget – process of itemizing allotment of funds

Development – process of expansion, elaboration, or growth of finances

Stewardship Team:

This team is responsible for managing all aspects of Open Prairie's financial health. This entails many tasks which may be delegated to various team members but must be coordinated to maximize effectiveness of the team.

- Basic budget planning
- Periodic review and update of budgets
- Annual Budget Proposal to the Congregation
- Multi-year projections of all expenses including salaries and building maintenance
- Education of existing and new members regarding pledging, expectations of the church, financial needs of the church

- Recommend raises and make overall financial recommendations to Council
- Promote special fundraising for "internal" mission, i.e. debt reduction
- Encourage long range planning to develop funds for increasing mission work
- Develop and conduct annual Stewardship Pledge Drive or equivalent

The team welcomes new participants at any time. Please contact Patricia, Rev. Curran Reichert, or any team member if you would like to become a 'little' or 'a lot' involved in the team's work.

Alan Forristall

On Sunday, June 18th, we will be receiving the "Strengthen the Church" special mission offering, part of our church's ministry through the United Church of Christ.

Through our contributions to "Strengthen the Church", we further our commitment to be a multicultural, multiracial church, open and affirming, and accessible to all.

Our gifts strengthen and renew existing churches, fund leadership for new churches, provide new programs for youth and young adults, and fund leadership development for the whole church.

Please think about making a generous gift to the "Strengthen the Church" offering on Sunday, June 18.

Patricia Wilson

MISSION TEAM

Greetings from the Mission Team, Don't forget, the last Sunday of this month will be a Jubilee Sunday. During worship we will be putting together May baskets for those Open Prairie folk who find it difficult to get to church or who are ill. We will also assemble some baskets for Gateway and those who are presently seeking refuge at Freedom House. Dawn Rudolph will be guiding us along, teaching us just what to do. Please join us. It's a great way to reach out to the community and it will be fun!

The Kuhnerts came through with great speed and efficiency to provide us with honey bears that we can give to visitors. Now the Mission team needs to get their act together and make some cool labels to go on them. Thank you Kuhnerts!

The food pantry has requested we provide fruit juices for the month of May. Thank you all for your continued support.

In May we are planning to have a planting party at Freedom House. On Mother's Day we will be offering you the opportunity to sponsor a flower for this project. We hope to make this an annual event as we build a beautiful perennial garden from which those staying at Freedom House can receive solace and peace. The actual planting will take place in the week following Mother's Day. We will keep you posted on when that will take place.

Peace,
Kelly

CONEFLOWER FARMS PICK-UP

For All those that ordered produce from Coneflower Farms; the pick-up will begin on Thursday May 18th after 5:30 on the Webbers' driveway.

CHRISTIAN ED

Your Christian Education Team has been working hard to continue growing the youth program. On April 2nd the youth went to Pilgrim Park and participated in the low ropes course. Special thanks to Cherie and Angie for helping chaperone. The youth had a great time and are already looking forward to the next adventure.

May will be an extremely busy month for the Christian Ed Team. Mark your calendars now. The youth choir will be singing a song on the 14th and the 21st. Sunday School Appreciation Day and Senior Sunday is scheduled for May 21st. All graduating seniors will be honored, the Sunday school teachers will be honored, and the youth will even be recognized. It is sure to be a fun service with a reception to follow.

Finally the college care packages will be mailed on May 1st to all college students away from home. It will be their finals care package to wish them well with finals and let them know that all their friends at Open Prairie are thinking about them.

Also watch for more information regarding a possible intergenerational trip to Wacky Waters in Rockford for a day in July. Who doesn't enjoy a water park?! It should be a great time. The youth are also thinking about going to summer camp at Pilgrim Park in July. Christian Ed would like to be able to grant them each some scholarship dollars to help cover the cost. We will be taking a special collection for the youth during the May worship services.

Finally, mark your calendars for Vacation Bible School. Like many things at Open Prairie this will be a first for us but we have been planning like crazy. The dates are August 7-10. We will be recruiting people later to help provide snacks and lead activities. Be thinking about how you can offer your support. Thank you for your support and we look forward to continuing to start new programs and blossom like the spring flowers.

Wendy Croisant

OPEN PRAIRIE UCC - MAY 2006 NEWS

RE: RUMMAGE SALE

Wow – did we have a great sale!!
You all donated and worked, donated and worked! We had a super amount of goods to sell and some really awesome workers! Donna, Carol and Jan give you all an” A+” and a really, really big “THANK YOU!!”
PS. Save your stuff for next year – we’re going to “do it again”!

GREETER SCHEDULE

May 7	Paul Ernst and Hal Autry
May 14	Patricia Wilson
May 21	Margo Bertram and Molly Hornbaker
May 28	Freida Anders

HAPPY BIRTHDAYS

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 Peggy know at the church office.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

5/03	8:00 am	Prayer group at Autry’s
5/04	6:30 pm	Choir at Autry-Webbers
5/07	4:00 pm	Worship/Dinner <i>English Country Dancing</i>
5/09	7:00 pm	Team Meeting
5/10	8:00 am	Prayer group at Autry’s
5/11	6:30 pm	Choir at Autry-Webbers
5/14	10:30 am	Worship - <i>Mother’s Day</i>
5/17	8:00 am	Prayer group at Autry’s
5/18	6:30 pm	Choir at Autry-Webbers
5/21	10:30 am	Worship – <i>Sunday School Appreciation Day and Senior Sunday</i>
5/23	7:00 pm	Church Council Meeting
5/24	8:00 am	Prayer group at Autry’s
5/25	6:30 pm	Choir at Autry-Webbers
5/28	10:30 am	Worship
5/31	8:00 am	Prayer group at Autry’s

MAY FRIENDSHIP DAY

May Friendship Day is scheduled for Friday, May 5th at 9:00 am. This year it will be held at First Presbyterian Church which is located at 320 Park Avenue East in Princeton. All are welcome!

Granville United Church Of Christ

Please join us for a:
Salad Luncheon – May 11, 2006
11:00 am – 1:00 pm
Adults - \$6.00
Pre-school - Free
Call 339-2673 or 339-6330



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

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