
FROM THE MODERATOR

I would like to thank all those who have continued to provide Open Prairie with meaningful and uplifting worship services. We have heard several strong messages from the pulpit. These people from our own congregation have stepped forward to fill this vacancy. Christ's work goes on.

As of this writing we have received another profile for an interim pastor. Kathy Lawes has said she has more in process. We all hope our patience is well rewarded.

*From your Moderator,
Bill Ollila*

May CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 1	6:30 pm	Choir @ Webber's
May 2	9:30 am	May Friendship Day-St. Louis
May 3	10:00 am	Youth Fundraiser, Hornbaker's
May 4	noon	Church reserved, shower
May 7	8:00 am	Prayer group @ Autrey's
May 7	6:00 pm	Prairie Circle@
May 8	6:30 pm	Choir @ Webber's
May 14	8:00 am	Prayer group @ Autrey's
May 15	6:30 pm	Choir @ Webber's
May 21	8:00 am	Prayer group @ Autrey's
May 22	6:30 pm	Choir @ Webber's
May 24	7:30 pm	Coffee House
May 28	8:00 am	Prayer group @ Autrey's
May 29	6:00 pm	Choir @ Webber's
May 30	7:00 am	Church reserved – Red Cross

☺ HAPPY May BIRTHDAY ☺

May 12	Michelle Heider
May 13	Roger Perkins
May 15	Jan Milles
May 15	Carl Carman
May 21	Mary Jane Goble
May 22	Nikki Kromphardt
May 23	Kevin Hale
May 23	Rebecca Hughes
May 25	Doug Criner
May 27	Evan Hale

Stewardship and Finance

What does church mean to you? We could sit in a circle asking that question and come up with as many different answers as people! But the value at the heart of every answer would likely be the same: Love. Our church is love.

Each year we receive a special offering that helps Open Prairie's love to grow and thrive. Called *Strengthen the Church*, this offering funds new congregations and renews existing ones. It supports programs for youth and young adults and nurtures current and future leaders. And this year, for the first time, it will aid the "God is Still Speaking" ministry and its message of inclusivity.

We will receive the *Strengthen the Church* special offering on **May 11th** – Pentecost – the birthday of the church – *and* Mother's Day! We can celebrate these two, the church and those who are Mother to us, but giving to *Strengthen the Church*. Your generous gift today ensures a vibrant church tomorrow.

A second opportunity to spread our love is available on **May 18th** to *Tools and Blankets*. Hazel Crain has asked me to notify you of this upcoming offering. During the month of May, Church Women United is sponsoring the *Tools and Blankets* program through Church World Service (CWS).

CWS *Tools and Blankets* provide the right tools at the right time. Whether faced with an emergency or struggling to keep food on the table, in the wake of a disaster or digging wells for clean, safe drinking water, our gifts make a difference in the lives of children and families in some 80 countries around the world.

See what a difference we can make together. Spread the love. God is still speaking.

See you in church,
Patricia Wilson, Chairman

Mission News

Greetings from the Mission Team,

A big thank you goes out to everybody who turned up in support of our Gateway Bowling party. We had over forty people bowling. It was clear that our Gateway neighbors were having a blast. We also appreciated all you folks who brought water and snacks. It was a great day!

Our first Coneflower Farm pickup day will be Thursday, May 22nd. I will be picking up the boxes from the farm in the late afternoon and they will be waiting for all who signed up at my house (316 West Park Ave.) Around 5pm. I don't know about you but I can't wait! Fresh yummy vegetables. Yippee!

The food pantry would like us to donate Juice for the month of May. Thank you everybody for your help. The Mission Team will be sponsoring a Coneflower box to be delivered every week to the food pantry. We did this last year and the pantry said it was greatly appreciated.

This year's Harry Potter festival will be held on Saturday, July 12th from 5 in the afternoon until 10. Open Prairie has sponsored the wonderful magical candy shop Honeydukes for the past three years. It is the Mission Team's major fundraiser making enough money for us to pursue our mission projects for the entire year. We need a lot of volunteers to make it happen. I am most grateful for all you have done in the past and I am asking for your help again. I need folks to man the shop and sell the chocolates and magic drinks. For those who have never participated I can assure you it is a lot of fun. Projects like this bring out the best in Open Prairie. This year the chocolate frogs and rats and grims will be all be made from fairly traded milk chocolate, dark chocolate, and white chocolate. No house elves were

mistreated or exploited in the making of our frogs. Thanks everybody!

Mother's Day is coming right up. May 11th! Wouldn't your mother just love some delicious fairly traded chocolate or coffee? You bet! Susan will be placing an order soon so don't delay!

*Peace to you!
Kelly*

FOOD PANTRY FOR MAY: Fruit Juice



Prairie Circle News

The next Prairie Circle meeting will be held Wednesday, May 7th, 6:00 pm at the home of Donna Chelin, 664 E. Central
Please bring a covered dish to share.

Church Council News

The next Church Council Meeting will be Tuesday, May 27th, 7:00 pm.

Christian Education

Whew! Did you hear that? That is the sound of your Christian Education Team catching their breath! The last month or so has been more like wind sprints but give us a couple of days and we will be right back at it again.

Did you realize that in April Christian Education had something planned every weekend! And not only that, but every single event they offered was a huge success thanks to the support of you and the rest of our thriving congregation. The Senior High Youth Group was feverishly busy trying to raise money for their Mission trip to Alamosa, CO this summer. Thanks to you and the support of other people in the community they have raised roughly \$3,700 so far. Wow! There are still a couple more events left where if you have not yet had the opportunity to support them you can still do so.

In fact mark your calendars now with the following dates: On May 3rd and June 7th from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. the Sr. high Youth Group will be serving lunch at Hornbaker Gardens. So put on your walking shoes and plan to go out and tour the gardens, sit by the pond or in the gazebo, listen to the refreshing sounds of nature, or even catch a frog, and while you are there, enjoy lunch provided by your Senior High Youth Group. Also a date has not yet been set but if you enjoyed the Pizza Hut Buffet Night that the youth did in April then you will have the chance to enjoy Pizza again in June. Watch your newsletter and bulletins for future information about that.

How about the younger youth? The 4th – 8th graders will continue meeting throughout the summer at their normal time of 9:30 a.m. and the younger youth will continue meeting during worship at 10:30 a.m. On Sunday, May 4th please don't forget to wear your play clothes because we will most likely be getting very messy as we work on a surprise project for our mom's for Mother's Day. On May 11th we will gather to put the finishing touches on our projects and wrap them all up nice and tidy for Mom so that you can take them home immediately following worship. On May 4th we will have all youth gather during worship to

work on this project so the older youth will not meet prior to 10:30 this Sunday only. Also beginning May 18th the Sunday School will begin its summer curriculum series. This summer they will be looking at the Fruits of the Spirit to get things started so peak in the Sunday School rooms every now and then and see what they are working on.

Summer Camp is coming up fast and furious. Please do not forget to get your camper registered. Wendy has the forms and will be happy to sign off on anyone who wishes to go. The church will provide scholarship up to \$50 per person who wishes to attend. I would encourage you to get your registrations in by May 15th to guarantee your spot in camp and to ensure that you do not have to pay a higher fee. If you have any questions about summer camp please do not hesitate to ask. Finally just a reminder please plan to attend worship on June 1st as we will be honoring and thanking our Sunday School Teachers for all they do to help shape our Christian Education Program into what it has become and what it continues to be. There will be a short reception in their honor immediately following worship.

As we enter into our last month of school please remember as you are driving around town that many youth are out on bicycles and skateboards. Please watch out for them and be safe! Good luck to all our high school and college friends who are preparing for finals!

Until next month, Open Prairie U-Rock!
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Just a reminder. We are continuing to recycle ink jet cartridges. All proceeds are used to help fund the younger youth going to camp.

News from Curran

Via email from Curran is the following information:

An Ultrasound on Monday, March 31 confirmed that Katie's pregnancy was no longer positive. They ask for your prayers.

Curran's graduation will be May 17th. Due to the amount of work it is taking to settle in to her new home and her new church she will not be returning to Illinois to participate in the ceremonies.

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