

OPEN PRAIRIE UCC – October 2004 News

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Colleagues,

Just thought you would like to rejoice with me in the opportunity our Conference has had to share from our 'storehouses' with another UCC Conference. We had 500 personal hygiene kits and 100 cleanup kits in storage. When the hurricanes wrought their widening damage, our wonderful disaster response coordinator, Bob Tripp, got to work finding out how our supplies could best help. It turns out that flooding in Pennsylvania has not gotten much attention and folks there needed the kits, so this week a member of one of our churches volunteered to drive our disaster coordinator's car pulling a trailer with the kits to the disaster coordinator of the Penn West Conference! Talk about cooperation! Please let this also be a reminder to all that we now need a new supply of kits of all sorts to prepare for future needs. Thank you for your sharing in the name of Jesus!

Jane Fisler-Hoffman,
Illinois Conference Minister

PRAIRIE CIRCLE

Prairie Circle meets on the first Wednesday of each month for supper at 6:00 p.m. Our next meeting will be Wednesday, October 6th at 6:00 p.m. at Lynette Ivey's home. We will be ordering carry-out from Hampshire Colony's Chicken & Biscuit dinner. Please sign up at church on Sunday or call Carol Kuhnert at 643-2118 to order your meal.

PECANS HAVE ARRIVED! Prairie Circle is selling one pound bags of delicious Calhoun pecan halves for \$7.00. You can buy pecans at church on Sunday mornings by calling Donna Chelin (875-2060) or the church office (659-3432).

STAR CHART

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

BIRTHDAYS

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

10/06 Rick Zinn
10/08 Joe Zearing
10/21 Jocie Vaughn
10/24 Ron McCutchan
10/29 Danielle Hughes

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

WORSHIP TEAM

An Advent planning meeting is scheduled for Saturday, October 16th from 10 am – 2 pm at the pastor's place. We extend an open invitation for any one wishing to participate. As we make plans for the holiday season, we'd love feedback on last year's Advent/Christmas services or any input anyone would have on things they'd like OPUCC to consider as part of our worship. If you can't attend the Advent meeting, give a note to one of the Worship team - Susan Hale, Linda Ernst, Ron McCutchan, Dee Dennick, Suzie Stalter, Tina Aronson

Assistance is always appreciated for Sunday morning set-up at 9:15 am. If you can help, please see Roger Perkins or Steve Taylor.

OPUCC'S INTER-GENERATIONAL JUBILEE

Saturday, October 23rd

A day for fun, food, fellowship and renewal at the beautiful Pilgrim Park!

A time to create community within our church family and deepen our relationship with God and one another.

Let's spend the day together as a family!

Pick up a flyer at church for all the details & registration information!

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MISSION TEAM

This Mission Team is up and running with a strong group of people offering their time and talents. At our last meeting we pledged to join the UCC *Our Faith Our Vote* campaign, a nonpartisan effort to register voters and raise awareness of the importance of involvement in the democratic process. The last two weeks of September Margaret & Hal Autrey, Jan Milles, Joe Waterhouse, Freida Anderson, Ron McCutchan and Kelly Autrey-Webber have been registering voters at Sullivans and the Bureau County Metro Center.

Thank you for your support of our local Food Pantry. For the month of October we will collect cake/brownie mix. Please bring your donations to worship on Sunday mornings.

Our next meetings will be October 12 and November 2 at 7:00 p.m. at Curran's home. Please feel free to join us. We are quite jolly and there is much to do.

Peace, Kelly Autrey-Webber

CHURCH INFORMATION

Church Office:
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Princeton IL 61356
(815) 659-3432
mail@openprairie.org

Marcie Jagers, Secretary

Rev. Curran Reichert
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revreichert@openprairie.org

Church Web Site:
www.openprairie.org

CHRISTIAN ED

- **Sr. High** youth gathered for a bonfire at Hornbakers. What did we do?
Scavenger Hunt
Bonfire
Hot dogs/brats and dessert
Smudging and sharing our gifts
Prayer pole
Great bag game under the light of the moon.
- **Confirmation Class** News. Confirmation Class meets on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. at the Prouty. Confirmation will take place on Sunday, November 21st at Pilgrim Park during 10:30 a.m. worship. When asked what Confirmation means to them now: "become a member of a church", "kneel on that cool thing", "singing *I Was There To Hear Your Burning Cry*". Our planned work project is to clean up road trash. On our wish list is a trip to Chicago and a trip to Circa '21 to see Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.
- **SUNDAY SCHOOL** for the younger children will be held during the 10:30 worship service this year. The children will join us for the beginning of worship. After the first 10 minutes or so they will be excused with their teacher for Sunday School class. They will join us for the closing 10 minutes of worship.
- **Two adult education** programs have been planned. Please make a note on your calendars.....

Studying Homosexuality and the Bible, led by Katie Morrison. Beginning Sunday, October 24th and the following three Sundays from 2-4 p.m.

Deepening Spirituality. Wednesdays in Advent December 1, 8, 15 and 22 from 6-7:30 p.m.

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Real peace [is] not just the absence of violence or of war... A mere absence of war is not genuine, lasting world peace. Peace must develop on mutual trust. -His Holiness the Dalai Lama

I agree with a former Middle East ambassador who said in my presence last month in Denver, "Terrorism is the war of the powerless, war is the terrorism of the powerful." -Rev. John Shelby Spong

Well friends, it is quite a time to be alive isn't it? The violence around the globe continues to occur at an astonishing rate-war rages in the Middle East while here at home we prepare for what some are calling the most important election of a lifetime. Our friends in Florida, Georgia, Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic have only begun the task of putting their homes and lives back together after a series of devastating Hurricanes that have left their cities and townships in ruins. Yes, it is quite a time to be alive indeed. It is easy to overt our gaze from all that is happening around us. It is tempting to become slightly myopic and concern ourselves only with the events of our own town, our own church or even of our own lives. We as progressive people of faith however, have been given the particularly messy task of placing ourselves at the heart of chaos - locally yes, but also nationally and globally.

Currently there is a book circulating among some of my colleagues called The Cross in Our Context. It is written by John Hall who reminds us that God sent Jesus to be with us, like us, in other words to be human and very much of this earth. In his view the cross speaks of Jesus' passionate and complete love for this fallen (his words not mine) creation. He urges us therefore, to pay attention to the world! It is our job from his perspective, and on this I have to say that I am in total agreement, to be in the world as thoroughly and with as much commitment as the Jesus we seek to follow.

In other words we are called to roll up our pants and wade in the rubble of our own human failings. We are called to respond to those in crisis, we are called to get our hands dirty in this world in the hopes that our efforts will work in tandem with the efforts of other-peacemakers,

lawmakers and justice seekers, to accomplish God's kindom on earth. One of the toughest things about being called to commit ourselves to a thoughtful, courageous, life changing Christianity is that in doing so we do not have the luxury of professing to have all the answers, to do so would be incongruous with the teaching/learning ministry to which we have been called. Instead we surround ourselves with others who are asking questions that matter to who we are and what is relevant in our world today. We commit ourselves to asking questions that lead us in pursuit of truth and freedom for all people. What we know for certain is that our way of being faithful in the world is intrinsically woven into the events of this world.

Because that is true it is imperative that we read the newspaper, listen to the radio, have conversations with one another, engage the Bible critically with an eye to historical context and detail. We must seek to grow spiritually and vocationally and here's the clincher - we must exercise our right to vote.

This is a privilege that people of faith and good conscience have given their lives to earn. It is our duty to understand the issues at hand and to register our support of those whose platforms are most in line with values that represent justice and equality for all people. Don't get me wrong, I am a firm believer in the separation of church and state. It is not appropriate for me to use my role as minister to influence how you cast your ballot in November. It is however, my obligation as a teacher of the Gospel and a leader of this community to implore you to make the connections between current events and the faith we seek to embody. Your right to vote, your ability to influence policy locally and abroad, your connection to the ways that this election will have an impact on not only our future but the future of generations to come - those very matters are where your faith matters most.

May God bless you as you continue to help others to become aware and informed about the events of our world and the issues at hand. Encourage others to register to vote and pray for those in positions of leadership and power throughout this great globe.

Deep Peace,
Rev. Curran Reichert

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

FRESH PRODUCE! Just a reminder that the last Tuesday for produce pick-up is October 12th. Your second payment of \$150 is due at that time.

ANNOUNCING A CONGREGATIONAL MEETING: Sunday, October 17th at Pilgrim Park following our worship service. The youth group will provide a soup luncheon fundraiser.

THE PRAIRIE ASSOCIATION FALL MEETING is scheduled for Saturday, November 13 at Hampshire Colony UCC. The speaker of the meeting will be Nancy Elsenheimer discussing Natural Church Development (NCD). NCD asserts that all healthy and growing churches demonstrate strong performance in eight quality characteristics, called "vital signs". NCD offers an analytical process that churches can use to evaluate themselves on these vital signs and then implement programs that will enhance their identified strengths and improve any weaknesses. Registration forms with more information will be available at church on Sunday mornings or give Marcie a call at 659-3432.

BUILDING TEAM

The Building Team continues to meet weekly. We are exploring all avenues. Although we have nothing "concrete" to report, we are optimistic.

FELLOWSHIP TEAM

✂ We hosted a newcomer's night on September 17th that was well attended. All had a good time. Good fun and good fellowship!!

✂ We ask that people sign up to bring "goodies" for before and/or after church. The sign up is always on the table at church

✂ Fellowship will host a special coffee hour after the October 3rd service for Celebration/Stewardship Sunday.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday Mornings

10:30 am Worship at Prouty Building
(10/17 is at Pilgrim Park)

10/3			Celebration Sunday!
10/5	5:00	pm	Produce box pick-up
10/6	8:00	am	Prayer Group
	6:00	pm	Prairie Circle @ Iveys
10/7	6:30	pm	Choir Practice
	8:00	pm	Building Team Meeting
10/12	5:00	pm	Produce box pick-up
	7:00	pm	Mission Team Meeting
10/13	8:00	am	Prayer Group
10/14	6:30	pm	Choir Practice
10/16	10:00	am	Advent Planning Meeting
10/17	10:30	am	Worship at Pilgrim Park
	11:30	am	Soup Luncheon
			Annual Meeting
10/19	7:00	pm	Christian Ed Meeting
10/20	8:00	am	Prayer Group
10/21	6:30	pm	Choir Practice
	8:00	pm	Building Team Meeting
10/23			Intergenerational Jubilee
10/24	12:00	pm	Pastoral Relations Mtg
	2:00	pm	Adult Study Group
10/26	7:00	pm	Council Meeting
10/27	8:00	am	Prayer Group
10/28	6:30	pm	Choir Practice
	8:00	pm	Worship Team Meeting
10/31	2:00	pm	Adult Study Group

USHER/GREETER SCHEDULE

10/3	The Forristall Family
10/10	Mimi Cofoid & Susan Hale
10/17	Gene Humke & Jim Sears
10/24	Beth Bickerman & Dena Dennick
10/31	Steve Taylor & Paul Ernst