

OPEN PRAIRIE UCC – October 2005 News

FELLOWSHIP TEAM

Coffee Hour after church is a perfect way to meet new people and to let visitors know we're glad to have them with us. Coffee Hour also lets we veteran members have a time to check in with and check up on each other. The Fellowship Team feels this social time is vital to church growth and ministering to each other. Please consider hosting a Coffee Hour this fall. The sign up sheet is on the west table. Also available is a set of Coffee Hour notes to make the task run smoothly for you. I'm willing to help those interested in hosting. I'd also be happy to pair up folks who'd rather not take on a Coffee Hour on their own. Please prayerfully consider this important ministry and sign up or give me a call soon. Many thanks! Becky Perkins

A RUMMAGE SALE!

Have you been meaning to clean out that closet in the hall or how about your garage? Great! Plan to bring your unwanted items to our upcoming all-church rummage sale! The sale is set for Friday, October 21st from 5-8 p.m. and Saturday, October 22nd from 8 am – 3 pm. Donations can be brought to the church beginning on Sunday, October 16th following our worship service.

PIZZA HUT DAY!

Pizza Hut Day for Open Prairie will be this Wednesday! Pick up a form at church and eat some pizza on Wednesday. This is an easy fundraiser for us, where Pizza Hut donates a percentage of your total purchase back to Open Prairie. Mark your calendars for the upcoming dates of November 2nd and December 7th as well!

OPEN TABLE

Open Table is a small group, sponsored by Open Prairie, specifically designed to support GLBT people within our community. It is open to all regardless of church affiliation. Some dates to reserve:

- GLBT focused adult education series meeting at church at 1:00 p.m.. All are welcome.
 - October 16 Homosexuality and the Bible
 - October 23 Issues facing GLBT community: aging, parenting, and coping
 - October 30 Activism 101.
- October 22. All-inclusive Halloween Party hosted by Suzie Stalter & Janis Land. Costume required.
- October 28 & 29 Coalition gathering at Pilgrim Park. Contact Gene Humke at 309-699-5941
- December 16 Open Table Christmas Party at 25 East Marion

If you have ideas for a gathering space, activities or places, please contact Rev. Curran Reichert and she will pass on information to the group.

TEAM MEETING

Our next Team Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 11th at 7:00 p.m. at the church. Instead of having meetings four Tuesday nights of the month, all teams meet together once a month for two hours. I look forward to seeing all the teams represented on the 11th. Thanks, Rev. Reichert

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Open Prairie,

We have been through much together in the past two years. We have been witness to the powerful manifestation of a strong and deepening faith community, we have moved into a permanent location (yippee) and are well on our way to accomplishing many of the goals we set for ourselves back in 2003. I consider myself blessed to have watched as you've grown into and stepped out on faith over and over again since the birth of the Open Prairie vision. Together we have stretched and grown and just when we thought we were done stretching and growing, we have stretched and grown some more. Surely God is alive and still speaking in our midst. That means, of course, that there is more growth on the horizon.

When asked what our hopes were in this new location person after person said, "New membership and more children, new families and lots of little ones." Those are wonderful aspirations and we all know will take some concerted effort if they are to become a reality. If you were in worship September 25th you were a part of small group discussions centering on the shape of leadership at OPUCC in the foreseeable future. As most of you are aware, OPUCC was selected by the National Church to receive a Leadership Grant in the amount of \$44,000 to be distributed over the course of the next three years. As I mentioned in a previous letter to the congregation, this grant is designed specifically to support leadership salaries and is not available to be used for any other purpose. The combined need for evangelism and outreach to new and potential church members and the need to focus more attention on the development of the Christian education programs available to young children and their families has led us to a place of collective discernment. Might we

be ready for a second staff person to focus specifically on those areas?

This is an exciting time in the life of our church, a new space, broader dreams, bigger visions and hopes for the continued success of the OPUCC family. I want you to know that we are in this discernment process together. Our job is to process all of our options openly and honestly, pray about the options we see now and those of which we might not yet be aware, and continue to be in conversation with each other until we come to a place where we all feel ready to move forward.

What we know is that through the National Leadership Grant we have some of the resources needed to support an additional part-time staff person. What is yet unclear, is how much money will be raised for the 2006 general operating budget. It is, therefore, difficult at this time to know how much additional money might need to be raised if indeed a part-time position is to become a reality. Because that leaves us with some big question marks, Church Council, with my full support, has concluded that the most reasonable course of action at this time is to create a solid prospective budget for 2006, put our collective efforts into a successful stewardship drive during the month of October and assess the possibilities of additional leadership once pledges have been collected. So let us take a deep breath, roll our collective shoulders back, put our feet flat on the ground and proceed.

May October bless us with bounteous surprises!

In Christ, Rev. Curran Reichert

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HURRICANE RESPONSE

In response to the urgent need by the Illinois Conference to replenish personal health care kits, our Christian Ed Team asked church members to donate the necessary items. Thanks to everyone's generous support, the young people of our church packaged 24 health kits.

For up-to-date news on how the UCC is responding to the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, and how you can help, log on to www.ucc.org.

CHURCH INFORMATION

New Church Office:

Marcie Jagers, Administrator
25 E. Marion St
Princeton, IL 61356
(815) 872-5150
mail@openprairie.org

Temporary Church Office:

22937 1140 N Ave
Princeton IL 61356
(815) 659-3432

Rev. Curran Reichert

(815) 872-1661 home office
revreichert@openprairie.org

Church Web Site:

www.openprairie.org

PRAIRIE CIRCLE

Prairie Circle meets the first Wednesday night of every month to share a meal. On October 5th we will gather at Pizza Hut at 6:00 p.m. This is open to all the women of Open Prairie and their pals.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Worship – 10:30 am at 25 E. Marion on
Sundays

10/5	6:00	pm	Prairie Circle @
10/6	6:30	pm	Choir Rehearsal @ Webbers
10/9	9:45	am	6 th -8 th Sunday School
	10:30	am	Worship @ church
	6:00	pm	Sr. High Round Table
10/11	7:00	pm	Monthly Team Meeting @ church
10/13	6:30	pm	Choir Rehearsal @ Webbers
10/16	9:45	am	6 th -8 th Sunday School
	10:30	am	Worship @ church
10/20	6:30	pm	Choir Rehearsal @ Webbers
10/23	9:45	am	6 th -8 th Sunday School
	10:30	am	Worship @ church
			Sr. High Chicago Trip
10/25	7:00	pm	Council Meeting @ church
10/29			Harvest Festival Activities
10/30	9:45	am	6 th -8 th Sunday School
10/30	10:30	am	Worship @ church

HAPPY BIRTHDAYS

OCTOBER

6	Rick Zinn
8	Joe Zearing
19	Gib Martin
21	Jocie Vaughn
24	Ron McCutchan
27	Ginny Martin
29	Danielle Hughes

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

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Illinois Conference Coalition for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender concerns presents a workshop with Dr. Robert Minor, Professor of Religion at the University of Kansas

Dr. Robert Minor's topic will be "Re-understanding Homophobia: Its Diagnosis and Cure." The workshop will be held Saturday, October 29, 2005, at Pilgrim Park, Dupree Center. The workshop will begin at 10:00 a.m. and end at 3:00 p.m. The cost is \$30 per person. Lunch is included.

To register for this event please contact the registrar: Jim Sears, 1178 N. Byerly Hills Drive. East Peoria, IL 61611-1282. His phone number is 309-699-5941, his fax number is 309-699-0743, and his email is jamessearsjr@mchsi.com. Checks should be made out to the Illinois Conference Coalition.

This event is open to Coalition members, ONA church personnel, members of Illinois Conference churches, and the public at-large. Registration is on a first come basis. The deadline for registration is Friday, October 22, 2005. Seating is limited to sixty to seventy-five registrants

SAVE THIS DATE: OCTOBER 29, 2005

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Prairie Association Fall Meeting will be held Saturday, November 5, at Community Congregational Church, Elburn. Jean Bethke Elshtain will be speaking on "Just War Theory." Registration will begin at 8:00 a.m.

CHRISTIAN ED

SUNDAY SCHOOL:

Pre-school through 5th grade young people begin their Sundays at worship and are excused after the first hymn for Sunday School. 6th-8th graders gather at 9:45 a.m. for class before worship in the youth room.

Our Sunday School teachers for Kindergarten-5th grade are Becky Perkins, Angie Hughes, Wendy Croisant, Trishia Jones, and Terri Zearing. Kathy Hornbaker is leading the 6th-8th graders and the Sr. High Youth Group.

Christian Education parents provided a meal following the 4:00 p.m. service on October 2nd. We offered grilled pork chops & hot dogs, salad and dessert.

The Sr. High Youth Group held their first gathering on September 12th at Pizza Hut at 8:45 p.m. It's a challenge to find a time to meet! We ate a lot of breadsticks and discussed adventures we would like to try. We are planning a trip to Chicago on October 23rd.

The Sr. High also gathered around a bonfire at the Hornbakers on October 2nd. We shared a sacred healing service of smudging with sage in honor of beginning a new youth year. We discussed ideas and got to know one another. The following are the youth group members this year: Creal Zearing, Trishia Jones, Tara Jaggars, Abby Beneke, Jared Jaggars, Lauren Flowers, Carl Carman, Sallee Zearing, Tom Beneke, Olivia Bettasso, Evan Hale, Tyler Taylor, Jared Bartman, Adam Baumann, Jason Behrends, and Matthew Smith.

MISSION TEAM

Greetings to you all!

Fall is here, and with it the Mission Team's New Year! Yeehaw! We are thrilled to welcome some new folks to the Mission Team including Wendy Croisant, Janis Land, and Susan Hale. Welcome to you all! And a special welcome home to Margaret Autrey, back from the wilds of the north.

Recently, I had occasion to review all the projects the Mission Team undertook this past year and we thought you might be interested. Our work has included a Voter Registration Drive, Open Prairie T-shirts and Sweatshirts, Bake Sales, the Christmas Giving Tree for Gateway clients, Tour of Freedom House, Contributions to the Food Pantry, Freedom House "Blues" Fundraiser, Easter party for Gateway, Ads on National Public Radio, Relocation and Visitors Guide Brochure, Support for our local Organic Farmers, Planted flowers in Freedom House's Peace Garden, Lunch in the Park, and Festival 9 3/4. Whew! This year we hope to represent Open Prairie in Princeton's upcoming Harvest Festival in October.

On November 13th, we will be joining thousands of churches in hosting a Premiere Screening of the Independent Documentary film, "Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Prices". The UCC is sponsoring this film along with CLUE (Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice), Interfaith Worker Justice, Unitarian Universalists, Progressive Jewish Alliance, African American Ministers in Action, The Jewish Federation, Ignatian Solidarity Network, and Sojourners. You may ask why we as a faith community should get involved in the fight to improve Wal-Mart's

business model. Come and watch the film join a discussion, and decide for yourself.

Our Open Prairie Food Pantry barrel will be moving from the Prouty Building to our new home. The Food Pantry would like us to provide cake and brownie mixes for the month of October.

Peace, Kelly

WORSHIP NOTES

1st Sunday of the month we celebrate a family friendly worship service at 4 pm, followed by a light meal and an educational experience, usually centering around a film and discussion time. Young adults are encouraged to participate with the community throughout the whole evening. Young children will be included in the service and suppertime with a special program that is age-appropriate provided for the educational time. We promise to be finished by 8 pm, at the latest, sometimes earlier depending on the topic and length of film.

AN INVITATION

The members of the Granville United Church of Christ cordially invite you to the installation of Dr. Ronald McNeill as our pastor, on Sunday, October 16 at 4:00 p.m. A dinner will follow in Bonucchi Hall. Reservations are needed by calling 339-2305 by Wednesday, October 9. Our congregation has been truly blessed to have Rev. McNeill with us. He is a wonderful storyteller and spiritual leader. Please join us as we start a new journey together.

CORRESPONDENCE

*To Everyone at Open Prairie,
Thanks a million for all the hot dogs, pork
chops, buns, beautiful baby items and fleece
blankets! You are all joyous blessing to us.*

*Stephanie Cartwright
Freedom House*

Dear Friends:

*Thank you very much for your generous
\$172 contribution supporting Keith R. Scott in
the National AIDS Marathon Training
Program. Your donation will help support the
AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) in its
work to develop a comprehensive system of
HIV prevention and care, advocate for sound
and compassionate public policy, coordinate
the activities of local AIDS service providers,
and fund dozens of community-based
organizations providing AIDS prevention,
care, housing, education, and capacity-
building projects.*

*With nearly 30,000 individuals living with HIV
in the Chicago area and approximately 1,600
new infections occurring each year, your
partnership in battling HIV/AIDS is more
crucial than ever. Thanks to you, we will
continue to fund a broad range of local AIDS
organizations and to provide valuable
services and programs to those affected by
the disease.*

*Thank you again for your generosity and your
invaluable commitment to the fight against
AIDS.*

*Sincerely,
Mark Ishaug, Executive Direction
AIDS Foundation of Chicago*

Dear Friends of Faith in Action:

*Thank you so very much for the gift of \$170
to Faith in Action. This financial gift is an
investment in the lives of those we serve.
Through Faith in Action, we are helping to
meet the social and spiritual needs of
persons with developmental disabilities, one
person at a time. It isn't complicated to make
a difference in the lives of the people we
serve. It simply takes people willing to give
of their time to be a friend, and it takes the
financial support of the people and church
who support the vision to keep the project
going.*

*Again, thank you to the church and you for
your willingness to be so supportive of
people with disabilities. We are grateful for
your giving. Together we can make a
difference!*

*Sincerely,
Lesley Gonigam, Project Director
Faith in Action of Gateway Services, Inc.*

STEWARDSHIP

*Plans are underway for our 2006
Stewardship Drive - "God is Still Speaking
About Stewardship". We will kick off the
drive during worship on Sunday, October
9th with Stewardship Sunday planned for
October 30th. Watch the Sunday bulletin
and your mailbox for more details.*