

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Some of us come into our young adult years knowing that the day will come, if we live long enough, to receive an inheritance. It will come from a grandparent, aunt or uncle who favors us, from our parents, or perhaps another family member or friend. An inheritance, if used wisely, can make many things possible. For instance, a young person might wish to go into business. With an inheritance there is capital to make it possible. Another might need time to write novels or music. With an inheritance, time can be devoted to creativity.

In congregations without a history of mission trips, it can be difficult to get one off the ground. There are many questions, not a few hesitations, fears perhaps of journeying outside the community, and a host of other unforeseen challenges. Open Prairie is different. It feels quite like a generous inheritance here. When I came in May, the Back Bay Mission trip was a strong possibility for 2012. And now the day has arrived. I'm delighted to report that Rich, Kathy and David Hornbaker, Mitch Kloster, Wendy Brown, Karen Martin, Brian Taylor and Creal Zearing and I leave this Saturday for Back Bay Mission. I look forward to the people we will meet, the work we will share and the relationships we will build while on the journey.

Our youth also shared their desire for a youth mission trip as groups from our congregation have taken in the past. In February these young women will engage in their first fund raiser. We hope you can join us on February 12 for a soup and chili lunch. Mealtimes are wonderful ways to fellowship and secondarily, to raise funds for worthy causes. Danielle Hughes, Katrina Rudolph and Fern Webber will journey in July to Sisseton, South Dakota to

work for four days among the Sisseton and Wapeton first peoples of the Sioux Nation. We're grateful to their moms for assistance in the planning, and special thanks to Wendy Brown, our coordinator for the project. Wendy and I will serve as their drivers and adult counselors on the journey. We have tentative plans to stay with Beth Forristall on our way home. Watch for more on this developing story later.

The mission trips are so immediately possible because of the inheritance of Open Prairie's openness to and support of 3-D hands on mission experiences for members of our congregation. Let's rejoice in that!

Let's also celebrate the extraordinary spiritual inheritance that is ours thanks to our guide, Jesus. He set the stage by coming among people to bring us together, to bring us a much clearer picture of the nature and character of God. By his 3-D life we can see who God is. As to our spiritual inheritance, the more we share and the more we grow, the more we add to the inheritance that is Open Prairie for future generations. Please keep the Back Bay team in your prayers this week and next, for strength, for skillfulness and that we will be transformed by our experience. Keep Fern, Katrina and Danielle in your prayers for preparation that's fun and for a week to remember for life. Thank you for all of your support, and for the generous inheritance of which I am now privileged to be a part. I will do my best to employ this inheritance faithfully and wisely. We journey Saturday, in July, and every day in the very spirit of Jesus, whom it is our joy to know and to serve.

Your sister in Christ,

Pastor Mary Gay

January/February CALENDAR OF EVENTS



Happy Belated Birthday to...

January

19	4:30pm	Personnel Committee
20	12:30pm	Lunch Bunch @ Java
21	8:00am	Installation Mtg. @ Java
		Leave for Biloxi Trip
22	9:30am	Sunday School
	9:45am	Choir
	6:00pm	Movie Night
25	6:30pm	Choir
28	7:30pm	Coffeehouse
		Return from Biloxi Trip
29	9:30am	Sunday School
	9:45am	Choir
	10:30am	Worship

Jan 2	Lori Moore
Jan 5	Brooke Fisher
Jan 7	Carol Mazzaro
Jan 10	Bill Beneke
Jan 11	Terri Zearing
Jan 14	Lilith Gray
Jan 16	Sarah Criner

HAPPY BIRTHDAY To YOU!!!

February

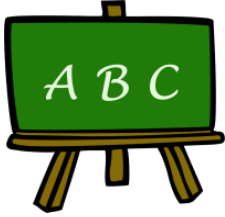
5	9:30am	Sunday School
	9:45am	Choir
	10:30am	Worship
6	7:00pm	OP Reads
8	5:00pm	Interns Meet
	6:30pm	Choir
	10:30am	Worship
12	9:30am	Sunday School
	9:45am	Choir
	10:30am	Worship
		Soup & Chili Luncheon (After Church)
15	6:30pm	Choir
19	9:30am	Sunday School
	9:45am	Choir
	10:30am	Worship
20	<i>Office Closed - Presidents' Day</i>	
22	5:00pm	Interns Meet
	7:30pm	Ash Wednesday Service
25	7:30pm	Coffeehouse
26	9:30am	Sunday School
	9:45am	Choir
	10:30am	Worship
27	4:00pm	Christian Ed Meeting
	7:00pm	Church Council Meeting
29	6:30pm	Choir

Jan 19	Bill Ollila
Jan 19	Caleb Thomas Tracey
Jan 24	Peggy Hackley
Jan 24	Margaret Autrey
Jan 28	Rich Hornbaker
Jan 29	Tony McCombs
Feb 5	Becky Sapp
Feb 12	June Harmon
Feb 12	Maggie Beneke
Feb 14	Karyn Stark
Feb 20	Debby Jarvis
Feb 21	Prudence Yagmin
Feb 21	Barbara Madsen
Feb 23	Susan Hale
Feb 23	Susan Feigenbaum
Feb 23	Michael Zearing
Feb 24	Douglas Land
Feb 29	Carol Kuhnert

Church Council News

The next Church Council Meeting will be
Monday, February 27th at 7:00 PM.

During worship, childcare is available for young children from infancy through kindergarten. The children will be able to leave the sanctuary and go to the preschool room after the "Children's Moment" with Pastor Mary Gay



Please take note of the **new office hours** starting immediately!

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Wednesday 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Happy Valentine's Day



Don't forget about the box in the church office to collect printer inkjet cartridges for recycling. We earn up to \$4 per cartridge and keep them out of the landfills!

January
FOOD BANK:



Spaghetti
Sauce

CHURCH WOMEN UNITED
ANNUAL MEETING

January 28, 2012
NOON-2:30
First United Methodist Church



Potluck/Salad Luncheon
Drinks & Table Service Provided
Please bring a salad/dish to share!
****If you are a church member there is a form to fill out – it can be picked up at the OPUC office!**

February FOOD BANK:



Soup
&
Crackers



Biloxi Work Trip

Members of the Open Prairie Family will be gone the week of January 22-28, 2012 to volunteer with the Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, MS. Open Prairie started sending a group down there each year after Hurricane Katrina to help renovate and rebuild devastated homes. Back Bay Mission has built a very nice, new facility to house their volunteer groups, after having lost several of their own buildings in the storm. They continue to need help rebuilding homes of victims of Katrina.

You do not need to be a skilled carpenter to go on this trip. The volunteer coordinators determine jobs to fit the skill level of the group. We have done everything from putting up siding and hanging drywall to painting and cleaning. This has been an amazing experience for those who have gone in previous years.

We wish those attending a safe trip and another wonderful experience!

Community Coffee



When:

Saturday, February 4th, 2012

Where: Sheffield UCC

Time: 7:00am-10:00am

Featuring their Famous Fresh Baked Cinnamon Rolls

PASTOR MARY GAY'S INSTALLATION

On March 11, 2012, we will be installing Rev. Mary Gay McKinney as our pastor and teacher. The installation service will be held at 3pm at Open Prairie. Following the installation we will be having a time of fellowship. Please plan on attending this very special and exciting event in the life of Open Prairie. More details will follow.



LADIES LUNCH BUNCH

*Fridays at 12:30, All
Ladies Welcome!*



Calling All Cooks!

Sunday School interns, teachers, and guest presenters meet on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month from 5:00-6:30 p.m. for a learning/planning session and supper. We are looking for folks who are willing to provide a simple supper for our group of 6-8 people. Suppers can be homemade or purchased. We are not a fussy group! If you would like to provide supper for us one evening, please contact Dani in the church office to reserve a date



**LENT BEGINS with our Ash
Wednesday worship at 7:30pm on
Wednesday, February 22. Come to
receive ashes, to pray, to begin your
Lenten journey.**

“Our Table”

Located at The First United Methodist Church
of Princeton, every Monday night.

*“Our hope is to offer help to families and
individuals who are struggling to make ends
meet, and to offer fellowship around the table
for those who find themselves alone at meal
time.”*

SAVE THE DATE!!!!

**Mark your calendars for April 22, 2012 . We
will be having our annual potato bar and
festival of arts that afternoon / evening.
Along with saving the date, please think
about what you might donate for the
auction. People love homemade items.
Let’s make this the biggest potato bar ever.
Invite your friends and family. This is one of
Open Prairie’s biggest fundraisers and we
need all of you. See you on April 22.**

Mimi and Angie



Health Ministries



The Health Ministries Team will be sponsoring a Valentine making event during the soup dinner on Sunday, February 12th. We invite OPUCC members and guests of all ages to help us make valentine magnets that we will give to our sick and shut-ins for Valentine’s Day. We will also be mailing Valentines to those who could use a pick-me-up. Please bring the name and mailing address of a friend or family member who you would like us to send a valentine to... Place their information in the decorated Valentine Box in the church entryway/Narthex, and we will decorate and write Valentines on the 12th. We also invite you to donate Valentine decorating supplies (like stickers, foam hearts, etc.) that we can use that Sunday. Donations can be placed in the valentine box or given to Mimi or Meagan.

The January 28th Princeton Coffeehouse show will feature Peter Mulvey.



www.petermulvey.com

He has shared the stage with Emmylou Harris, Richard Thompson, Ani DiFranco, the Indigo Girls & Greg Brown. "His voice feels like fine old leather...and his guitar sounds like it's on steroids...a superb technician..." - *The Boston Globe*

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X0t_q7TcHY&feature=related

**Saturday January 28th,
at 7:30 PM
\$10.00 at the door**

www.theprincetoncoffeehouse.com

MISSION NEWS

Mission Team would like to extend a thank you to those who so generously gave to the Gateway Christmas present program. The program was a hit yet again and a happy Christmas was given to a group of young people thanks to you!

We continue to offer fairly traded chocolate, teas and coffee. Please see Susan with any orders you may have for this. For the month of February, we will be collecting Soup and Crackers for the Bureau County Food Pantry. Thank you and stay warm! Jessica and the Mission Team

The February 25th Princeton Coffeehouse show will feature Stacey Earle (Steve Earle's younger sister) & Mark Stuart..



www.staceyandmark.com

Stacey & Mark have sung & played with Joan Baez & in Steve Earle's band, The Dukers. Mark has played with others such as Steve Forbert & Freddy Fender. The *Chicago Tribune* praises their "near-seamless synchronicity".

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pU-fMYmTrwk>

Saturday February 25th,
at 7:30 PM
\$10.00 at the door

www.theprincetoncoffeehouse.com



Adam Webber's journey toward becoming an ordained minister in the UCC is moving forward. He will soon have completed his hospice chaplaincy and his internship at First Congregation UCC in DeKalb. He recently met with our Church Council. One of the requirements for ordination is a letter from the governing body of one's home church requesting that a candidate be examined for ordination by the Ministry Team for Authorized Ministry of the Prairie Association. Moderator Steve Gunning wrote a letter which also included some endorsements from OP members. Let's keep Adam and the family in our prayers as they discern the ministry to which God and the church are calling.



**GROUND HOG'S DAY 2012 IS THURSDAY
FEBRUARY 2ND!**

**Saturday, February 18th
Princeton Public School
Foundation Trivia Night**



@ the Bureau County Metro Center
Doors open at 5:30pm
8-10 per team

Tickets are \$15.00 per person and are on sale at Citizens First National Bank.



NURSERY CARE doesn't just happen. Thanks to a committed group of volunteers, our youngest congregants enjoy

quality child care and a great time when they leave after the children's message. Sarah Criner is our coordinator for these efforts. She is assisted by Terri Zearing, Patricia Wilson and Sallee Beneke. When you see them around town and at church, please thank them for their ministry. It's part of GREAT STARTS in the faith right here at Open Prairie.



**UPCOMING COFFEEHOUSE EVENTS,
18 Years and counting:**



Mar. 24th – Dana & Susan Robinson www.robinsongs.com

Apr. 28th – Rita Hosking ritahosking.com

May 26th – Nels Andrews nelsandrews.com

All shows begin at 7:30 PM. There are no advance ticket sales. All seating is general admission, and the recession-proof ticket price remains a modest \$10.00. Door open at 7:00 PM. The Princeton Coffeehouse is located at Open Prairie UCC Church, 25 E. Marion Street in Downtown Princeton. We still serve Open Prairie's fair trade coffee, as well as assorted teas and homemade desserts. For further information, check our website at

www.theprincetoncoffeehouse.com



Speaking of our children and youth, who are our Sunday school teachers? Mimi Cofoid and Molly Blogg are the teaching team for our youngest children. Lilly Gray recently came for her first time to Sunday school with Ardyn Johnson and Heather Heider. Children come when they are three. Steven Rahn, Fox Webber and Becky Hughes form our Middler group, taught by the team of Becky Perkins, Pastor Mary Gay, Dawn Rudolph and most recently to the team, David Gray. Fern, Danielle and Katrina, our able interns, rotate in the groups. They add a dimension to the Sunday school program that inspires and enriches it for the younger students.



"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart."

-Helen Keller

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!



Open Prairie UCC



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