

The Common Thread

A monthly publication of Church of the Open Arms, UCC

Volume 14, Issue 1

January 1, 2010

MINISTER'S ROUNDTABLE

Have you found time in the busy-ness of the holiday season to stop and reflect about the new year beginning? Reflect with me on this beautiful poem --

i am running into a new year a poem by Lucille Clifton

**i am running into a new year
and the old years blow back
like a wind
that i catch in my hair
like strong fingers like
all my old promises and
it will be hard to let go
of what i said to myself
about myself
when i was sixteen and
twentysix and thirtysix
even thirtysix but
i am running into a new year
and i beg what i love and
i leave to forgive me**

These new beginnings are arbitrary really. Advent, four weeks before Christmas, is a new beginning of the Christian year. September always feels like a new beginning to me at back to school time. Then there is the Chinese New Year and the Jewish New Year. The longing for a clean slate and a fresh start is a profound, universal longing. Maybe you are making resolutions or setting goals for the new year. Perhaps you are ready to shake off the past and leave it behind as quickly as possible. I feel wistful thinking about the passing of time. Like a skier trying to find balance or a surfer trying to ride the wave, I want to find some equilibrium in the present moment. Can we accept the past with grace and run into the new year with hope? These life lessons about letting go and staying open to the future seem ever-new to me. May you be richly blessed in this new year.

Sincerely,
Kathy McCallie

Flag Dancing

January 4th

Its dazzling!

Its daring!

Come join this colorful, fun activity and swirl into a great new year.

7:30 p.m. in the Community Hall

Ordination for Kayla Bonewell **Save the Date - February 14th**

Kayla Bonewell is now on the staff as associate pastor in Rochester Minnesota at a UCC church working with youth and young adults. She will be with us in Oklahoma City for her ordination service on Sunday, Feb. 14th at 2:00 p.m. in the afternoon. Mark that important date on your calendar and plan now to attend.

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL RETREAT **SATURDAY, JANUARY 23** **9:00 A.M. – 3:00 PM.**

TRAINING IN LEADERSHIP SKILLS IS A PLUS FOR ALL OF US! ALL ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND THIS OPPORTUNITY FOR TEAM-BUILDING, LEADERSHIP TRAINING, AND ORGANIZING FOR OUR MINISTRY AND MISSION IN THE UPCOMING YEAR.

New Class

Sunday morning is a great opportunity to learn and make friends before church. A new class is forming to discuss some fascinating characters in the bible. This will be bible study like you've never tried it before. If you are interested in checking out this class please stay tuned for more information.

In 2010, the full moon drum circles will continue on the Fridays nearest the full moon. In January, that will be Friday, January 29.

And we will be re-introducing the New Moon Intention-Setting ceremonies that we initiated in 2008. They will be on the Fridays nearest the New Moon.

That will be Friday, January 15.

These evenings will be held at the Peace Education Institute,
11404 N. Midwest Blvd.

A vegetarian potluck begins at 6:30
and the drumming/intention-setting starts at 7:30.

These activities are free.

The whole schedule is:

Full Moon Drumming

January 29
February 26
March 26
April 30
May 28
June 25
July 23
August 27
September 24
October 22
November 19

New Moon Gatherings

January 15
February 12
March 12
April 16
May 14
June 11
July 9
August 13
September 10
October 8
November 5
December 3

WINTER SOLSTICE 2010
will be celebrated December 19, 2010
at Church of the Open Arms UCC,
3131 N. Penn, Oklahoma City, OK
at 7:00 p.m

Something to Think About...

During the holiday season, there is a lot of talk and focus about family. This has been especially true for me this year as my family faced its first holidays after the loss of my mother.

In the beginning, I was having a very difficult time dealing with my feelings. I had an overwhelming sadness knowing that my mother would not be here to celebrate the holidays with us. Even shopping was difficult for me because in years past I had always called her from stores asking for advice or sharing a triumph of having found the perfect gift. But suddenly in the midst of this sorrow, a realization and then a feeling of peace hit me. As much as I missed my mother and always will, I am very fortunate that I not only have a close, supportive, and loving family of origin but also a wide and diverse family of choice that provides invaluable support and love. It also occurred to me that it was my mother who gave me my view of family. In both words and action, she taught me and my sister that family not only consists of our relatives, but also includes anyone we hold close in our hearts. She taught us the value and spirituality of opening our hearts to both give and receive love. By doing this she left us an inheritance that will never lose value. It will continue to grow in love.

I encourage all of you to look around at those you are close to and reflect on your feelings towards them. I feel certain that you already feel this way about a lot of people in your life, but you may not have thought about them in these terms. Family doesn't have to be defined by bloodlines, last names, or traditions. It can be very simply defined in love.

In the entry way of our home, I have a wall of photos. It's our "family wall." Not all on the wall are relatives, but all are "family." With the writing of this article, I was inspired to add a new addition our wall. It's a plaque that reads, "Those that enter this home as friends, leave as family."

*Blessings,
Terry Ellis.*

January 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					No Food Pantry	2
					1	
3 9:30 choir rehearsal 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship 12:00 Monthly Potluck	4 6:00pm Meditation 7:30pm Flag Dancing	5	6 6:00 Choir Rehearsal	7 1-1:45 food pantry drop off	8 10:00-12:00 Food Pantry set up 3:00-6:00 Food Pantry servers	9
10 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship	11 6:00pm Meditation	12	13 6:00 Choir Rehearsal	14 1-1:45 food pantry drop off	15 10:00-12:00 Food Pantry set up 3:00-6:00 Food Pantry servers 6:30 pm New Moon at DEI (see pg. 3)	16
17 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship	18 6:00pm Meditation	19	20 6:00 Choir Rehearsal	21 1-1:45 food pantry drop off	22 10:00-12:00 Food Pantry set up 3:00-6:00 Food Pantry servers	23 9-3 Leadership Retreat (see pg.2)
24 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship	25 6:00pm Meditation	26	27 6:00 Choir Rehearsal	28 1-1:45 food pantry drop off	29 10:00-12:00 Food Pantry set up 3:00-6:00 Food Pantry servers 6:30 pm Full Moon at DEI (see pg. 3)	30
31 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship						

Church of the Open Arms, UCC
3131 N. Pennsylvania Ave.
Oklahoma City, OK 73112
405-525-9555
openarmsok@aol.com

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LEADERSHIP
COUNCIL
RETREAT

SATURDAY, JANUARY 23

9:00 A.M. ~ 3:00 P.M.

"Never place a period where God has placed a comma." -Gracie Allen