

The Common Thread

A monthly publication of Church of the Open Arms, UCC

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April 1, 2008

MINISTER'S ROUNDTABLE

Those of us in the Oklahoma City area have a marvelous opportunity coming up Saturday, April 5th at Oklahoma City University. A stellar list of speakers will be presenting a conference entitled, "Denouncing Violence in the Name of God: The Case of Islam." This conference is free and includes internationally known speakers from the University of Chicago, Rice University, Monash University in Australia, Morocco, Egypt, and the International Human Rights Law Institute. I look forward to attending the full conference myself, and I encourage you to spread the word and bring friends.

Islam is sadly misrepresented and misunderstood by most of us the in United States. The importance of learning to cooperate and respect each other from different religious traditions cannot be overstated. This conference was planned and organized with the participation of the FBI and Office of Homeland Security. Our ability to live in a peaceful, faithful future requires that each of us develop new appreciation for our Muslim neighbors. I hope you can join me in attending this event.

Sincerely,
Kathy McCallie

Denouncing Violence in the Name of God: The Case of Islam
Saturday, April 5, 8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
The Henry Freede Center, Oklahoma City University
Free to the Public, All are welcome!

HIV/ AIDS Support Group
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HIV/ AIDS Support Group

All those infected or affected by HIV/AIDS are invited to come join in the new support group forming at Open Arms. The group will meet twice each month on the first and third Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. in the community hall. Whether you are a person who has tested positive, a person who has developed illness, a family member, friend, caregiver, or partner, you are welcome. All sharing in the group will be confidential and respectful. The group does not promote any single religious perspective, but will be a safe, free opportunity to speak truth of our experience and share unconditional support. For more information, call 525-9555. The group will have its first meetings on Thursday, April the 17th and May 1st.

New Moon Celebration

This quiet, reflective celebration reminds us of our connection to the earth, the sky, and the cosmos. Deepening our awareness of nature enhances our spirituality and joy in life. Come connect with new friends and share the wonder and peace. If you can't make this event on April 6th, then mark your calendar for Monday, May 5th and plan to attend the next new moon celebration.

Mark these dates:

April 6, May 5, June 3, July 3, August 1, August 30, September 29, October 28, November 27 and December 21 (Winter Solstice).

7-8pm.

For more information,
call Conna Wilkinson, 204-6479.

Prayer Concerns:

- ⇒ Dr. Kathy McCallie's son, Jesse Stephenson, will be deployed in Afghanistan for 15-18 months beginning March 16th. Please keep Jesse, his wife, Amy, and their family in your prayers.
- ⇒ Bruce Saunkeah continues to recover from chemotherapy. Please keep him and Jeff Graves in your prayers
- ⇒ Troy Milligan continues to recover from back surgery.
- ⇒ Carol Fasol underwent emergency surgery to remove an intestinal blockage. Please keep her and Lynda Mead in your prayers.

If you know of any prayer concerns you would like to go out on the Email prayer chain, or if you would like to be added to the Email prayer chain, send an email to Mindy at hellwege69@aol.com.

**CHILD CARE AVAILABLE
ON WEDNESDAYS
AT 6:45 PM**

Wednesday Nights

Every Wednesday night at 7:00 p.m.
we are celebrating and singing
in a mid-week worship time.

All are welcome.

This spiritual lift in the middle of the week
is relaxing and fun.

**Friday evenings
6:30 - 8:00pm
New Youth Project
Youth Group for Teens**

**Sunday Morning Discussion Group
Meets Sunday's at 9:30am.**

Testimonies of Faith

As a member of COA, I pledged to give of my time, talents, and finances. The time and talents part has been relatively easy for me. It is pretty obvious that I suit up and show up often and pitch in where I am needed. In fact, if you asked anyone in the congregation if Mike DeArmond was reasonably fulfilling that part of the membership pledge, I could probably get a witness.

However, that is not the case when it comes to my finances. I purposely gave in a manner that could not be tracked and in an amount and frequency that would be embarrassing should anyone be able to determine it. Don't get me wrong, I could certainly justify all of it if you would just take the time to hear me out.

Last summer I started really being troubled in my spirit about my disobedience and lack of faithfulness in the area of my giving. After a period of spiritual discomfort, I finally made the decision to give regularly and accountably. I determined an amount and placed the cash in one of those little envelopes, wrote my name on the envelope, and placed it in the offering plate every Sunday. I can honestly say that immediately after beginning my Obedience Experiment I got the spiritual relief that I was looking for. But Wait. There is more.

I have shared my story of Recovery with the congregation and with many of you personally. Due to the "wreckage of my past" I was unable to open a checking account or obtain any type of credit/debit card. Six weeks after beginning my experiment I was able to obtain a Credit Card with a modest limit. At 8 weeks I got a modest raise at work. After 3 months of practicing disciplined giving, I was able to open a checking account. I immediately signed up for electronic giving so I wouldn't have to deal with writing a check or filling out those dang envelopes anymore.

And it doesn't stop there. Recently I received a raise that was equal to fifty percent of my annual salary. I was totally shocked. As a result I have been able to increase my giving by fifty percent. I am almost to a ten percent tithe although that was never my intention when I began this experiment.

*I truly know what it is like to live the promise contained in Luke 6:38 Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. I encourage everyone to take a look at how you are fulfilling the membership pledge you made when you became a member of COA. If you think that you might need to "Experiment" in some areas, I encourage you to do so. Our God is faithful. I truly believe that **GOD IS EVERYTHING** in my life. When I act in obedience, even when it seems like I can't possibly do so, God's grace is always there to fill any gaps.*

Mike.

P.S. I also got a boyfriend for Christmas!

A decorative border made of a repeating musical staff pattern with notes, framing the text.

Join the Choir!

We're always looking for more voices!
We rehearse Wednesdays at 6:00pm and Sundays at 9:30am.

April 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>Mark your calendar! Rev. Loyce Newton Edwards Ordina- tion May 4th 3:00pm</p>		<p>7:00pm PFLAG 1</p>	<p>6:00 Choir Rehearsal 6:00 Beginning Spanish 7:00 Advanced Spanish 7:00 Worship Service 7:30 Sharing Circles 7:30 Men's group</p>	<p>4:30 Meet at Ingrid's 3</p>	<p>4:00-6:00 Food Pantry 6:30-8pm New Youth Project 7:00 Book study class</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>6 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 am Sunday School 10-45 am Worship 12:00 Monthly Potluck 12-45 Worship Team mtg 7pm New Moon Service</p>	<p>7 6:00pm Meditation</p>	<p>8 6:00 Choir Rehearsal 6:00 Beginning Spanish 7:00 Advanced Spanish 7:00 Worship Service 7:30 Sharing Circles 7:30 Men's group</p>	<p>9 6:00 Choir Rehearsal 6:00 Beginning Spanish 7:00 Advanced Spanish 7:00 Worship Service 7:30 Sharing Circles 7:30 Men's group</p>	<p>10 4:30 Meet at Ingrid's 7:00 Finance Team meeting</p>	<p>11 4:00-6:00 Food Pantry 6:30-8pm New Youth Project 7:00 Book study class</p>	<p>12</p>
<p>13 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Children's Choir 9:30 Sunday School 10-45 Worship</p>	<p>14 6:00pm Meditation 6:45pm New Growth</p>	<p>15 6:00 Choir Rehearsal 6:00 Beginning Spanish 7:00 Advanced Spanish 7:00 Worship Service 7:30 Sharing Circles 7:30 Men's group</p>	<p>16 6:00 Choir Rehearsal 6:00 Beginning Spanish 7:00 Advanced Spanish 7:00 Worship Service 7:30 Sharing Circles 7:30 Men's group</p>	<p>17 4:30 Meet at Ingrid's</p>	<p>18 4:00-6:00 Food Pantry 6:30-8pm New Youth Project 7:00 Book study class</p>	<p>19</p>
<p>20 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Children's Choir 9:30 Sunday School 10-45 Worship</p>	<p>21 6:00pm Meditation 7:00pm Leadership Council</p>	<p>22 6:00 Choir Rehearsal 6:00 Beginning Spanish 7:00 Advanced Spanish 7:00 Worship Service 7:30 Sharing Circles 7:30 Men's group</p>	<p>23 6:00 Choir Rehearsal 6:00 Beginning Spanish 7:00 Advanced Spanish 7:00 Worship Service 7:30 Sharing Circles 7:30 Men's group</p>	<p>24 4:30 Meet at Ingrid's</p>	<p>25 4:00-6:00 Food Pantry 6:30-8pm New Youth Project 7:00 Book study class</p>	<p>26</p>
<p>27 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Children's Choir 9:30 Sunday School 10-45 Worship</p>	<p>28 6:00pm Meditation 6:45pm New Growth</p>	<p>29 6:00 Choir Rehearsal 6:00 Beginning Spanish 7:00 Advanced Spanish 7:00 Worship Service 7:30 Sharing Circles 7:30 Men's group</p>	<p>30 6:00 Choir Rehearsal 6:00 Beginning Spanish 7:00 Advanced Spanish 7:00 Worship Service 7:30 Sharing Circles 7:30 Men's group</p>		<p>CHILD CARE AVAILABLE ON WEDNESDAYS STARTING AT 6:45PM</p>	

Rev. Loyce Newton-Edwards “Re-Ordination”

Saturday, April 12th, 2008 9:00 am-3:00 pm Church of the Savior
Sunday, May 4th, 2008 3:00 pm-4:00 pm Church of the Open Arms UCC

Oklahoma Association United Church of Christ
Spring Ecclesiastical Council Meeting
Church of the Savior, 5600 NW 63rd

It is a moment in time that our own Rev. Loyce Newton-Edwards, COA's Assistant Pastor, has been joyously anticipating, and eagerly looking forward to for almost 2 years! She was ordained by Bishop Dan Solomon, Oklahoma Conference United Methodist Church in May of 1996. On April 12th, she will be presented for UCC Ministerial Standing, part 1, at COS in the morning session, with Rev. Sue Miers and Lizette Merchan. Each of them will preach a sermon, then a vote will be taken. According to Rev. Rosemary McCombs Maxey, Chairperson Committee on Ministry, Oklahoma Association, “approval from the body of the Oklahoma Association will give them standing as fully authorized ministers in the whole United Church of Christ.” Rev. Jim Stovall, COA's Associate Pastor, went through the same UCC ordination process in April, 2007.

Submitting their “theological” reflection papers is part of the requirements for this ordination process, and those papers are then distributed to Conference Ministers prior to the meeting on April 12th. To obtain Ministerial Standing, they are also required to take UCC History and Polity classes, and in most cases, complete their seminary educations. Newton-Edwards received her M. Div. Degree from the historic African American Seminary, The ITC in Atlanta, GA. (The Interdenominational Theological Center). Of the Af-Am Clergy-persons who earn the M. Div. Degree, 80% are graduates of this seminary.

After the vote is taken on April 12th, and it's YES, part 2 of the process, Ordination at Church of the Open Arms UCC will take place on May 4th. Everybody is invited to attend either/both events to help us celebrate Rev. Newton-Edwards “gifts of ministry” to our “beloved community,” as she continues to “...follow her bliss...” We give God thanks for this mile stone for “social justice ministry ,” in our church's history.

Church of the Open Arms Sounds off Against Hate Speech



Photos by Victor Gorin, “Star Magazine”

Wednesday Night Services

7:00pm, Every Week

**Come for a refreshing mid-week spirit lift. Request your favorite hymn.
Stick around and get to know others in a sharing circle.**

Ingrid's Group

**Inviting everyone to join us at Ingrid's every Thursday at
4:30pm for drinks , good food, and good conversation.**

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

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