

# The Common Thread

A monthly publication of Church of the Open Arms, UCC

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March 1, 2008

## MINISTER'S ROUNDTABLE

Some days I wonder how Christianity can be part of the solution to the global problems that seriously threaten the future of life on earth. I wonder how we can do better as a congregation to encourage spiritual growth and responsible living in ourselves and others. Recently I began to reread a theology book that has been important to my faith formation and my ministry. The author calls for "a new type of person," a transformation that seems to be the same "conversion" that Jesus urged. Here is a passage from Planetary Theology:

### A New Type of Person

*"Churches and all groups concerned with the future of humanity must try to bring into being a new type of person, whose loyalty to humankind and to our planetary home is primary. Such a person would not neglect her or his own home, locality, or country, but rather so care for each as not to hurt others and the earth.*

*Given today's consumeristic waste and ruin, such persons would try to simplify their wants. They would not find joy in acquiring as much as possible, but in sharing with others and in demanding little for themselves. Service to others would not be only a duty but also the source of profound inner joy and societal harmony. Instead of profit maximization for self or a small group, service to all would be a powerful motivation for creativity and a fair distribution of natural resources and of the fruit of human labor.*

*Respect for nature will enable such persons to rediscover the original and organic beauty in the ordinary things of life – bodies of water, trees, fresh air, the sunset, the moon, birds, fish, flowers, music – and in the creative arts .... The present world crisis summons us to growth in awareness of and sensitivity to others. This is a never-ending process."*

*From Tissa Balasuriya, Planetary Theology.*

I believe that this is what it means to follow Jesus in our time. Let's become new!

Sincerely,  
Kathy McCallie

*Sexual Identity and Scripture Conference*

**See insert for information and registration.**

## Good Friday Service Friday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 8:00 p.m.

Tenebrae is an ancient, classical service including scripture readings of the passion narratives describing the trial and death of Jesus. The readings are interspersed with singing and periods of silence. The service begins with the Christ candle and twelve other candles representing the disciples lighted on the table. As the readings progress, one candle is extinguished at a time until the service ends in darkness and silence. This dramatic remembrance of the crucifixion is an important part of our observance of Easter. All are encouraged to mark this date on your calendar and be present.

## Palm Sunday March 16<sup>th</sup>

Children of the church are needed for the processional or "palm leaf parade" at the beginning of worship on Palm Sunday. Kids must be in the sanctuary at 10:15 a.m. to practice walking and waving palm branches. Children of all ages are welcome. After the kids walk in to an opening song, they will have regular activities including Children's Moment and Godly Play time downstairs.

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.

## New Moon Services

Many of you have attended our annual Winter Solstice Celebrations at COA. Now we are having monthly gatherings on the nights of the New Moons . . . the darkest night of each month. We will use the occasion to reflect on our lives and share our struggles, hopes and dreams for the future.

Why are we doing this? . . .

because we want to be more in touch with nature and more attuned to the natural rhythms of Mother Earth and to become more aware of ourselves as part of creation. When the weather is nice, we may gather outside in someone's back yard, at a lake or other outdoor setting.

*Mark these dates: March 7, 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.

## OPEN ARMS WEBSITE REVAMPED!!

Check it out! See the slides of recent church activities, listen to sermons you missed or just want to hear again. Soon you will be able to hear the choir anthem and special music, too.

Weekly Events and Upcoming Events are updated weekly.

Can't remember when your group is meeting? **Check the website.**

Lose your newsletter? **Check the website!**

Have a question or a comment? **Check the website . . .** all email gets delivered directly to the church email address.

If your committee or group is going to meet and you want it listed, go the website and send us the information by using the "CONTACT US" link. We'll post your meeting on one of the Events pages.

Have you got a great picture you'd like to share? Send it to the church, and with the necessary permissions, we'll add it on a slide show.

When you need information, visit the website. And when you have information that you want to share with the congregation, we'll post it for you.

**[www.openarm.org](http://www.openarm.org)**

## GAY PRIDE 2008

*How could we possibly top last year's gay pride float entry? Now is the time to find out. This year's theme has been announced and the winner is... "Coming of Age". This is a fantastic opportunity for our church to join its creative forces. There are so many different directions in which we can run with this. This year we will not be held back. This is our year for the church to send out its message loud and clear. A gay pride float committee is being formed and we desperately need your help. We will meet for an explosive brainstorming session at 12:15 pm after church on Sunday, March 9. Everyone is welcome and urged to join us. We are excited to hear what you have to say, so come be part of this year's pride!*

### Parade

**Friday night stepoff 7 p.m. June 20  
same route**

### Festival in Memorial Park

**Saturday June 21 noon - 10 p.m.**

**Sunday June 22 Noon --5 p.m.**

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

## Are You Caught Up on Your Pledge or Current in Your Planned Giving?

January and February are always difficult months for the church, financially, but regular giving in 2008 is substantially down from anticipated levels. Please review your giving. If you are behind and can catch up, please do so. If you can make an added gift to the church at this time, it would be timely and appreciated.

Thanks. Finance Team

**Friday evenings from 6-7pm  
New Youth Project**

## Prayer Concerns:

- ⇒ Dr. Kathy McCallie's son, Jesse Stephenson, will be deployed in Afghanistan for 15-18 months beginning March 16<sup>th</sup>. 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
- ⇒ Rev. Loyce Newton Edwards continues treatment on a path to full "heart" health. Please keep her, Archie and her family in your prayers.
- ⇒ Nancy Nesser continues to recover from surgery to remove a polyp from her vocal chords. Please remember her and Sandra Hoyt in your prayers.
- ⇒ LoRee Schrott's mother's health is failing. Please keep her and Cyndy Whitten and her family in your prayers.
- ⇒ Melinda Norton's brother is on hospice. Please keep her and Pam Norton and her

## CHURCH VITALITY WORKSHOP

*March 28-29*

*With a national staff member.*

*Watch for more information.*

## Join the Choir!

We're always looking for more voices!

We rehearse Wednesdays at 6:00pm and Sundays at 9:30am.

# Easter Events

Good Friday Service March 21st Friday 8:00pm—see article on page 2

Palm Sunday March 16th Sunday 10:45am—see article on page 2

## Easter Sunday March 23rd

Sunrise service 7:00am—come welcome Easter morning, dress warm

[carpool leaving from the church at 6:40 am, or meet us there at 7:00]

*From I-35 & Hefner Road (the Frontier City Exit). Take Hefner Rd. east 3.5 miles to Midwest Boulevard. Turn left (north) and go about 1/4 mile. It is the first driveway on the right. There are reflectors on the driveway. Turn in and follow the driveway around to the right until you find the fire.*

Easter Morning Breakfast 8:30–9:30am—in the community hall

Easter Service 10:45am

Easter egg hunt after church—at Swatek Park at 30th and Youngs



# **Godly Play – Winter into Spring: A Period of Transformation**

**By Maria Rubino-Watkins**

**405-528-2199 (Call for more information)**

Children are learning and growing and becoming....

Since I last wrote to provide you with an update on our happenings downstairs, the last of the Godly Play materials have been purchased – Can I get an Amen Somebody! We now have 44 weeks of stories leaving 4 to 8 weeks during the year that a story will not be told and Godly Play will not be held (dates will be announced). Also, a beautiful red carpet was donated for our lesson and story-telling space – Amen! Kneeling tables are in the process of being researched and purchased thanks to a generous donation. And we have been donated funds for our weekly feast together. The children will be so pleased to know that the Matzo Crackers will keep coming. Many thanks to the anonymous donations that are left for us to continue providing quality worship in Godly Play. In response to the inquiries regarding additional needs, please keep in mind that we need a vacuum cleaner in good working condition. If you are thinking about purchasing a new one for your home or business and would like to donate your gently used one, we would gladly accept one for our use. We also need extra helpers for our carpenter Bob Grisham. Bob has graciously offered to build us all new shelving to the specifications provided by the Godly Play creators but it is a HUGE undertaking. If anyone has free time that they could be available to help Bob with assembly, sanding, or whatever else is needed, please let us know and we will get you hooked up with him.

*Additional donations being accepted:*

*Clay - \$25.00*

*Funds for staff training - \$50.00*

*Funds for parent supplemental materials – \$25.00*

*Funds for more program manuals and training DVD's - \$50.00*

We are currently in the process of telling the 7 sequential stories of Easter and the Faces of the Journey. These stories tell the sequence of Jesus' life from birth to death and culminate in the Easter Story. The children have been contributing to the story each week by choosing materials from around the room that "tell more of the story." This has been amazing – they have chosen materials that have provoked thought and "wondering" by all present. If you would like to invite a child to share with you some of what they are experiencing in Godly Play, some good questions for you to begin with might sound something like this: "I wonder what your favorite part of the story was" or "I wonder what the most important part of the story was" or "I wonder what you like best about Godly Play." Notice that all of your opening lines begin with "I wonder." And remember, there are no right or wrong answers to "wondering" questions. You are encouraged to simply enjoy the experience of wondering together.

**NEXT PARENT PARTICIPATION DATES** (This is for all adults who would like to experience Godly Play first hand. Parents of children who participate in Godly Play or who are considering having their children participate in Godly Play are given first priority, but other adults are welcome also – the maximum number of adult is 10, so sign up early)

March 2      12:30-1:30 (please plan to eat lunch before coming downstairs)

April 13      9:30-10:30

**NEXT TRAINING DATES FOR DOOR PERSONS OR STORY TELLERS** (This is for all adults who would like to be trained as door persons or story tellers in the Godly Play worship program. You will be asked to sign up on the schedule following the training so please bring your calendars.)

March 9      12:30-1:30 (please plan to eat lunch before coming downstairs)

April 20      9:30-10:30

# March 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 9:30 Children's Choir 9:30 am Sunday School 10:45 am Worship 12:00 Monthly Potluck 12:45 Worship Team mtg	3 6:00pm Meditation 6:30pm New Growth	4 7:00pm PFLAG	5 6:00 Choir Rehearsal 6:00 Beginning Spanish 7:00 Advanced Spanish 7:30 Men's group	6 11-2:30 Education Workshop 4:30 Meet at Ingrid's	7 4:00-6:00 Food Pantry 6-7pm New Youth Project 7:00 Book study class 7pm New Moon Service	8
9 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Children's Choir 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship	10 6:00pm Meditation	11	12 6:00 Choir Rehearsal 6:00 Beginning Spanish 7:00 Advanced Spanish 7:00 Worship Service 7:30 Men's group	13 7:00 Finance Team meeting 4:30 Meet at Ingrid's	14 4:00-6:00 Food Pantry 6-7pm New Youth Project 7:00 Book study class	15
16 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Children's Choir 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship <b>Palm Sunday</b>	17 6:00pm Meditation 6:30pm New Growth	18	19 6:00 Choir Rehearsal 6:00 Beginning Spanish 7:00 Advanced Spanish 7:00 Worship Service 7:30 Men's group	20 4:30 Meet at Ingrid's	21 4:00-6:00 Food Pantry 6-7pm New Youth Project 7:00 Book study class 8:00 Good Friday Service <b>Good Friday</b>	22
23 7:00 Sunrise Service 8:30 Easter Breakfast 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Children's Choir 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship <b>Easter Sunday</b>	24 6:00pm Meditation 7:00pm Leadership Council	25	26 6:00 Choir Rehearsal 6:00 Beginning Spanish 7:00 Advanced Spanish 7:00 Worship Service 7:30 Men's group	27 4:30 Meet at Ingrid's	28 4:00-6:00 Food Pantry 6-7pm New Youth Project 7:00 Book study class <b>Church Vitality Conference @ Church of the Open Arms</b>	29
30 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Children's Choir 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship	31 6:00pm Meditation 6:30pm New Growth					

**Sexual Identity and Scripture Conference @ UCO in Edmond**

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

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## **Interfaith Leaders Share Spiritual Values during an Election Year**

Leaders of Christian, Muslim, Jewish, and Buddhist faith communities in Oklahoma were present in a gathering convened by the Interfaith Alliance of Oklahoma on Tuesday, February 5th. Dialogue revealed common concerns shared by members of these diverse faith traditions, especially during this election year. The following statement represents shared values, priorities, and convictions based in the faith and spirituality of each participant.

“People with spiritual awareness have a moral obligation to enter into dialogue with each other and with governmental policy-makers about issues and policies that impact the social and economic fabric of our society and world,” said Rev. Jeff Hamilton, President, Interfaith Alliance of Oklahoma

*The interfaith representatives agreed to the following declaration of values:*

*Our faith traditions share fundamental principles including justice and equality that God calls us to reflect in our social covenant. Economic and social justice cannot be separated. We can join together in efforts to transform and create new paradigms shaped by a vision of a just and safe society.*

*Stewardship of the world’s global environment is critical. Global warming is taking place now. It is not just a scientific concern. It is a moral and spiritual issue. Our relationship to the global environment should reflect the universal, spiritual teachings that earth’s resources must benefit all.*

*As Oklahomans and people of diverse faith, we unite in celebration of the symbols of peace on our state flag: the shield, the peace pipe, and the olive branch. These remind us that force should be used only for defense, that diplomacy can often overcome differences, and that peace is a universal value. We have a God-given responsibility to repair, restore, and return control to local people after incidents of war. We must go forward in this new century using our time and resources to build rather than to destroy; to cultivate rather than dominate.*

*While we cut taxes to aid our economy and provide funding to bring resolution to the war in Iraq, we believe it is immoral for social services to suffer. We believe that public education, health care, and assistance for the poor should be priorities.*

*As people of faith, we agree with the principle of separation of church and state. Although we do not endorse specific candidates or parties as communities of faith, we do believe that we share a mission to bring light to the world by applying our spiritual values to issues of the day.*

Those participating were  
Rev. Kathy McCallie, Church of the Open Arms, United Church of Christ,  
Michael Barlow, Jewish Federation,  
Rabbi Russel Fox, Emanuel Synagogue,  
Kris Ladusau, Buddhist, Dharma Center,  
Jim Huff, Baptist, American’s United for the Separation of Church and State,  
Lydia Polley, Oklahoma Campaign Coordinator for US Department of Peace and Non –Violence,  
Orhan Kucukosman, Institute for Interfaith Dialog  
and Jeff Hamilton, Pres. Interfaith Alliance of Oklahoma.

# **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.**

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## **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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