

The Common Thread

A monthly publication of Church of the Open Arms, UCC

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MINISTER'S ROUNDTABLE

I like this prayer that is one example of ancient, Celtic theology. Sometimes this prayer is called the "Breastplate" or the "Cry of Deer" attributed to St. Patrick c. 430— although, it is probably older according to Phillip Newell, an authority on Celtic spirituality.

"I bind unto myself today, The virtues of the star-lit heaven,
The glorious sun's life-giving ray, The whiteness of the moon at even,
The flashing of the lightning free, The whirling wind's tempestuous shocks,
The stable earth, the deep salt sea, Around the old eternal rocks."

I like the connection to nature that is reflected in the prayer. Our planet requires an understanding that God loves the earth and so should we. Maybe in summer you are outside more enjoying the starry nights or the good swimming weather. Maybe you are sticking close to the air conditioner inside more. I hope you can savor a lazy, slower pace this time of year. May your prayer life be rich.

Peace,

Kathy McCallie

**THE CHURCH
WINS AT PRIDE!!!!**

Church of the open arms wins 1st place in two categories

Best use of theme!!!

Best not for profit!!!

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 each month on the third Thursday 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.

COMMUNITY LIFE:

Thank you to all of those who helped with June's potluck. Thanks also to those who supplied the meal. Eet was-a fabuloso! (my attempt at an Italian accent, sorry)

I encourage those who have never helped with behind-the-scenes of potluck to volunteer this month. It will give you a whole new respect for the magic that happens each month.

What's up with the NYP?

With the coming of summer comes the beginning of a new quarter for the youth group of the church. But, not only does summer mark the beginning of a new quarter, it also marks the ½ birthday of the New Youth Project.

In October of 2007, the youth group was merely an inspiration. In November the idea was taken to the leadership council and approved for creation. We started out using a curriculum that was UCC approved, because... well, it was UCC approved. It just didn't seem to fit our youth. It seemed a little mature for some and a little immature for others.

Now, as summer begins we also begin with a new curriculum. It is music-based, with music by today's popular Christian artists. Every three months we receive a new "box". With it we get lots of different artist posters, lots of information of what's going on in the Christian mainstream, as well as 9 full-length CDs with bible study, and a full-length DVD bonus. So far, the reaction has been positive. (we still need your magazines!)

A NOTE TO THE YOUTH:

In the past six months the group has grown. Not only in number, but in maturity, in bond, and in spirituality. I have seen a noticeable difference in each of you. I admire the respect that you are beginning to show—for your group and for each other. Most of all, you all should know that I am very, very proud of and love each of you.

Class Discussion on World Religions Every Sunday in July 4:00-5:30 p.m.

Each Sunday afternoon in July from 4:00-5:30 p.m. Kathy McCallie will lead a discussion group on the topic of world religions. Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, and Judaism will be highlighted during the four week class. Whether you are a beginner in studying these great religious traditions or you have much knowledge and insight to share, you are encouraged to join in. We hope the group may arrange field trips and guest speakers to broaden our perspectives. Childcare will be provided if requested in advance. Sign up at the welcome table in the church entry way or call the church 525-9555.

New Moon Service

****Attention-read for changes****

Our New Moon celebration will be held at the home of Kathy McCallie this month. All are welcome to come experience this time of deeper connection with the earth and with new friends. Wear clothes and shoes for walking in the woods. The service will be outside. Kathy's address is: 3712 Amelia Ave. Amelia is one block east of Meridian and runs north/south between N.W. 36th and N.W. 39th. The New Moon is a time for profound reflection and relaxation as we let go into deeper spirituality.

AUGUST 16TH LEADERSHIP RETREAT

All church servant/leaders and those who want to expand our ministry are urged to attend a day of team-building, planning, and training on Saturday, August 16th at the church. The activities will be held from 9:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. Bring a few dollars to contribute for lunch. We truly want to include people who have never been involved before, and we want to use this time to nurture those that have been keeping things rolling all along.

ZUKAV CLASS DRAWS TO AN END

The Friday night class on Gary Zukav's "The Seat of the Soul," drew to an end with yet another interesting evening of discussion, snacks and shared stories. The subjects of intuition, reincarnation, and the skills of multisensory awareness, tossed about over the past six months, certainly made us think! Chapter topics that caught our attention included sacred relationship, compassion, authentic power, and the 'splintered personality' versus the 'whole.' Accompanying such somber subjects we enjoyed bits of chocolate from Linda and delicious cookies weekly supplied by Jim. At times we even glimpsed each others' hearts regarding family concerns, work hassles, and past wounds. Who could ask for anything more? May each of us carry with us the best moments of our association and the deepest insights of this marvelous author.

July 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 7:00pm PFLAG	2 6:00 Choir Rehearsal 6:00 Beginning Spanish 7:00 Advanced Spanish 7:00 Worship Service New Moon Service	3 4:30 Meet at Ingrid's	4 4:00-6:00 Food Pantry 6:30-8pm New Youth Project 7:00 Book study class	5
6 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 am Sunday School 10-45 am Worship 12:00 Monthly Potluck Worship team meeting	7 6:00pm Meditation 6:30 Society for Creative Ancestrists	8	9 6:00 Choir Rehearsal 6:00 Beginning Spanish 7:00 Advanced Spanish 7:00 Worship Service	10 4:30 Meet at Ingrid's 7:00PM Finance Team Meeting	11 10:00 OK Gay Natives 4:00-6:00 Food Pantry 6:30-8pm New Youth Project 7:00 Book study class	12
13 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Sunday School 10-45 Worship	14 6:00pm Meditation	15	16 6:00 Choir Rehearsal 6:00 Beginning Spanish 7:00 Advanced Spanish 7:00 Worship Service	17 4:30 Meet at Ingrid's 7:30pm HIV Support Group	18 4:00-6:00 Food Pantry 6:30-8pm New Youth Project 7:00 Book study class	19
20 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Sunday School 10-45 Worship 4:30 peace program	21 6:00pm Meditation	22	23 6:00 Choir Rehearsal 6:00 Beginning Spanish 7:00 Advanced Spanish 7:00 Worship Service	24 4:30 Meet at Ingrid's	25 4:00-6:00 Food Pantry 6:30-8pm New Youth Project 7:00 Book study class	26
27 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Sunday School 10-45 Worship	28 6:00pm Meditation	29	30 6:00 Choir Rehearsal 6:00 Beginning Spanish 7:00 Advanced Spanish :00 Worship Service	31 4:30 Meet at Ingrid's	<div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> CHILD CARE AVAILABLE ON WEDNESDAYS STARTING AT 6:45PM </div>	

Keeping Hope alive...

I have been very fortunate to have not experienced significant painful rejection in my life. I was always on the outskirts of the "in" crowd growing up. Even as a practicing alcoholic/addict I was tolerated by friends and family. However, I can no longer claim that distinction. Three days after Mother's day I received a phone call from my mother that rocked my world. I have been officially rejected by my biological family. Ron and I are not welcome in Mom's home. We are not to ever show up at family events. I would only be allowed to come to see her if I were not gay and acted right. She expressed her regrets over my unhappiness and assured me that she would be praying diligently for the salvation of my soul. There were other hurtful things expressed but that is the bulk of it.

I was totally shocked. I believed that Mom had come to some resolution with my sexuality. Apparently not. What really adds salt to the wound is that my maternal grandmother was diagnosed with terminal cancer on Mother's Day. She has been given only a few months to live. I can honestly say that my reaction was neither loving nor kind. (One of these days I pray I am able to respond rather than react.)

"How can this happen to me! These people love me! I am becoming the relative and son I prayed they could be proud of! What am I going to do!!!" What a horrible, lonely, ugly place to experience. As I hung up the phone Ron reached over and placed his hand on my thigh. I looked up into eyes full of love, concern, and compassion. I immediately remembered that I am not alone. God put this beautiful man in my life. God has my back and has been preparing me for such a time as this.

I am so Grateful that God has called me to Church of the Open Arms. I can't think of a more appropriate place for me to be deeply connected at this time. Now I understand at a deeper level, a gut level, how to stand in solidarity with others who have experienced this most intimate rejection from those whose unconditional love we have counted on. I am convinced of the need for the ministry of our church. I am certain that a loving God has assembled this congregation as a safe, loving harbor for me and the countless others just like me. I am so grateful that each of you has answered the call on your life to be a part of this faith community. Thank you.

I am not sure how all of this will play out. I am certain that "this too shall pass." Things always change. Experience has proven that nothing is ever as bad as I imagine it will be. I also know that no matter what it feels like, I am not alone. I have a faith community that is there for Such a Time as This. Church of the Open Arms is the miracle in my life today

Praise be to God!

Mike

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.**

www.openarms.org

Check it out!

New changes include sermons and music online.

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

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