

The Common Thread

A monthly publication of Church of the Open Arms, UCC

Volume 15, Issue 3

March 1, 2011

MINISTER'S ROUNDTABLE

The word “lent” came from a root word “lengthen” because it was associated with the lengthening days in the season of Spring. Lent was the word for Spring. In the history of the church, lent became known as the forty days of preparation for Easter (not counting Sundays). People would often observe the season of Lent with spiritual practices that enhanced their consciousness of Christ’s love. Some people would fast or give something up to remind them on a daily basis of Christ’s unconditional love and what that cost him. Others would add something like a book study, Bible study, or prayer time to their daily routine during lent. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and ends on Easter morning at sunrise. Consider ways to find some meaningful way to mark those forty days as you prepare for Easter.

On March 9th our Ash Wednesday service will be held at 8:00 p.m. As a congregation, we will offer Wednesday night chapel service from 7:00-7:30 p.m. each week during lent. The service will include a scripture reading and brief reflection (or “mini” sermon), a prayer time, and some singing. So mark your calendar and plan to come Wednesday nights.

Prayerfully,
Kathy McCallie



Leadership Council Meeting
Sunday, March 20th at 2:00 p.m.
ALL Welcome

Full-moon drumming to be held at the
Peace Education Institute on Friday, March 18
6:30 p.m.

BELONGING CLASS
March 27th 2:00 p.m.

The class will be a small group discussion about how to get more involved in the life of the congregation. It is designed for new members, people who might consider becoming new members, and people who have been coming for some time but might want to get more active.

The Belonging Class will cover information about how decisions are made at the church, the history of the congregation, and opportunities for service and learning. But, the main purpose of the class is to get better acquainted with each other, make new friends, and learn about what you hope for the future of our church.

**COMMUNITY
POWER TEAM
RETREAT**
Saturday, March 26th

OSC (Oklahoma Sponsoring Committee - Interfaith Network for Community Power) will soon have a new name! Members of our own Community Power Team will be joining leaders from other congregations to continue the development of our faith-based community organizing effort. The retreat will be held from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at Our Lady's Cathedral (31st and Western).

Bring something to share for potluck lunch.

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

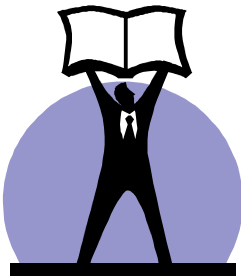
March 9th at 8:00 p.m. our Worship Team is planning a traditional service of Ashes to begin the season of Lent. The service is a little less than one hour long, and includes the opportunity to receive the mark of ashes on the forehead reminding us of our connection with dust and ashes. This service is a time to reflect on our mortality and the reality of death and dying in the midst of life. The journey towards Easter offers rich potential for activating and enhancing our spiritual life.

Please plan to attend Ash Wednesday service.

LETTER FROM JIM STOVALL

Many of us struggle to find a sense of balance in our lives. Too often I have started projects with the best of intentions and then I am disappointed when I don't follow through in the way that I originally intended. During this past year I have taken on several projects at our church and I have disappointed myself and others when I have not had the time or energy to complete or do the job effectively. I have often struggled to find the right balance between my family, my work, the church and my own spiritual and emotional needs. In an attempt to find a better sense of balance, I am cutting back on my official duties at Open Arms.

While I am not going anywhere, it seems appropriate at this time for me to be a member among members and not an Assistant Minister. I am grateful to everyone at Open Arms for the part that you have played in my spiritual journey. This is a very special community that I deeply love. I feel privileged to have played a part in the life of the congregation and in many individual lives over the past several years. I have enjoyed my years on staff at Church of the Open Arms and am grateful for the opportunity to have become ordained in the UCC as a result. My hope is that we all might find a greater sense of balance in our lives. I look forward to an exciting future as we grow together.



The Directory should be at the print shop by the time you get this newsletter!

We are asking for a \$15.00 dollar donation to offset the cost, but any donation will be welcome!!

Thanks to everybody's that has worked so hard to get this done. All of your hard work has been appreciated!!!!

The New Growth Team

Beginning April 10th
Adult Sunday School Book Discussion:
***Becoming Animal*, by David Abrams**

Would we be more joyful, spiritually engaged, and connected with the universe if we increased our awareness of our oneness with the earth and all life?

Join in the stimulating discussion and open sharing from 9:30-10:30 each Sunday morning.

YOUTH NEWS

Benefit Concert by Mixed Company!!!



Supporting the Youth Mission Trip

Mark your calendars for Saturday, March 12, 7 pm.

We'll listen to the always inspiring **Mixed Company** as they lull us into that peaceful place in our souls.

We're raising money for the Youth mission trip. The youth are excited as we explore all the possibilities to serve others this summer.

Young Adults Peace Cafe

- The Second Act

Our meet-up has changed times and venues. We're getting together on Tuesday nights at 7:30pm now, at Picasso's in the Paseo. The official address is 3009 Paseo OKC, OK 73118, in case ya need to mapquest it. (It's where Galileo's restaurant used to be.)

Come, come! Call or text Rachel at 360-7696 to say you'll be there. Join us for general gabbing to get to know each other and discuss current events in the world that are on your mind.

Peace & Justice Team

UPCOMING BOOK STUDY

The Hope: A Guide to Sacred Activism, by Andrew Harvey
led by Mark and Linda Herndon, Tuesdays @ 7 p.m., March 22 - May 10 (8 sessions)

What is the Hope in today's chaotic world with its incessant prophesies of impending calamity?

Rumi once said: "In the ruin of heartbreak, you find the diamond of a divine passion that can resurrect the dead." This perspective informs Andrew Harvey's "seven forces of Death and seven features of Birth" in our world, which is outlined in this study. Part of our role is to act as midwives, bringing new life into being in the midst of the collapse of many old social forms. This is a rewarding path for the Sacred Activism, as Rumi has stated:

*"To be born in love
Is to serve all beings and all creation.
Real lovers serve ardently, hopefully,
And in an ecstasy of awe."*

Participants in this discussion group will be invited to explore their own passionate connections to the infinite possibilities we face today to create a different future for the community of life on this planet. What is the One Thing that you feel uniquely called to do in service to the Divine, yourself as an instrument of the Divine, to all sentient beings in your life, to your local community, and to the global community?

It is not necessary to purchase the book, but if interested it is available through Amazon, Barnes and Noble or Borders. As part of each session we will experience meditation through the practices of T'ai-chi and Qui Gong.

COA-OP CHANGES

The Fair Trade / Home Made Co-op is changing it's day. Starting in March, we'll be open the 4th Sunday instead of the 1st Sunday and we'll be moving to the Community Hall to be part of the Community Café.

What is Fair Trade / Home Made? Home made means you either make it yourself or you know the person who did. It is not commercially produced; it isn't used items or old clothing. Stuff Exchange nights are for those things. This is for art, baked goods, handcrafts, personal services (like massage and carpentry), etc. Fair Trade means that it is certified fair trade, which means that everyone along the chain of production has been treated fairly, and that the product is not made using child or slave labor, or otherwise unfairly taking advantage of someone. Coffee and chocolate will carry a "Fair Trade" stamp, and items that you might bring back with you from a trip where you bought personally from an artisan and paid them a fair price would also qualify.

If you are not sure whether your items are Fair Trade or Home Made, and, if you would like to participate on any given month, call the church office and leave your name and number and someone from the Peace & Justice team will get back to you.

REPORT ON STUFF EXCHANGE

by ANGELE FAHEY, Peace & Justice Committee

As many know, Church of the Open Arms had its second Stuff Exchange in the middle of February and for whatever reason, few people came. As the evening progressed I began to get discouraged and disappointed by the lack of interest, but after about an hour or so, someone walked into the church in need of help. The man was homeless and cold and the evening temperatures were dropping. I helped him find a coat that fits and some warm clothing. And then he left just as quickly as he arrived. In that moment I remembered my purpose, my reason for joining Shalom Team. Lugging the boxes, organizing the knick-knacks, carrying bags of books down and back up the basement stairs, everything forgotten... everything except that moment when I was able to help a man find warmth in this sometimes cold world.



Community Life Team



A big thank you to Marilyn and her two sons, for the donation of a huge electric roaster and a large deep fat fryer for the church kitchen in January

Debbie Hall and Joely Kennemer would like to thank all the people who sent us purple cards, for those who prayed for us, for those of you who called us, and for those who thought of us while Joely was having and recovering from surgery in January. It means the world to us to know that we have such a wonderful church family and church home! A special thank you to Bo Bass, Ellen Barnes, Sue Shook and all the others for taking care of the Community Life Room in Debbie's absence on January 16, 2011.

"Love and kindness never returns to the sender void"-Mrs. Ollie Bell, Died 1997, at 106 years old.

A special thank you to Marie Kizzia for donating the many packages of baked goods to the Community Café, to Joely Kennemer for the Dunkin' Donuts, to Mike DeArmond for the delicious Bundt cake and to Carl Friar and Jason for the party mints. Without these donations, it would not have been possible to offer nourishment to our church on that morning. A great time was had by all! Anytime that you would like to bring something for the Sunday morning fellowship in the Community Café, please feel free to do so-it will be greatly appreciated! We could use fruits/veggies and protein items for those on dietary restrictions.

Once again, I am impressed and blessed by the people of the Church of the Open Arms! I would like to thank **EVERYONE** who brought food for the potluck on February 6, 2011. A special thanks to Scott and Gene, Jerry, Marie Kizzia, Barbara, Teri and Keva, and Carl and Jason for setting up and cleaning up after the potluck! If it weren't for all the members of the church pitching in, this potluck would not be as great as it is every month! A big thank you to Mark and Linda Herndon for the donation of a huge corning ware baking dish to the church, every donation is appreciated.

Thank you to all of you who donate money to the Community Café! The money goes to help buy chicken and different items for the Café. It is truly appreciated by all!

Debbie Hall

Book Discussion Group

Not Your Parents Offering Plate by Clif Christopher


A Guide to Modern Stewardship in Modern Churches

March 20th, 27th and April 3rd

Kathy McCallie will be leading this book discussion with the Finance Team as we reflect together on faithful stewardship as a congregation. Maybe God is nudging you to consider volunteering to help the congregation grow in discipleship through steps toward faithful financial giving.

All are welcome to join in the study group each Sunday morning beginning March 20th from 8:00-9:00 a.m. in the community hall.

March, 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 7:30 Peace Café @ Picassos	2 5:30 Youth Group 6PM Choir Rehearsal 7PM Spanish Class 7:30-9pm Mary Daly Group	3 1:45 Food Pantry drop-off	4 10-noon Food Pantry set -up 3:00 - 6:00 Food Pantry Servers	5
6 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 10:45 Worship 12:00 Monthly Potluck 12-1:30 Youth Group	7 7PM Sustainable Living Group	8 7:30 Peace Café @ Picassos	9 5:30 Youth Group 6PM Choir Rehearsal 7PM Spanish Class 7:30PM Mary Daly Group 8PM Ash Wed. Service	10 1:45 Food Pantry drop-off	11 10AM Food Pantry set- up 3:00 - 6:00 Food Pantry Servers	12 7PM Benefit Concert For Youth
13 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 10:45 Worship 12-1:30 Youth Group	14 10:30 AM Sr. Rink Coffee 7PM Sustainable Living	15 7:30 Peace Café @ Picassos	16 5:30 Youth Group 6PM Choir Rehearsal 7PM Lent Service 7PM Spanish Class 7:30PM Mary Daly Group	17 1:45 Food Pantry drop-off	18 10AM Food Pantry set- up 3:00 - 6:00 Food Pantry Servers	19
						
20 8:00 Book Study: <i>Not Your Parent's Offering Plate</i> 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 10:45 Worship 12-1:30 Youth Group 2PM Leadership Council Meeting	21 7PM Sustainable Living	22 7PM Book Study <i>The Hope: A Guide to Sacred Activism</i> 7:30 Peace Café @ Picassos	23 5:30 Youth Group 6PM Choir Rehearsal 7PM Lent Service 7PM Spanish Class 7:30PM Mary Daly Group	24 1:45 Food Pantry drop-off	25 10AM Food Pantry set- up 3:00 - 6:00 Food Pantry Servers	26
27 8:00 <i>Not Your Parent's Offering Plate</i> 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 10:45 Worship 12-1:30 Youth Group 2:00 "Belonging" Class	28 10:30AM Sr. Rink Coffee 7PM Sustainable Living	29 7PM <i>The Hope</i> 7:30 Peace Café @ Picassos	30	31		

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Sermons now on the web!
www.openarms.org

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

8:00 P.M., MARCH 9

CHURCH OF THE OPEN ARMS

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