

The Common Thread

A monthly publication of Church of the Open Arms, UCC

Volume 13, Issue 3

March 1, 2009

MINISTER'S ROUNDTABLE

Easter is a time for joining the church, baptizing babies, and confirming people who are ready to affirm their faith. These things can happen at any time throughout the year, but Easter is an exciting and traditional time for celebrating our faith in this way.

Confirmation is an opportunity to affirm your faith. Some people are baptized when they are babies, and desire to go through confirmation to decide for themselves to be part of the Christian faith. Others have already gone through confirmation but want a "booster" or a renewal of faith. Confirmation class is a time to learn about every question related to being a person of faith. There are no bad questions or stupid questions. All your questions are welcome. Some churches have confirmation class for adults and youth separately. Some of those classes meet week after week for months. This year at Open Arms we are hosting a confirmation retreat, packing in lots of information on a Friday night and Saturday. Whether you have never been baptized or are already confirmed, you are urged to participate. More details are provided about the confirmation retreat in the article in this newsletter. You can sign up to attend at the church.

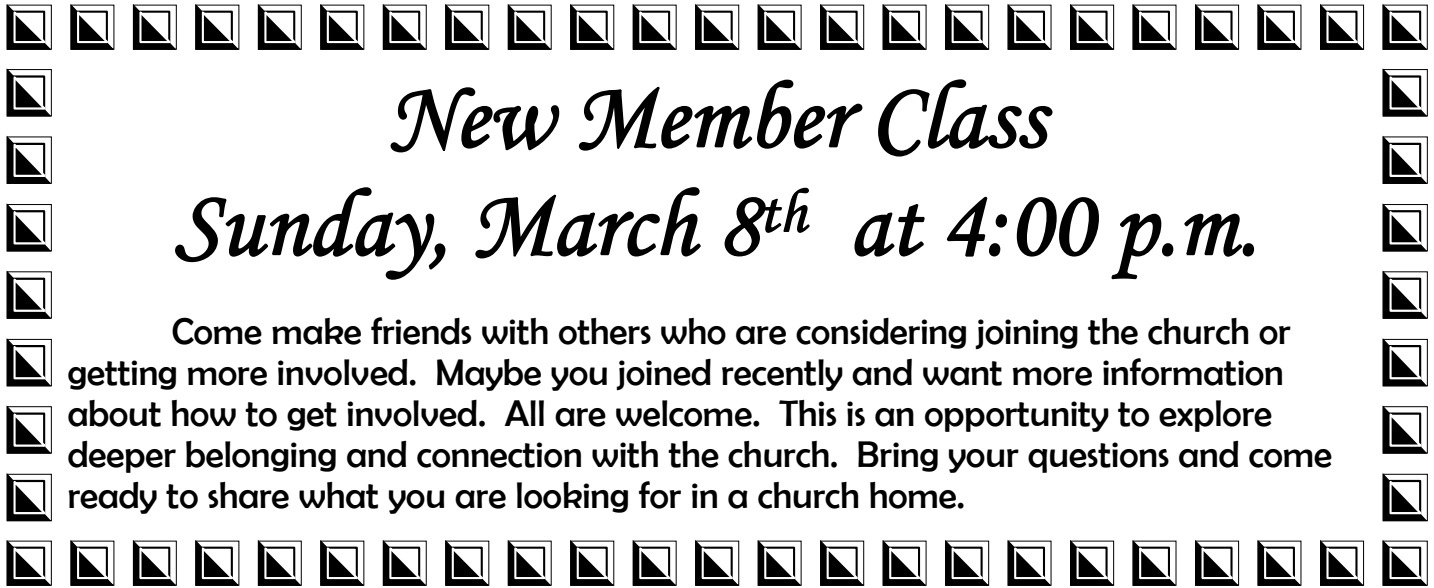
Confirmation class was one of the most important influences on my own faith journey. I hope you will make every effort to attend this retreat. I would be more than happy to visit with any of you who have questions about this retreat.

*May the blessings of Easter be yours,
Kathy McCallie*



Confirmation Retreat March 27th and 28th

See article pg. 3



New Member Class

Sunday, March 8th at 4:00 p.m.

Come make friends with others who are considering joining the church or getting more involved. Maybe you joined recently and want more information about how to get involved. All are welcome. This is an opportunity to explore deeper belonging and connection with the church. Bring your questions and come ready to share what you are looking for in a church home.

Long-Term Care Seminar

The cost of providing nursing home care, assisted living, or help at home for an elderly person is staggering. Maybe you and your partner are wondering how you might handle that issue someday. Maybe you have an elderly friend or loved one who is facing that question. This seminar is a time to learn about options for insurance that would protect against that need. Unfortunately, Medicare does not provide for long-term care. Only if a person losing all their financial assets can they get help from Medicaid in those situations. We all need to be informed of these issues.

Thursday, March 6th at 5:30 p.m. Open Arms will host an educational presentation provided by a local insurance company related to costs and considerations of long-term care. Our church is not encouraging anyone to buy insurance, or to buy from this particular company. What we are doing is encouraging everyone to think through these issues and plan intentionally to take good care of loved ones and of ourselves. This company does offer plans that provide benefits for same-sex partner couples. They will help us understand the challenges of planning well for our future. Please sign up at the church or call the church office (405) 525-9555 to reserve a spot at this seminar.

Community Development Team

Twenty eight churches have committed to forming a community development organization to raise grass-roots citizen action for a better community! These churches include a wide diversity of racial, economic, theological, and social groups. Open Arms is one of the churches that helped launch this important initiative. Now we are looking for a small group of people from our church who want to build on this connection with other faith groups interested in social action in the community.

On Sunday, March 29th, at 4:00 p.m. Kathy McCallie and others will offer an overview of this project and how you can get involved. This is one of the most encouraging and exciting things that has happened in Oklahoma City in a long time. People of all different religions, cultures, races, economic groups, political groups, and interests will be working together on common ground to bring pressure to improve our city. Doesn't it sound fascinating to meet with people from different communities to find common ground! All are encouraged to attend this meeting March 29th at Open Arms.

Who Cares?

A Confirmation Retreat - for spiritual growth and wonder

Friday night and Saturday
March 27th and 28th at Open Arms

Why are there so many denominations? How are they different?

Why is the bible so confusing to read? How can I get more familiar with it?

What is the trinity?

What is salvation?

What is God like?

What do Christians believe about evil?

What do I have to believe to be a Christian?

What is the United Church of Christ?

Do I need to know about theology?

What is a protestant?

What are people of faith like?

Why go to church?

And Who Cares ????

This event is for adults and youth who are at least 13 or older. Creative story-telling, film, art, and discussion will be used in presenting themes of theology, church history, biblical study, and Christian discipleship in ways that are relevant to our lives today.

Friday night: Supper starts at 6:30 p.m. program: 7:00-9:30 p.m.

Saturday program: 9:30 a.m. -5:00 p.m.

Rather than have the class spread out over many weeks or months, this intensive schedule will provide an in-depth and thorough experience for confirming faith and increasing self-understanding.

Cost is: \$12 per person

that pays for supper, lunch, and snacks as well as materials.

Child Care can only be provided if reserved no later than March 20th.

To register, call 525-9555 or sign up at church.

Small Groups at Open Arms

New groups started in January and the **Family Support Group** is doing well. The second Sunday of each month we gather for a light lunch and discussion on issues close to the heart of being a parent/grandparent. Last month we talked about transitions—from leaving the house each morning to making changes in living arrangements. All parents and grandparents are welcome.

The second group was a group for ministers and that did not go as well. We are discontinuing that small group. This is one of the things I love about Church of the Open Arms; we can try things and if they don't work, we just try something else.

What kind of group do you want?

Let Rev. Dr. Suzanne Nichols know and we will see if there are others with your interest. Support groups are only one kind of group. Maybe you want a bowling group? A quilting group? A dance group? Call Suzanne at 465-1041 and let her know.

New Growth Team Training is coming during March!

- If you are a greeter or want to be;
- if you want to help grow our
- church; or if you are interested in
- meeting more people at Open
- Arms, you may find a place to
- serve on this ministry team. Con-
- tact Suzanne Nichols and expect
- her to invite you to the training as
- soon as the date is cleared...hint:
- probably the afternoon of the
- third Sunday in March the 15.

WHAT THE HECK'S UP WITH THAT N.Y.P.?

It's already been a busy year for our church's youth group, the New Youth Project. We started off with a study on the works of C.S. Lewis (the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe and Prince Caspian). We will finish off with a study on Switchfoot's *This is Home* video on March 4th.

Then mark your calendar for a meeting that could change the whole group. On January 4 the group turned a year old. It has grown and changed so much on its own. On March 11 the group will be holding a "Reconstruction" meeting. They will meet to discuss different ideas for the group for the upcoming year. They will also be re-establishing the rules that will govern THEIR youth group. And they will be re-writing THEIR mission statement. If you are a current member of NYP or are thinking of joining, please take into consideration the things that you like, the things you don't like, and the things you would like to see happen with the group. It is the night that the New Youth Project claims itself. It is also the night we will be taking a **GROUP PICTURE FOR THE CHURCH WEBSITE**.

We will soon begin studies based on High School Musical I, II, and III. I know... High School Musical? Bible Study? It's crazy, but it's true! And we are planning for our annual Lock-In! You'll just have to keep your eyes and ears open and come check it out.

The New Youth Project will be kicking off Fundraiser '09 with a **BAKE SALE!!** Join us on April 5th, Palm Sunday and Potluck Sunday, right after church. Fill up your belly for free then take home a little sumpin'-sumpin' for nibblin' later! We are preparing to order our new curriculum.

And lastly, we are getting ready for THE event of the year. The NYP-COA Yard Sale is right around the corner. It is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, June 6th. You may start bringing your donations by the church at any time. Please call me if you need to set up a time for drop-off. **WE DO NOT HAVE ANY ONE WITH A TRUCK TO DO "PICK UP"**. However, if someone would like to volunteer for that sort of thing, it would be greatly appreciated.

VOLUNTEER FAIR

Even though the weather may be cool, it's time to light up that volunteer spirit and find a place where you can spend some time and energy in service to Church of the Open Arms. Last year, we held our first Volunteer Fair. As a result, teams found valuable volunteers and many church members and visitors learned much more about the teams that run the church.

It's time for the 2009 Volunteer Fair! On **Sunday, March 1st**, both before and after morning worship service, information about the various teams and opportunities for volunteers will be available. Representatives of the teams will be available to answer questions and share information and personal stories of how and why they volunteer. For those of you unfamiliar with the teams, they are:

Worship team – concerned with planning, preparing and presenting the worship services

Building team – helping with maintaining and upgrading the physical facilities

Community life – building and supporting the church family and community

New Growth team – involves welcoming visitors to our church

Shalom – advocates social justice and peace within the church and in the community

Care team – supports the church's prayer chain and arranges for assistance to church members in need

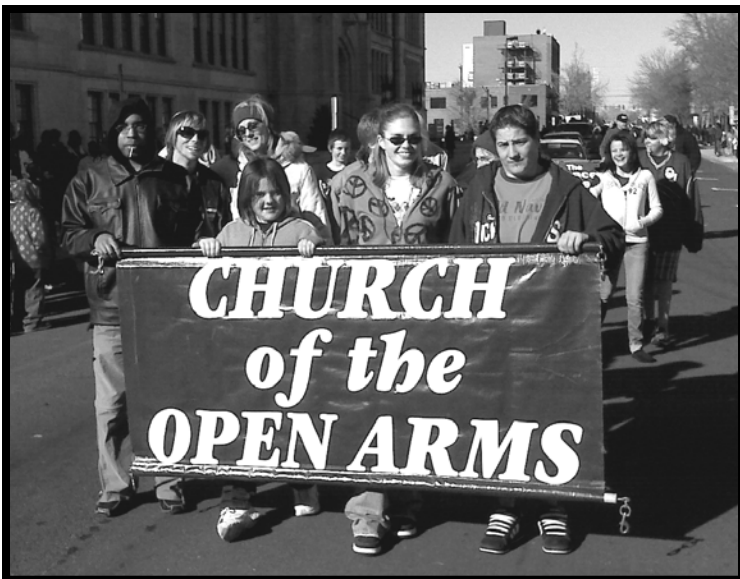
Finance team – manages and monitors the church's finances

Education team – coordinates and presents educational opportunities for all ages

Staff leadership team – oversees paid staff of the church

Opportunities to volunteer vary within the teams. Check out the teams, ask questions and sign up! Everyone is needed and welcome. (If you didn't get your newsletter until after the first, you can still get information and volunteer. Just contact a member of the presidency or Kathy or Suzanne for more information).

MLK 2009



There were 21 members of COA who walked, waved and graciously carried our church banner.

We walked with 1st Unitarian Church, Peace House and the Stonewall Democrats.

Peace / Prayer Vigil

Shalom team will be sponsoring a Peace Vigil to recognize the 6 year anniversary of the start of the Iraq War which is Thursday March, 19th 2009. Our plan is to pray for guidance and peace rather than protest. There will be many Peace related activities throughout the Community so stay tuned in for announcements and encourage others to participate as they are able. **For more details see Annie Almond.**

Mark your calendar! Easter is coming soon.

April 5th
Palm Sunday
April 10th
8:00 pm Good Friday Service
April 12th
Easter Sunday, Egg Hunt

If you would like to have your business card displayed in our monthly newsletter the cost is \$ 10.00.

Contact Rev. Loyce via email at loycee@sbcglobal.net

DAWN COUNSELING

Dr. Dawn Singleton, Ph.D.
Licensed Marital & Family Therapist
Licensed Professional Counselor-
Certified Child & Parenting Specialist
5005 N. Pennsylvania # 303
OKC, OK 73112 232-3296
dawnsi@aol.com

Rev. Loyce Crusader For Justice Radio Ministry

revloyce.com
KTLR Radio, 890 AM
ktr.com (live streaming)
loycee@sbcglobal.net
Wednesdays 9:00-9:30 AM
405 642-0124

Wed. March 11th, 2009

Conna Wilkinson
Director, Peace Education Institute
"Our America...Our Story"

Wed. March 18th, 2009

Rev. Dr. Kathy McCallie
Sr. Pastor, Church of the Open Arms, UCC
"Being Bi-Sexual in America"

Z SALON

SARAH ORTIZ, STYLIST
11201 N. MAY, OKC, OK
(BETWEEN HEFNER & 122ND)
752-2010

Certified Massage Therapist

Linda Herndon
405 301-4535
ljherndon7@cox.net

Four S Home Inspection Group, LLC.

Denise Chadwick
OK LIC # 498
405 519-3432
fourshome@yahoo.com
New, Pre-purchase, Weekend, Pre-listing

March 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:30 no choir rehearsal 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship 12:00 Monthly Potluck Worship team meeting Volunteer Fair	2 6:00pm Meditation	3 7:00 Identity Discussion	4 6:00 Choir Rehearsal 7-8pm New Youth Project 7:00 Worship Service 7:30 Bible Study	5 7:00 Life Improvement class	6 10:00-12:00 Food Pantry set up 3:00-6:00 Food Pantry servers 5:30 Long Term Care Seminar	7
8 9:30 no choir rehearsal 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship 12:00 Family Support Group 4:00 New Member Class	9 6:00pm Meditation	10 7:00 Identity Discussion	11 6:00 Choir Rehearsal 7-8pm New Youth Project 7:00 Worship Service 7:30 Bible Study	12 7:00 Life Improvement class	13 10:00-12:00 Food Pantry set up 3:00-6:00 Food Pantry servers	14
15 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship	16 6:00pm Meditation	17 7:00 Identity Discussion	18 6:00 Choir Rehearsal 7-8pm New Youth Project 7:00 Worship Service 7:30 Bible Study	19 7:00 Life Improvement class	20 10:00-12:00 Food Pantry set up 3:00-6:00 Food Pantry servers	21
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29 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship 4:00 Community Development Team	30	31				

Confirmation Retreat See pg 3

Meet one of our Food Pantry Clients

By Marie Kizzia

Ro Melda Saylor is a vibrant outgoing 79 year old single woman who is supporting a son and three dogs and lives in a small garage apartment not far from our Food Pantry. She has worked at many jobs, including legal secretary for David Boren when he was first running for office in Seminole County. After many diverse and interesting jobs she was forced to retire early at the age of 61 because of an injury to her hand. She is on Social Security and works a few hours each week at the Dollar General store close to her house and would work more if offered. Her son is an out of work musician and inventor but is unable to help financially now. They own a car but it is not running so Ro usually walks the 2 miles to our Food Pantry and take the bus home or catches a ride from someone at the pantry. She has gotten food stamps in the past but doesn't quite understand why she is now disqualified. She has been coming to our Food Pantry for 3 years and really appreciates the friendliness of the volunteers and the wonderful variety of food she receives.

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

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