

# The Common Thread

A monthly publication of Church of the Open Arms, UCC

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May 1, 2011

## MINISTER'S ROUNDTABLE

When my first child was born I had a whole new depth of insight about what love is. I remember thinking that I never really understood love at all before that time. The birth of each of my children had that magical, mystical, spiritual, transcendent quality that left me dazzled and full of wonderment. Now, I am experiencing a whole new level of that blessing as I meet my first grandchild. My son, Jesse, and his wife, Amy, are celebrating the birth of their daughter, Jessalin. I was blessed to go visit them at their home in Clarksville, Tennessee recently for a few days. Everyone had told me how great it was to be a grandparent, but I still wasn't prepared for the depth of love I would feel.

Those experiences of unconditional love give us a glimpse of God's love for each one of us and all creation. The power of love is certainly the strongest force in existence. During this Easter season, I hope that you savor the return of spring green and rising energy of life all around us. Take a few hours to relax, look at the stars, watch the clouds drift by overhead, listen to the birds, and remember that God delights in your very being – just exactly the way you are. Nothing you can do will make God love you any more. And nothing you can do will make God love you any less. As Paul said: "Nothing can separate us from the love of God." Happy Easter Season!

In Awe and Wonder,  
Kathy McCallie

"We all have two religions: the religion we talk about and the religion we live. It is our task to make the difference between the two as small as possible." —William Gardner

# Gratitude Dinner

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you – to each of you who have ever made a financial contribution to Church of the Open Arms! There are so many ways that lives are being changed, hearts are being blessed, and Christ's love is flowing through our church because of our ministries. Couples are finding new strength for their relationship, children are learning about the biblical stories, teens are finding opportunities to serve the community, our food pantry provides food for over one hundred families each week, our social justice team's study groups are challenging us to integrate justice-seeking more fully in our lives. All of these things are possible because of the resources of our building, our staff, and the strength of witness through your financial giving. Now the Finance Team of our church is hosting a dinner for everyone in the church to thank those who have made a financial contribution of any amount. Please join the fun at Ryan's Buffet, 6500 SW 3<sup>rd</sup>, on **Friday, May 6<sup>th</sup> beginning at 6:30**. We will share inspiration, entertainment, and fun while making friends.

Call the church office, 525-9555, to make your reservation.

## Belonging Class

May 22<sup>nd</sup>

The Belonging Class, May 22<sup>nd</sup> at 2:00 p.m., is a small group discussion about how to get more involved in the life of the congregation. This class 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 covers information about how decisions get 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.

## Road Trip!!

### Oklahoma UCC Meeting

All the churches of our denomination, the United Church of Christ (UCC) will send delegates and visitors to Tulsa for our Spring Association meeting on Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup>. You can join this opportunity to learn more about the UCC, meet friends from our partner churches, and get inspired about the future of our ministry in Oklahoma by attending that day. To carpool to Fellowship UCC in Tulsa you can meet at our church parking lot at 7:30 a.m. that Saturday. The group will return to OKC around supper time.

## **WHERE WE STAND: - The United Church of Christ on RACISM**

Our United Church of Christ connection includes a strong emphasis on justice issues. At Church of the Open Arms, our mission is to extend the radical welcome of the UCC denomination of all peoples. Though some have branded this a "post-racial" era, the UCC does not. The following is a statement from the UCC website ([www.UCC.org](http://www.UCC.org)). You can visit the website to see all the "whereas's," but the following context and resolution were adopted in 2003.

*The United States has a long history of racism, segregation, discrimination, and legalized oppression of people based on their skin color. Even today, despite progress made on many fronts, economic disadvantages associated with race and ethnicity persist. Some of these are lifted up on this page. The United Church of Christ has a long history of working towards Racial Justice. We continue to actively work to ensure justice in these areas right now!*

### **UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CALLED TO BE AN ANTI-RACIST CHURCH**

ADOPTED 2003 GENERAL SYNOD MULTIRACIAL/MULTICULTURAL ADDENDUM TO 1993 PRONOUNCEMENT AND PROPOSAL FOR ACTION

**THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED**, that the United Church of Christ is called to be an antiracist church and that we encourage all Conferences and Associations and local churches of the United Church of Christ to adopt anti-racism mandates, including policy that encourages anti-racism *programs* for all United Church of Christ staff and volunteers; and

**LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Conferences and Associations and local churches facilitate programs within their churches that would examine both historic and contemporary forms of racism and its effects and that the programs be made available to the churches; and

**LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Justice and Witness Ministries provides leadership in the development and implementation of programs to dismantle racism, working in partnership with the Collegium, Covenanted Ministries, Affiliated Ministries, Associated Ministries, Conferences, Associations and local churches in developing appropriately trained anti-racism facilitators; and

**LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Covenanted Ministries of the United Church of Christ work in concert to dismantle racism in church and in society and partner with Conferences and Associations in sharing resources and costs associated with doing antiracism work.

**LET IT BE FINALLY RESOLVED**, that the Justice and Witness Ministries will report the progress of the development and implementation of these programs at the Twenty-fifth General Synod.

Some possible topics for discussion at Church of the Open Arms . . . .

*"How are we extending our radical welcome to persons of all ethnicities?"*

*"Where do we stand on anti-immigration legislation & how is this related to racism?"*

*"How can we respond to the growing backlash against Muslims in our state?"*

*"What do we need to know about racism in Oklahoma with regard to African Americans, Native Americans and Hispanic Americans?"*

*"Who are the 'invisible people' in our community?"*

The United Church of Christ offers several suggestions for discussion groups and studies on these kinds of questions. If you are interested, please contact a member of our Social Justice Committee.

# May, 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 10:45 Worship 12:00 Monthly Potluck 12-1:30 Youth Group	2	3 7PM Book Study <i>The Hope: A Guide to Sacred Activism</i> 7:30 Young Adlt Peace Café @ Picasso's	4 6PM Choir Rehearsal 7PM Chapel Service 7PM Spanish Class 7:30PM Mary Daly Group	5 1:45 Food Pantry drop-off 6:30—Financial Peace University	6 10AM Food Pantry set-up 3:00 - 6:00 Food Pantry Servers 7PM—Gratitude Dinner Ryan's Buffet	7 UCC Spring Association Meeting
8 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 10:45 Worship 12-1:30 Youth Group	9 10:30 AM Sr. Rink Coffee	10 7PM Book Study <i>The Hope</i> 7:30 Peace Café @ Picasso's	11 6PM Choir Rehearsal 7PM Chapel Service 7PM Spanish Class 7:30PM Mary Daly Group	12 1:45 Food Pantry drop-off 6:30—Financial Peace University	13 10AM Food Pantry set-up 3:00 - 6:00 Food Pantry Servers	14
15 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 10:45 Worship 12-1:30 Youth Group 2PM Leadership Council Meeting	16	17 7:30 Young Adult Peace Café @ Picasso's	18 6PM Choir Rehearsal 7PM Chapel Service 7PM Spanish Class 7:30PM Mary Daly Group	19 1:45 Food Pantry drop-off 6:30—Financial Peace University	20 10AM Food Pantry set-up 3:00 - 6:00 Food Pantry Servers	21
22 <b>COA-OP</b> 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 10:45 Worship 12-1:30 Youth Group 2:00 BELONGING Class	23 10:30AM Sr. Rink Coffee	24 7:30 Peace Café @ Picasso's	25 6PM Choir Rehearsal 7PM Chapel Service 7PM Spanish Class 7:30PM Mary Daly Group	26 1:45 Food Pantry drop-off 6:30—Financial Peace University	27 10AM Food Pantry set-up 3:00 - 6:00 Food Pantry Servers	28
29 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 10:45 Worship 12-1:30 Youth Group	30	31 7:30 Peace Café @ Picasso's				

For more info on church events,  
see us online:  
**OPENARMS.ORG**

# CARE TEAM

As a community of faith, Church of the Open Arms strives to embody Jesus' commandment to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt 22:39). Every week, countless acts of kindness, great and small, take place throughout our congregation. Caring for one another is an essential part of what we do, and it is becoming even more important during this exciting time of growth in our church.

Meeting the needs of a growing congregation can be challenging, but it can also be an opportunity for mutual support and for spiritual reward.

During the next few weeks, the Care Team invites you to consider offering your gifts and talents in the service of your fellow members. A volunteer sign-up sheet will remain in the lobby through May 20, and a brief organizational meeting will be scheduled in early June. Our goal is to have at least 10 new Care Team members. A wonderful aspect of the Care Team is that you may participate at many levels. Perhaps you would like to visit church friends who are in the hospital. Maybe you could commit to sending cards to a few people each week. How about touching base with two people by phone? The possibilities for service are unlimited!

God calls all of us to service and to ministries as numerous and varied as ourselves. In the end, our hope is that each and every member of Church of the Open Arms will consider themselves members of the Care Team. Please contact Pastor Scott or Bruce Saunkeah for more information.



**Full-moon drumming to be held at the  
Peace Education Institute  
Friday, May 20—7:30 p.m.**

## COA-OP

The Church of the Open Arms Homemade and Fair Trade Co-op is now being held on the 4th Sunday of the month in the Community Hall prior to and following the morning worship service. Come join the Community Café for coffee and morning snacks and check out the Fair Trade coffee, chocolate, homemade baked goods and other homemade items made by your church family-members. Everyone is welcome to bring items for sale, as long as they're homemade or Fair Trade!

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Sermons now on the web!  
[www.openarms.org](http://www.openarms.org)

# **GRATITUDE DINNER**

**FRIDAY, MAY 6**

**6:30 P.M.**

**RYAN'S BUFFET**

**6500 SW 3RD**

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