

The Common Thread

A monthly publication of Church of the Open Arms, UCC

Volume 14, Issue 11

November 1, 2010

MINISTER'S ROUNDTABLE

Blessed Unrest, by Paul Hawken, inspires hope about changing the world. In the book he offers a critical look at environmental issues and the movements that are gathering momentum to work on behalf of all life. Hawken reminds readers that human life and all creation has sacred worth and value. Too often, forces in our world today abuse both people and the planet. He wrote: "Slaves, serfs, and the poor are the forests, soils, and oceans of society; each constitutes surplus value that has been exploited repeatedly by those in power, whether governments or multinational corporations." The spirituality that shines through the book is consistent with the great teachings of Jesus and of the prophets in the bible. Here is one of my favorite passages where Hawken quotes Barry Lopez: "How is one to live a moral and compassionate existence when one is fully aware of the blood, the horror inherent in life, when one finds darkness not only in one's culture but within oneself?... There are simply no answers to some of the great pressing questions. You continue to live them out, making your life a worthy expression of leaning into the light." -- Barry Lopez, *Arctic Dreams*.

In this season of changing weather and longer days, I hope you are finding inspiration and meaning in every single day, and in every simple joy. Try reading *Blessed Unrest*, and tell me what great things you are reading, too!

Sincerely,
Kathy McCallie

The Hope Dinner

November 18, 2010— 6 PM

Church of the Open Arms

"The Rainbow Road— A Covenant's Journey"
Reverend Mark Christian, Guest Speaker

Food Pantry Vacation

The Food Pantry will be closed on Friday, November 26th. Our hard-working pantry volunteers will take a day off the day following Thanksgiving.

Many programs support those in need over Thanksgiving, and the food bank is closed, so we wish all our dedicated pantry workers a well-deserved week off!

Three cheers for Laura, Marie, Bo, Kerri, Kent, and the others who make it happen week after week.

Full-moon drumming to be held at the Peace Education Institute on Friday, November 19.

Vegetarian potluck at 6:30 p.m.

Drumming at 7:30 p.m.

**Thursday, November 11th 7:00-9:00 p.m.
Palestinian Speaker: Huwaida Arraf**

Huwaida Arraf is a Palestinian-rights activist and co-founder of the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), a Palestinian-led organization focused on assisting the Palestinian side of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict using non-violent protests.

Arraf, who is Christian, is the daughter of a Palestinian mother and father. Her father has Israeli citizenship. Her parents moved from the West Bank to be able to raise Arraf away from the violence there. She and her parents were able to visit Palestine every few years until Arraf was ten years old. Arraf majored in Arabic and Judaic studies and political science at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She also spent a year at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and studied Hebrew on a kibbutz. Arraf later earned a J.D. at American University's Washington College of Law. Her focus was on International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, with a particular interest in war crimes prosecution.

In the spring of 2000, Arraf traveled to Jerusalem to serve as program coordinator for Seeds of Peace, a U.S.-based nonprofit organization that seeks to foster dialogue between Jewish and Palestinian youth. In 2001 her title at the Center for Coexistence in Jerusalem was Regional Coordinator. Arraf married Adam Shapiro, another ISM co-founder, in 2002. They met while both were working at the Jerusalem center of Seeds of Peace.



Make Friends Gathering

Friday, November 12th, 6:30-9:00pm

Come hang out at the campfire in Kathy's backyard (directions available from the church). This relaxing evening is a time to make new friends and catch up with old ones. Bring a snack to share and a lawn chair if you have one. If the weather is nice we will be outside. All are welcome.

Church Finance Update Meetings

The COA finance team has put a lot of thought and effort into thinking about how we can grow our church in a financially responsible way. One of the most important ways of making sure that the important ministry of COA continues is to have an active congregation that is fully informed about church finances and all other aspects of church life. The finance team is organizing a series of small meetings both at the church and at the homes of members so that everyone in the church has the opportunity to reflect on how we fund COA in the future. We also want everyone to consider tithing (giving 10% of your income). For many people, this is a source of joy and a sense of empowerment. The meetings promise to be lively, fun and provide an opportunity for you to feel more a part of the church. It is really important for everyone who wants to be a part of this journey to join with us as we move into the future together. Members of the finance team will be in touch with all church members encouraging to respond to this opportunity for involvement. We hope that you will say 'Yes'.

Another important event is the "all church" leadership council meeting coming up in November in which we will be asked to approve a budget proposal for next year. Included in the newsletter is a description of how our money is spent. If you have questions about the financial situation at Church of the Open Arms you are invited to attend a finance meeting or ask someone on the finance team. Detailed financial reports are available each month.

Monday, November 15th - 7:00 p.m.

All Church Council Meeting

Our Church Council elects officers for the upcoming year and approves our budget in our **most important meeting of the year** in November. All are welcome to come join in the decision-making and learn more about strengthening the mission of the church.

David Rovics Folk Concert

7:30 pm, Friday, November 19



Traveling troubadour David Rovics will give an Oklahoma City concert at Church of the Open Arms as part of his 2010 national tour .

David Rovics has been called the musical voice of the progressive movement in the United States. He and his songs are featured on national radio programs around the world. Check out www.davidrovics.com.

David is an American singer/songwriter. His music concerns topical subjects, such as war, anti-globalization and social justice issues. Although most of Rovics' work is commercially distributed, he has made all of his recorded music freely available as downloadable mp3 files. He encourages the free distribution of his work by non-profit means to promote his work and spread political messages.

With humor and compassion, his music communicates a spirit of “gleeful rebellion” that makes “nonviolent revolution for change irresistible,” according to one review.

Asking only free-will donations, activist/song-writer Rovics will guarantee music lovers a memorable evening.

December 1, World AIDS Day

At Church of the Open Arms, we have many members who are HIV+, and we remember many beloved members of our church who have died of AIDS. We honor and cherish those living with HIV, and pray for continued support for healing and hope.

Started on 1st December 1988, World AIDS Day is about raising money, increasing awareness, fighting prejudice and improving education. The World AIDS Day theme for 2010 is *'Universal Access and Human Rights.'* World AIDS Day is important in reminding people that HIV has not gone away, and that there are many things still to be done. According to UNAIDS estimates, there are now 33.4 million people living with HIV, including 2.1 million children. During 2008 some 2.7 million people became newly infected with the virus and an estimated 2 million people died from AIDS. Around half of all people who become infected with HIV do so before they are 25 and are killed by AIDS before they are 35.

CHURCH OF THE OPEN ARMS COOP

Fair Trade / Home Made

What is the most local economy you can imagine? I think it would be my closest circle of friends and going out from there. It's just neighborly to know what goods and services our friends and acquaintances have to offer and to buy those things from them instead of giving all of our business to big box stores, or purchasing the same or equivalent items from people we don't know.

There are a lot of skills, professional services, or products that you might need or appreciate that are available through our congregational community.

There are other reasons to help the COA Coop grow, too. Besides getting things that are home-made with love . . . like greeting cards, great photography, artwork, banana trees, herbal healing items, eggs, jewelry, massages, sailing parties, etc., there is also the opportunity to support FAIR TRADE.

What is fair trade? It is making sure that the artisans and workers who provide products to the global market get a fair price for his/her work. There are many things we buy cheaply in Oklahoma City (and the U.S.) because of near slave labor in other countries.

The fact is that the further away from us a product is made, the less we know about how it was made, what's in it, and who is benefiting.

Here's what you can do to help our little experimental coop grow.

Check it out on the first Sunday's of each month on your way into the potluck or before worship. . . . and find something to buy.

Bring something to sell or trade for something else you might want. We have musicians, electricians, general fix-it people, artists, great cooks, teachers, gardeners, and who-knows-what other abilities in our community.

Bring a description of your professional services along with contact information on an attractive information sheet that interested people can pick up.

Remember, whatever you bring, it should be something you made, or something a friend of yours made, and/ or it should be considered "Fair Trade" as in Fair Trade Coffee, chocolate, artwork etc.

The tables are set up at 8:30 a.m. on the first Sunday of each month and are staffed before and after worship. Your items to sell or trade should be marked with your name and the price of the item.

If you would enjoy working at the tables, please contact **Conna Wilkinson** (204-6479).

2011 Budget – Church of the Open Arms

Reaching out to serve our Community.....\$46,743

We provide a weekly food pantry that feeds approximately 100 families each week. We make meeting rooms available to various non-profit groups and to 12-step groups. Our pastor visits non-members, provide counseling services to residents of our community, and participates in many community organizations. Neighborhood children and youth participate in programs offered as well. In addition to this we contribute to OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) and the Oklahoma Association, UCC to share in connectional ministries and missions.

Preparing for and Conducting Worship.....\$59,691

Worship is central to our congregational life. Planning for Sunday morning worship, preparing sermons, conducting weddings, funerals, and other special services requires a significant part of our pastor's time. Our music ministers put in countless hours preparing and rehearsing with musicians. The Worship ministry team consults with the pastor, selects music, plans and conducts inspiring services. This budget category includes cost for music, bulletins, candles, communion elements, other worship aids, as well as guest ministers during vacation periods.

Educating Our Children, Youth, and Adults.....\$36,568

Under the leadership of our pastor and the education ministry team, we are developing an excellent church school. Curriculum materials and other supplies are part of the expenses involved here. We are glad to offer book studies, church membership classes for adults, weekday Bible-study groups, and occasional forums on current issues. Our childcare workers provide safe, enjoyable activities for children while adults are in classes. Our Godly Play program is one of the most exciting, faithful ministries of our entire church. Children are learning biblical stories through methods that are fun, inspiring, and memorable. Volunteers are trained and equipped to lead classes and groups for children and youth. We often sponsor public events for the wider community designed to educate as well.

Caring for Our Church Family.....\$42,332

Pastoral care is a vital part of our work, especially for persons who are ill, hospitalized, bereaved, preparing for marriage, going through divorce, or facing other crises. Communication and community building is another aspect of our caring. Our church leaders and secretary provide information and other services to members to develop a strong sense of connection. Our monthly newsletter, weekly emails, regular communications, game nights, and the many all-church activities are also parts of sustaining our common life.

Reducing Our Debt.....\$35,103

The debt incurred when we bought our building seven years ago is paid on a monthly mortgage. Our mortgage payment is \$2,925.25 per month.

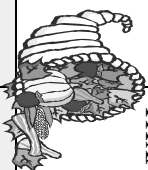
Equipping and Maintaining Our Building.....\$32,000

Our building team works hard to take care of our facilities. Providing facilities for God's work requires meeting costs for utilities, insurance, and maintenance. We also pay a part-time cleaning crew for weekly service.

Total.....\$252,437

Monthly financial reports documenting all spending and income are available, and finance team meetings are always open to help us maintain complete transparency in our finances.

November 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 7:30 pm Flag Dancing	2	3 6:00 pm Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm <i>Saving Jesus</i> Discussion Group 7:30-9pm Mary Daly Discussion Group	4 1:45 Food Pantry drop-off	5 10am—noon Food Pantry set-up Servers 3:00 - 6:00 Food Pantry Servers	6 7-10pm Fall Singles Mixer Dance
COA-OP 7 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Sunday School 9:30 Book Study* 10:45 Worship 12:00 Monthly Potluck 12-1:30 Youth Group	8 10:30 am Sr. Rink Coffee 7:30 pm Flag Dancing	9 7:00 Building Team Meeting	10 6:00 pm Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm <i>Saving Jesus</i> Discussion Group 7:30-9pm Mary Daly Discussion Group	11 1:45 Food Pantry drop-off 7-9pm Palestinian Speaker, Huwaida Arraf *	12 10am—noon Food Pantry set-up 3:00 - 6:00 Food Pantry Servers 6:30-9:00 MAKE FRIENDS GATHERING	13 6-9:00 pm Oklahoma Vegetarian Society's Pot Luck *
14 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Sunday School 9:30 Book Study* 10:45 Worship 12-1:30 Youth Group	15 7:00 pm All Church Council 7:30 pm Flag Dancing	16	17 6:00 pm Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm <i>Saving Jesus</i> Discussion Group 7:30-9pm Mary Daly Discussion Group	18 1:45 Food Pantry drop-off 6:00 pm HOPE DINNER	19 10am-noon Food Pantry 3:00 - 6:00 Food Pantry Servers J 7:30 pm—DAVID ROVICS IN CONCERT J J	20
21 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Sunday School 9:30 Book Study* 10:45 Worship 12-1:30 Youth Group 1:00: "Prime Timers" Thanksgiving Pot Luck	22 10:30 am Sr. Rink Coffee 7:30 pm Flag Dancing	23	24  HAPPY THANKSGIVING DAY	25	26	27
28 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Sunday School 9:30 Book Study* 10:45 Worship 12-1:30 Youth Group	29 7:30 pm Flag Dancing	30			* See website for more info: http://Openarms.org	

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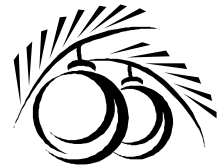
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Sermons now on the web!
www.openarms.org



Advent/Christmas Decorating Party



Friday, Dec. 3 6:30-9:30pm.

Come trim the tree and spruce up the church for the holiday season.
Bring a holiday snack to share.

We will play cards and make new friends between climbing ladders and
hanging the greens.

All are encouraged to participate.



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