

# The Common Thread

A monthly publication of Church of the Open Arms, UCC

Volume 12, Issue 6

June 1, 2008

## MINISTER'S ROUNDTABLE

I am a universalist. That is to say, I believe in the concept of universal salvation, meaning that ultimately every soul receives salvation. There have been Christian universalists since the earliest Christian communities. Debates have always raged about how to interpret scriptures and the teachings of Jesus related to these issues. Of course, many Christians do not believe in universal salvation, but they believe that in the end some are saved and others are not. Our church has no official position on this question -- we agree to disagree like we do over many questions. People interested in learning more about this concept of universal salvation are invited to attend a conference at Church of the Open Arms in June. More details about the conference are included in this newsletter with registration information. Our church is not organizing this event, but we are providing space. That means that members of our church can attend the conference at no cost. Volunteers are needed to help serve as building hosts and refreshment organizers. Even if you strongly disagree with the universalist position, you may want to come hear some of these lectures to learn more.

Still learning,  
Kathy McCallie



*Therapy Sisters*  
*Sunday June 22<sup>nd</sup>*  
*Morning service and Sunday evening*  
*after the Ice Cream Social.*  
*See page 2.*

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## 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 twice each month on the first and third Thursdays 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. The group will have its first meetings on Thursday, April the 17th and May 1st.

## New Moon Service

The new moon service will be held in the great outdoors during the summer months. Join us at Conna's at 7pm for relaxing or hiking or bring some food to cook on the fire.

*June 3, and July 3*

Call Conna for directions at 204-6479.

## Kathy in D.C.!

The first two weeks in June, Kathy McCallie will be teaching a class at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington D.C. The intensive two-week summer class is for seminary students and pastors. The class is about ethical issues of economic development with women in extreme poverty. This time for study, research, and teaching is an essential part of the continuing education requirements for pastors. Rev. Loyce Newton-Edwards and Rev. Jim Stovall will be offering leadership and pastoral care while Kathy is away. Kathy will be back in OKC on Saturday, June 14th.

## The Youth Want You to Know

We have added on thirty minutes to the NYP meeting time. This time will be used for the youth to work on their "Life Project". The group is encouraged to look through magazines daily, cutting out things that would represent how they feel that certain day. They will then bring what they have collected with them where it will become part of a large collage. It will become a sort of representation of what our youth is facing today. We are asking that people donate their old magazines to the New Youth Project. Any questions call Kenny 208-8969.

## Therapy Sisters in Concert for Pride Weekend

Austin's "Divas of Dysfunction" have appointments for new and returning clients in Oklahoma City. The Therapy Sisters, a.k.a. Maurine McLean and Lisa Rogers, long-time Lone Star lampoon artists, will travel to Oklahoma City to co-facilitate 2 large "group sessions" June 22, just in time to celebrate OKC's Gay Pride Parade and festival.

The Sisters will participate in worship service at Church of the Open Arms Sunday morning, June 22. Later that evening, they will perform in concert. The concert will follow the traditional Ice Cream Social at 5:30 p.m. The band Covert Union will open the show at 6:30 p.m. and the Therapy Sisters will take the stage at 7:30 p.m. Suggested donation is \$10.

Maurine McLean seeks stability by playing steady bass lines. Maurine is a Spanish-English interpreter by day; a musician by night. Both trades allow her to play with sound and meaning, two tireless companions. She's responsible for such Therapy Sisters songs as "My Finger is an Instrument of Death" and "Don't Touch Me When I'm Beautiful." Giving people the giggles by playing music is her heart's delight.

Lisa Rogers has played in various and sundry bands throughout the developmental stages of her life. She was weaned on church music, cut her teeth on folk music, took her first steps to bluegrass, swore off high heels while listening to women's music, and found self-realization in the world of novelty tunes. A social worker by trade, Lisa is an avid reader of printed matter that ranges from the New York Times to the National Enquirer. Her most acclaimed news-inspired hit, "The Weenie Whacking Woman," based on the tale of John and Lorena Bobbitt, topped the charts on Dr. Demento's syndicated novelty radio show.

**The food pantry** is helping so many people in the community thanks to all of the support that we have received through all of your generous donations. We assisted around 900 people and that number will only continue to grow during the summer months. The weekly collection in the red grocery basket (near the front doors) has been a huge success! If you would like to volunteer on Friday's to assist with the food pantry please call Heather at 525-9555.

**June Food Collection**  
**June 1 - Pinto Beans (dry)**  
**June 8- Peanut Butter**  
**June 15 - Tuna**  
**June 22 - Hot Dogs (freeze)**  
**June 29 - Pinto Beans (dry)**

**Once again we would like to thank you for your continued support of the Open Arms Food Pantry! You are helping sooooo many people in need!**

# Gay Pride Festival

**June 20th Friday night**

**Parade**

**June 21-22 Saturday and Sunday**

**Festival at Memorial Park**

**June 22 Sunday 5:30**

## **Prayer Concerns:**

- ⇒ Dr. Kathy McCallie's son, Jesse Stephenson, is in Afghanistan for 15-18 months beginning March 16<sup>th</sup>. Please keep Jesse, his wife, Amy, and their family in your prayers.
- ⇒ Bruce Saunkeah continues to recover from chemotherapy. Please keep him and Jeff Graves in your prayers.
- ⇒ Jim (Elvin) Zurcher is residing at The Fountains @ Canterbury, 12300 Reynolds Rd., The Springs Health Center, # 403b, OKC, Ok 73120. He would like music in his room. Please keep him and Eddie in your prayers, as Eddie is undergoing knee surgery and moving residence during this time of transition.
- ⇒ Jayne Askins said she would like to receive more phone calls/cards/contact etc. from our community. Contact info: 321-3083, 401 Vicksburg Ct., Norman, OK 73071.

# Christian Universalist Celebration 2008

## June 13-15<sup>th</sup>

*"All God's Children, No One Left Behind"*

The Christian Universalist Association (CUA) is holding a major conference for people who believe in or are interested in learning about the Gospel of God's universal love and salvation. Join this exciting and diverse ecumenical gathering of Christians from across America and around the world, coming together from a wide variety of denominational backgrounds to celebrate the uplifting message that all people are God's children and no one will be left behind!

Church of the Open Arms members attend free! Register and get more information at:  
<http://www.christianuniversalist.org/events/celebration2008.html>

### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

#### FRIDAY, JUNE 13 (joint events at Restoration Nation conference facilities)

- 1:00 to 2:00 p.m.: Sign-in, informal fellowship and refreshments
- 2:00: "Uniting People and Churches in the True Good News" -- speech and interactive discussion with Rev. Eric Stetson
- 3:00: "Knowing the Heart of Our Heavenly Father" -- speech and interactive discussion with Charles Slagle
- 4:00 to 5:00: Sign-in, informal fellowship and refreshments
- 5:00: Dinner
- 6:30: Praise & Worship
- 7:15: "Universalism Today: Reflections of a Traveling Universalist" -- speech by Rev. Kalen Fristad
- 8:15: Open Mic
- 8:30 to 9:30: "His Presence Is Mercy" -- speech by Rev. Dick King

#### SATURDAY, JUNE 14 (at Church of the Open Arms UCC)

- 8:30 a.m.: Sign-in, informal fellowship and refreshments

#### **Morning Session:**

- 9:00: Praise & Worship -- led by Rev. Lillie Henley, Rev. Felicia Urbanski, and Charles Slagle
- 9:45: "The Second Reformation: Reclaiming the Universalist Spirit of Christianity" -- speech by Rev. Eric Stetson
- 10:45: Intermission and refreshments
- 11:00: Meet the Board of Directors of the CUA (panel discussion with Q&A session)

#### **Lunch (12:00 to 1:30 p.m.)**

#### **Afternoon Session:**

- 1:30: "The History of Christian Universalism from the 1st to 21st Century" -- presentation by Rev. Eric Stetson and Rev. Kalen Fristad
- 2:30: "From Hell-Based Religion to the Love-Based Gospel: A Personal Journey" -- testimony by Charles Slagle
- 3:15: Intermission and refreshments
- 3:30: Workshops (choose to attend either of the following):

- "Pastoral Care and Christian Universalism" with Chaplain G. A. Roach and Rev. Lillie Henley
- "Church Planting and Growth" with Rev. Ron Robinson
- 4:30: Open Mic (there will be time for 10 to 20 people from the audience to share thoughts, testimonies, etc.)

**Dinner (5:30 to 7:00) Evening Session:**

- 7:00: "Spreading the Good News in Kenya" -- speech and Q&A with Rev. Cyrus Bosire Ogega
- 7:30: "When All Is Said and Done" -- speech by Rev. Rich Koster
- 8:15: "The Victory of the Gospel" -- speech by Rhett Ellis
- 8:45: Candle-Lighting Ceremony
- 9:00 to 9:30: Panel Discussion/Q&A with Officers of the CUA about future plans and goals for the organization

**SUNDAY, JUNE 15 (at Church of the Open Arms UCC)**

- 8:30 a.m.: Informal fellowship and refreshments
- 9:00: "Universal Salvation in the Bible" -- Adult Sunday School class led by Chaplain G. A. Roach
- 10:15: Closing Circle (hymns, prayers, and testimonies) -- facilitated by Rev. Felicia Urbanski
- 10:45: Worship service with sermon by Rev. Kalen Fristad, "Rescue or Flush?"
- 12:00 to 12:30 p.m.: Informal fellowship and refreshments
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***Be sure to check out our literature and book table during the day on Saturday and Sunday.***

**ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS:**

**Rev. Kalen Fristad** has been a United Methodist minister for over 30 years and currently leads three churches in Iowa. He is the author of a 2003 book, *Destined for Salvation: God's Promise to Save Everyone*. He spent three years traveling across America full-time, speaking at numerous churches to share the message of God's plan of salvation for all people, and continues to do speaking tours part-time. Rev. Fristad is the Chair of the Christian Universalist Association.



**Rev. Eric Stetson** is the author of a new book called *Christian Universalism: God's Good News for All People* (published March 2008). He started the *Christian Universalist Connection* newsletter in 2006 and is the editor-in-chief of that publication. He also teaches adult Sunday School classes at Universalist National Memorial Church in Washington D.C., and considers himself a non-denominational Christian. Rev. Stetson is the Executive Director of the Christian Universalist Association.



Info on other speakers listed online at [www.christianuniversalist.org](http://www.christianuniversalist.org)

# June 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 am Sunday School 10-45 am Worship 12:00 Monthly Potluck 4:00-5:30 Team mrg 4:00-5:30 Christians and Racial Justice	2	3 7:00pm PFLAG 7am New Moon Service (see article pg 2)	4 6:00 Choir Rehearsal 6:00 Beginning Spanish 7:00 Advanced Spanish 7:00 Worship Service	5 7:30pm HIV Support Group	6 4:00-6:00 Food Pantry 6:30-8pm New Youth Project 7:00 Book study class	7
8 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 am Sunday School 10-45 am Worship 4:00-5:30 Christians and Racial Justice	9 6:00pm Meditation	10	11 6:00 Choir Rehearsal 6:00 Beginning Spanish 7:00 Advanced Spanish 7:00 Worship Service	12 7:00 Finance Team meeting	13 4:00-6:00 Food Pantry 6:30-8pm New Youth Project 7:00 Book study class	14 4:00-6:00 Food Pantry 6:30-8pm New Youth Project 7:00 Book study class
15 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Sunday School 10-45 Worship Christian Universalist Celebration 2008 4:00-5:30 Christians and Racial Justice	16 6:00pm Meditation	17	18 6:00 Choir Rehearsal 6:00 Beginning Spanish 7:00 Advanced Spanish 7:00 Worship Service	19 7:30pm HIV Support Group	20 4:00-6:00 Food Pantry 6:30-8pm New Youth Project 7:00 Book study class	21 Pride Festival
22 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Sunday School 10-45 Worship 4:00-5:30 Christians and Racial Justice 5:30 See Reem Social Therapy Sisters Concert	23 6:00pm Meditation 7:00pm Leadership Council	24	25 6:00 Choir Rehearsal 6:00 Beginning Spanish 7:00 Advanced Spanish 7:00 Worship Service	26	27 4:00-6:00 Food Pantry 6:30-8pm New Youth Project 7:00 Book study class	28
29 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Sunday School 10-45 Worship 4:00-5:30 Christians and Racial Justice	30 6:00pm Meditation				CHILD CARE AVAILABLE ON WEDNESDAYS STARTING AT 6:45PM	

**Christian Universalist  
Celebration 2008**

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## From the Easter Season through Pentecost and to the Great Green Growing Sundays of Summer

Downstairs each Sunday, children ages 4-13, assemble to hear and play the great stories of the Bible. This program, called Godly Play, is a hands-on, interactive style of children's worship that incorporates the best parts of spiritual education, worship, and communion with others. With the help of many donors and the support of the church leadership, the program has been in place for the children of Church of the Open Arms since October, 2007 and will complete its first year at the end of summer.

From the time of my last article, the children experienced the stories that follow Easter Sunday. We learned that there are 8 different crosses and are learning to choose the one that speaks to us at different times of our lives. Sometimes a cross is not just a cross! We learned about Jesus' 12 disciples and the shields that represent each of their Christian journeys. Did you know that after Judas was no longer part of the 12, the remaining 11 chose *Matthias* to be the 12<sup>th</sup>? I wonder what Judas' shield looked like? We were introduced to Parables and how they are sometimes hard to get inside. Like the Parable of the Good Shepherd. We worked with this parable and began an understanding of how the Good Shepherd is unlike the Ordinary Shepherd – *"I know each one of them by name and they know the sound of my voice."* *"When I lead them from the sheepfold, they follow."* *"I help them when they are in the dark and scary places."* We connected this parable of the Good Shepherd with the story of World Communion and began to wonder if there is a place we have experienced that is like the place where *"people come from many lands to share bread and wine and hear the words of God."* On Pentecost Sunday, we finally got to hear why Pentecost Sunday is the "hot" Sunday on the church year calendar (marked with red paint). *"The holy spirit filled the disciples with its power and they felt as though they were on fire. Their tongues burned in their mouths."* *"It no longer mattered that people spoke different languages."* *"They went to many lands and told the story of what had happened..."* What an amazing series of stories about the path of these followers of Jesus and how their story is our story too.

We are heading into the Green Growing Sundays now as we end our school year and enter into summertime. Our summer schedule begins on June 22<sup>nd</sup>. Godly Play will be held on the Sundays listed below. When there is no Godly Play, child care will be provided downstairs by Miss Elsa and Miss Jenia. Miss Jenia has just recently joined our staff and we are very happy to have her. She is learning English very well and we are pleased that our children will have the opportunity to help her learn as well as to learn Spanish from her. Miss Jennifer will be taking a leave of absence after 10 years of child care at Church of the Open Arms. We are very happy and grateful to have had Miss Jennifer on staff as a reliable, dedicated, and loving care giver for our children. We wish her a restful, restorative time away.

### Children's Program Summer Schedule

June 22	Child Care only	August 3	Godly Play: The Parable of the Mustard Seed
June 29	Child Care only	August 10	Godly Play: The Story of Job
July 6	Godly Play: Parable of the Good Samaritan	August 17	Child Care only
July 13	Godly Play: Parable of the Deep Well	August 24	Child Care only
July 20	Child Care only	August 31	Child Care only
July 27	Child Care only	September 7	Godly Play: Opening Celebration

Please contact Maria Rubino-Watkins or Robert Watkins at 528-2199 if you have any questions about Godly Play.

### Did YOU Know...? Fun Facts about the Children's Program – Donations Welcome

- *Did you know* that the children "feast" on Matzo crackers each Sunday? We do this as a reminder of the story of Exodus. Moses' people did not have time to let their bread rise before their escape from the Pharaoh of Egypt. We would be grateful for **5 packages of Matzo crackers** available in the Jewish section of some grocery stores.
- *Did you know* that we were recently given a new vacuum cleaner for downstairs? **Thank you Mike D'Armond!**
- *Did you know* that the children's nursery is in need of a new coat of **paint, a changing table, crib, comfortable rocking chair, and an armoire for storage of diapers, wipes, and blankets?** We would be grateful for any of these items.
- *Did you know* that a donation was made last month of cookies, juice, and bars for downstairs? **Thank you to all** who donated these items.
- *Did you know* that the children have an opportunity to respond to the Bible Story with play? They use materials such as **clay, paints, pipe cleaners, and beads** as part of their worship experience. They also play music using instruments that they play themselves or pre-recorded music on a CD or tape. We would be grateful for more art supplies, a **recorder (which is kind of like a flute), and CD's with spiritual/gospel music** on them.
- *Did you know* that each Sunday as we depart from the Godly Play sanctuary, the story teller blesses each child with a Shalom? This is a way of saying, "May God Be With You." When the child responds, "Shalom", it is a way of saying, "And Also With You."

**"Shalom"** from Maria and Robert Watkins

# **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](http://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*

Church of the Open Arms, UCC  
3131 N. Pennsylvania Ave.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73112  
405-525-9555  
[openarmsok@aol.com](mailto:openarmsok@aol.com)

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