



Prairie Lane Press

May 2010

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Volunteers

This week, the Gems and Cadets had their last meeting. Sunday School is wrapping up, and Spotlight will end later on this Sunday. Many of our small group Bible studies will be calling it a year soon too. The year-end of some of church programs always seems to sneak up on us quickly. But, having a bit of a break and a change of pace seems to be good for everyone: teachers and students. This time of the year, Ecclesiastes 3 comes to my mind: *"There is a time for everything and a season for every activity."* We have many volunteers who work very hard, and it is good to take a refreshing break before coming back with more energy again the next year.

This year, May 16 is "Volunteer Appreciation Sunday". Included in this is saying thanks to those who served their terms on council for 3 years, and installing their replacements. But, even recognizing volunteers on a Sunday morning is very inadequate. We do so many things, especially for a church of our size (that only has one full time person on staff)! We need many volunteers, and I hope the people of our church feel like they are needed. We try to get our volunteers in places where they are gifted and interested, but we don't always find a perfect match. Plus, there are some things that do get filled up—we don't need 5 jr. high Sunday School teachers or 12 worship planners for example—but things do ebb and flow and opportunities develop. There is always a need for nursery helpers or refreshments servers, and we'll take as many praise team singers and instrumentalists as we can!

But, I also hope that as you fill out your volunteer surveys and as you think about what you can do and where you can fit, you don't just think about existing programs. We also need people with new ideas to start new ministries. We want the people of the church to feel empowered to come up with ideas and make things happen. There is so much more that we could be doing, but we just haven't thought of it yet. Ministry starts with you.

There are many things we are not doing, that we could be doing, if we had the leaders and volunteers interested enough to make it happen. Ideas have been tossed around, and we'll be looking at more ideas, including the survey results, at our meeting this week. Some examples include: ESL classes, a Sportsmen's Club, summer Sunday School, a Prairie Lane band, more children's choir, etc. We'd also like to get another Back Yard Bible Club. It's great to have ideas, and sometimes the church leadership can help facilitate those ideas, but what we really need is people willing to put in the hard work to make good ideas happen. (In another article in this newsletter, you will see a couple ideas for next year that people in the church have met about and talked about, but they won't go anywhere unless we find the right people willing to step up and fill some spots).

This year we are having a Vacation Bible School again because of a handful of dedicated people who wanted to make sure it happened. And, speaking of which, don't forget, there is another good opportunity to volunteer and help out—yes, even in the summer.

(continued next page)

Volunteers continued . . .

And, even as summer is coming and programs wind down, we know that we never really take a break from ministry. A free Wednesday night now might mean spending some extra time talking with the neighbors, or even ministry to our own families through intentional time spent with them. And, there is a lot more to ministry than church activities and programs. As Brain Sivinski liked to tell us in his outreach training, "ministry happens AS we are going." Any of our interests and activities and even our leisure can open up doors to make connections and share the gospel in word and deed. You might run a great ministry in your own kitchen that hardly anyone even knows about! That is great!

But, if you need some extra help and a place to develop ideas, perhaps some start up funds or whatever, also know that Prairie Lane Church can help you find and develop your ideas and gifts for ministry. We want your ideas, but even more than that, we want to help you make your ideas happen.

Possible Revamping of Wednesday Nights

Our plan is to have a special focus on outreach in our next ministry year of 2010-2011. Based on some good feedback, we realized we didn't need a lot more outreach training as much as we need outreach opportunities to put what we know into practice.

One ministry opportunity we already have but aren't taking full advantage of is our Gems and Cadets ministry. Currently, our church just doesn't have many kids in that age group, but that negative can turn into a positive because it forces us to try harder to bring new friends in and new people from the neighborhood. However, with a program that meets a couple Wednesdays a month, sometimes it gets confusing of when the meetings are, and it can be hard to develop consistency and momentum. We also don't really know some of the parents of the kids who come, which is not ideal for several reasons.

So, one thought we had was to start our Wednesday nights at 6pm and to have a free supper for the Gems, Cadets, their parents, and anyone else we can get to come. This could be followed by a variety of fun activities for the parents while their kids attend at Gems or Cadets. To make this happen, what we really need is someone who is interested in food to help organize the meals.

Sometimes, this would mean helping prepare food, but it would also be sometimes buying some meals, and sometimes delegating to other more occasional helpers. If you are interested in that, let us know soon because we could also get some grant money from the CRC to help pay for meals, if we have a person or a few people willing to head this up.

And/or another thought was to have something going on every Wednesday night to help build that consistency and to end confusion about what nights are church nights. We want to move JAMs from every other Wednesday to two Sunday nights a month instead, and then on the nights that there is not Cadets or Gems have other kinds of activities for the same age group. One good suggestion is to have a kid's choir and drama club. Our Christmas play practices could get moved to Wednesday nights, but we'd also need more ideas for early fall and for after Christmas. Once again, if we can find the willing leaders, we can make such an idea happen. **Let me know soon if you want to be involved in re-vamping our Wednesday nights at Prairie Lane!**



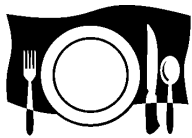


PLC 50th Anniversary

Do you know that the first church service of Prairie Lane Church took place on February 19, 1961 in the church parsonage basement? That means that **2011 is the 50th anniversary** of the start of our church, and we are looking to celebrate!

In April, the 50th anniversary planning committee met for the first time. For now, we just wanted to start to get some ideas rolling. BUT, we also wanted to try to pick a date for the main weekend celebration and let people know, so that for those who are planning on a big spring break trip next year, you can have these dates in mind and avoid missing this milestone at Prairie Lane. So, for right now, the committee has penciled in **Saturday April 9, 2011** for the main banquet and **Sunday April 10** for the official 50th Anniversary worship service.

Probably, some of the 50th anniversary events will start closer to February 19 when the official anniversary date is. We will have a few extra fun events (like perhaps a dress in the 60's fellowship dinner, a 1960's movie night), a special sermon series, a hymn sing, and so forth, plus we want to think of ways to involve our neighborhood—like a local historian talking about the history of this neighborhood and the history of development in Omaha. We will also use this as an opportunity to update our church picture directory, and raise funds for a special project (perhaps new exterior church signs). If you have an idea that you think should definitely be included for our 50th, let some one on the committee know (Donna, Jeanette, Marla, Ken, Mitch, Bob and Pastor Dan). But, in the meantime, mark your calendars for April 9-10 next year!



A New Church Fellowship Opportunity for Next Year

Fellowship Dining will be starting in September. Random computer generated groups of 5-7 people will be assigned to get together for fellowship/dining every 2 months. Then a new group will be selected. The group can decide if they want to get together for dessert, picnics, restaurants, progressive dinners, dinner at someone's house, potlucks, or other ideas. The hope for these new groups is to get people interacting with those they may not normally meet with to get to know each other better. Plus, it'll be fun!

Whoever is interested in being a "host" can specify that when they sign-up. We would hope for around 10 hosts. The host doesn't necessarily need to have an event in their home, but helps organize the date and location. Sign-up will begin soon so that groups can be arranged. Contact Adriene if you have questions.

Patrick Durkee's Chaplain Ministry

In the fall of 2009, Patrick Durkee passed an examination in our Classis Heartland to be ordained in the Christian Reformed Church as a chaplain in the Air Force Reserves. Pat had already been serving as a chaplain, but his other ordination was soon to expire, and he wanted to continue his chaplaincy work with the CRC. On October 18, 2009 we ordained Pat at a worship service to serve in this capacity. As his calling church, our council had the responsibility to supervise Pat and help him develop in his gifts for ministry, a responsibility that we took seriously.

However, Pat made it pretty clear all along that where he really felt called to serve was at a church in full time ministry. When some of those doors of opportunity closed in the CRC for Pat, he began having conversations with another denomination—the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. He found out from them, that if he passed their exam, they would be willing to ordain him as a minister of the Word, eligible to receive a call to serve a church. Pat took advantage of this opportunity, passed his exam, and was ordained in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Now they are responsible for his supervision as chaplain.

Therefore, Pat has resigned from his ministry associate role in the Christian Reformed Church. Soon after, he with his family decided to attend church elsewhere. **We wish Pat, and Brenda, Elle, and Gunnar, all the best as he awaits a call to serve a church in the OPC.**

Second Offerings

*Rather than just collect second offerings for anyone who asks, the deacons, along with the prayer team have developed a list of **core ministries** that we support. Below is our current list:*

PLC Core Causes 2010

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- GLOBAL CAUSES**
- VanEe – CRC World Missions (Mexico)
 - Michelle Maly (Ukraine)
 - Rachel & Bobby Kolb (Uganda)
 - Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC)
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- CRC HOME MISSIONS**
- Oasis – David Best
 - Northern Lighthouse / NE City - Sam Keyzer
 - New City – Ryan Pelton
 - Pathway –Kevin Schutte
 - Friendship – Verlyn Schaap
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- LOCAL OMAHA MINISTRIES**
- AAA Center Pregnancy Counseling
 - Mission for All Nations
 - Hope Center
 - Open Door Mission
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- CRC NATIONAL YOUTH**
- Gems National (one yearly offering)
 - Cadets National (one yearly offering)
 - Youth Unlimited (one yearly offering)
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- PLC CAUSES**
- Benevolence
 - Mustard Seed Preschool
 - PLC Building Improvement Fund
 - VBS
 - Youth Mission Trip (one yearly offering)

In addition to these second offerings, we also give \$20,000 a year out of general budget to ministry shares. Our ministry shares help support other ministries of our denomination. These causes outside of our ministry at Prairie Lane are part of our core value of developing a “Kingdom Mentality”, and this is an area we hope to keep improving in.

Church Plant Updates:

Nebraska City: Rev. Sam Keyzer continues his work in starting a new church plant in Nebraska City. He has teamed up with other local leaders already in place and they have a Saturday evening worship service already. Sam is asking for prayer intercessors. If you would like to join his prayer team, e-mail him at samkeyzer@yahoo.com.

New City Church in Kansas City: Ryan Pelton has made good progress in less than a year of work. Thanks to a generous gift from a donor, they recently have purchased a vacant church to begin meeting in.

Oasis: Through mutual agreement of himself and Northern Lighthouse, David Best has decided to resign from his position at Oasis in Waverly. They are currently trying to decide whether to continue the ministry with someone else, or close down.