

Circle of Friends women's ministry has a full year of events planned, beginning with a time of praise this Sunday, Nov. 17 from 2-4 p.m. at SunSet View, 700 block of South Bowman Avenue in Holyoke.

"Stand Firm when Life Changes," the theme for this year, really resonated with the Circle of Friends coordinating team of Sheryl Farnsworth, Julie Wiebke, Beverly Atkins, Nancy Kennedy and Beth Penfold.

The group got inspiration for the theme when they heard a song shared on Facebook, with 8-year-old Luke Sprague singing he would "stand strong" after losing part of his leg in a farming accident earlier this year. "Stand Firm" also came from a Bible school song a couple years ago.

The vision of Circle of Friends is to bring together women to grow together in their relationships with Jesus and with each other. It is an interdenominational ministry for women of all ages in Holyoke and surrounding towns.

Circle of Friends has held a big once-a-year conference for 10 years, but this year they felt like women needed more times to come together and be encouraged.

The Sunday, Nov. 17 time of praise is a perfect time for women to gather and get refreshed in the Lord and their relationships before all of the tension and expectations of the holidays bombard them.

Susan Baker and Kennedy will be leading praise and worship, with a focus on some of the attributes of God.

A special guest will be musician and songwriter Gayle Howell of Sterling. He is a Holyoke High School grad from the early 1970s.

As always, there will be refreshments and time to fellowship with the group of women.

Coordinators said it's important for them to provide events free of charge, as God has always provided for the needs of Circle of Friends.

November's time of praise is the first of five events in the "Stand Firm when Life Changes" year. Women are encouraged to mark their calendars for these exciting events!

The Circle of Friends main event is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 22, 2014, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at Phillips County Event Center in Holyoke. Its focus will be on "Developing a Firm Foundation."

Two more evenings are set for Wednesday, June 18, 2014, from 7-9 p.m. at SunSet View for the topic "Walking Through Loss" and Sunday, Sept. 28, 2014, from 6-8 p.m. at SunSet View for the topic "Family Dynamics."

Another time of praise will wrap up the year next November on Sunday, Nov. 16, 2014 from 2-4 p.m.

If any women would like to help with Circle of Friends by decorating, greeting, setting up events or praying, they should contact Farnsworth at 970-854-5123.