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PRAIRIE FIRE

... As the prairie stretches out until it becomes one with the sky, let us reach out to touch and be one with the natural world and with one another.
From our Bond of Union.
The Prairie Fire is the newsletter of Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society and is published semi-monthly.
An e-mail version is available at <http://www.execpc.com/~prairieu>

December 3, 2000

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PRAIRIE CALENDAR

Sunday, December 10

9:00am

Choir Rehearsal

10:00am

J. S. Bach – 250th anniversary celebration (a musical biography) presented by Warren Hagstrom and talented members.

11:45am

Computer Policies Meeting – open to all, led by Rick Ruecking.

Tuesday, December 12

7:00pm

Board Meeting. Open to all interested members.

Sunday, December 17

9:00am

Choir Rehearsal

9:30am

“Nifty Gifty” (downstairs).

10:00am

“Healthy Congregations In Conflict”. Second in the lay series, presented by Nancy Schraufnagel, Larry Nahlik, Bob Reuschlein and Marilyn Ruecking.

11:45am

Prairie Women’s Group meets downstairs. Bring a snack to pass and enjoy the company of other women. Specific topics for discussion are always welcome.

Tuesday, December 19

7:00pm

Spanish Speakers Potluck (See RSVP for details)

Sunday, December 24

9:00am

Choir Rehearsal

10:00am

Symbol Tree Celebration.

Intergenerational, led by Erin Bosch, with snacks and sweets after the service. You’re invited to bring a symbol and a snack.

Sunday, December 31

9:00am

Choir Rehearsal

10:00am

Jubilee Day. Presented by Rick Ruecking.

Saturday, January 6

4:00pm

Theater Party (see RSVP for details)

Sunday, January 7

10:00am

“Skepticism – An Introduction” First in a lay ministry led by Susan Hagstrom.

**Next Prairie Fire deadline is
Sunday, December 17, 2000**

available to the compassion and wisdom that lies deep within us all.

She described the watching meditation, which can help us understand and train our minds; and took us on a beautiful guided meditation, with questions that gently considered how our thoughts might affect our feelings.

Thank you Lisa for a great program!

Christmas Letters

If you usually write a Christmas newsletter to send to family and friends, we would be pleased if you would like to send or bring a copy to Prairie to put in the folder on the back table. Sharing these letters can be a great way for us to get to know each other better.

Book Worms Wanted: Join the Prairie Book Club

If you missed the first chance to join the Prairie Book Club, never fear, a second chance is coming up. Sue to our snowbirds, we have some opening for new members. Contact Mary Mullen at 238-7904 or Barb Park at 273-8775 and leave your name, address and e-mail address if you have one. See the next article for upcoming selections and dates. All books are out in paperback.

Upcoming Prairie Book Club Selections

Enthusiasm for the Prairie Book Club is running high and at our last meeting we chose books and meeting dates through April. Remember that we meet at Prairie after the service and bring our own lunches to eat. See the above article for information on how to join the club as we do have space for more members.

- Dec 10 – Clear Your Clutter with Feng Shui by Karen Kingston
- Jan 14 - Ellen Foster by Kaye Gibbons
- Feb 11- Wild Swan, Three Daughters of China by Jung Chang
- Mar 11- The Rise of Life on Earth by Joyce Carol Oates
- Apr 8- The Cider House Rules by John Irving

Reaching Out to Visitors

We have had quite a few visitors coming to Prairie this fall. Although it would be nice, it has not been possible for me to talk to all the visitors who come on a Sunday morning. So I am very grateful to those people who I have seen making an effort to converse with visitors. While I am conducting Prairie business with those who want to talk to me, I "am" surreptitiously looking around at the visitors to see if someone is talking to them. I would like to thank the following people who I have noticed talking to visitors recently: Rick Owens, Linda Sheehy, Aileen Nettleton, Barbara Rames, Rick Ruecking, Mary Mullen, Paula Pachciarz. I'm sure I have missed some people, and I hope they will not feel slighted. But I wanted to give some public positive reinforcement to the people I have seen, and I didn't want to refrain from doing that because I would not be aware of "everyone" who has made an effort in this regard. If you've been talking to visitors, and you're not on this list, please give yourself a pat on the back from me. I have been telephoning all the visitors this fall and they have told me that Prairie seems welcoming. Sometimes it's not the right fit for them, but they still think it's a nice place. So we're doing okay. I know it can be a sacrifice to talk to visitors when you really might prefer talking to your good Prairie friends, but that effort is appreciated.

~ Erin Bosch

Let Your Light Shine Lawn Signs

Prairie has posted two "Let Your Light Shine" lawn signs. This is an annual tradition of the Madison Urban Ministry to oppose hate crimes and promote a call for renewal in our communities. The signs will be displayed from now until the Martin Luther King holiday.

Kudos

Thanks to Al Nettleton for the new faucets in all the bathrooms at Prairie. We all appreciate their ease of operation and his efforts toward this project and many others. Next up – new carpets!

Book Donations

Many thanks to Karen Kiener for donating a collection of books that have been divided among

DETAILS OF UPCOMING EVENTS

December 10

The Life and Music of J.S. Bach

We'll mark the 250th anniversary of Johann Sebastian Bach's death by celebrating his life and music. Prairie members of all ages will perform on various instruments. The choir and congregation will sing. Bach lives!

December 10

Ad Hoc Computer Policies Meeting

On Sunday, December 10, after church, we will hold an ad hoc discussion regarding the directions the society should follow regarding computer use and electronic communications. E-mail is rapidly approaching the same ubiquity as the telephone. What issues are important to you? What policies should the Society develop? This meeting is a general opportunity to develop a consensus of how our organization should proceed. Please make plans to stay after church.

December 17

Healthy Congregations in Conflict

Marilyn Ruecking, Nancy Schraufnagel, Bob Reuschlein, and Larry Nahlik attended a Central Midwest District workshop entitled "Planning for Conflict in UU Congregations" last March. They will recap what they learned and set the stage for future presentations.

Nifty Gifty

Nifty Gifty, Prairie's annual alternative gift-making holiday celebration is Sunday, Dec. 17 at 9:30 (note the early start time).

A sign-up sheet will circulate this Sunday asking for volunteers for individual projects, gift wrapping and treats. You may also call Randy, 238-1856, or Robin, 286-9165 to volunteer your time and be part of the fun.

Symbol Tree Service - December 24.

This is Prairie's traditional holiday service. In addition to the Symbol Tree ceremony, there will be a candlelight "Santa Lucia" children's procession. (Young people should assemble downstairs that morning.) We would like to keep the lights dim for the entire service, so those who have difficulty hearing and who benefit from reading lips, should

plan to sit in the front row. We will be using candles to read the hymns also, but if you need more light and would like to bring a small flashlight, that would be fine. For the Symbol Tree ceremony, you are invited to bring an item to hang on the evergreen tree that is a symbol of something that has happened in your life the past year. You can either tell us about that event, or you can choose to read a short poem or other chosen words.

OUR SOCIETY

Thanksgiving Intergenerational

On November 26, Larry Nahlik introduced a panel consisting of Metje Butler, George Calden, Rosemarie Lester and Rachel Siegfried. This distinguished group was then asked to respond to questions from Prairie's youngest members and teens. The result was a fascinating collection of stories and memories from the rich and varied lives of the panelists. One of the questions posed was what life event affected each of our elders most. Rosemarie and George were affected most by World War II, Rosemarie because she lived in Germany and had to deal with daily survival, fear, and loss, and George because the GI bill made it possible for him to go to college. For Rachel, the Depression had the greatest impact. Metje was influenced by her father's and sister's interest in art and is an artist today. If you were unable to attend, take heart. There were many requests afterward to make this an annual Thanksgiving Intergenerational tradition, and so it may well become. Thank you, Larry, for the concept and for making it happen!

Enlightenment – Don't Know What It Means?

Lisa Glueck enlightened us with the second in her series with Larry Nahlik on Eastern Religions. She told us of Buddha's teachings, and how we all experience our moments of being "awake", full of compassion and connection to all other living beings.

Steps we can take to "awaken" include: - understanding and confronting our suffering, and knowing we all suffer; anticipating the eventual loss of our possessions and our bodies; letting go of these by emptying our minds, freeing them to be

the Ceremonies committee, RE committee and Caring committee. These books are valuable resources and are greatly appreciated.

Religious Education News In A Nutshell

9-12

We've been working hard planning service projects. Our first one should bear fruit by mid-December. We participated in the intergenerational service on November 26th and gained wisdom from long time Prairie members.

6-8

We had a long discussion about this comment from the New York Times:- "Everyday I leave my house... to walk out into a varying weather of racial divisiveness, wherein the texture of one's hair, the color of one's skin, and one's facial features are assumed to be indices of .. culture, politics, and morality."

3-5

We tackled Creative Conflict Resolution. We acted out various conflict situations so we could figure out ways to resolve them poitively.

K-2

Our theme was "making friends with people different from us". We explored this by reading the story "My Friend The Monster".

A Note from Rachel Long

Tapes of the Prairie Retreat Talent Show for both 2000 and 1999 are available. You may sign them out at the back table in the main meeting room. Enjoy!

Hospitality

The Society has a few activities for which we need help during the Sunday service. Please come prepared to pitch-in and get these jobs done:

December 10	
Coffee set-up	Judy Skog
Greeting	Orange Schroeder
Program taping	Pat Cautley
Kitchen and cleanup	Kathy Converse, ?
Snow Shovelng	?
December 17	
Coffee set-up	?
Greeting	Ann Urbanski
Program taping	?
Kitchen and cleanup	Aileen Nettleton, ?
Snow Shovelng	?

First Call For Help

The Caring Committee has been established to help Prairie members in need. The types of support offered are writing notes, rides, telephoning, preparing food, home visits, child care, support for people dealing with life crises (e.g., grieving), tape delivery, and as a community resource list. The primary contact person has a list of volunteers with specific support roles. The current primary contact is Rosemarie Lester 255-7039.

Holiday Blood Drive

Saturday, December 23

7am .2 pm

Alliant Energy Center

(formerly Dane County Expo Center)

Free Parking • Child care • Santa

For an appointment, call 227-1357
or 1-800 GIVE LIFE

RSVP/You're Invited – The Social Events Calendar

December 19: 7:00pm

Spanish Speakers Potluck

You're invited to join the Spanish Speakers at the home of Rosemary Dorney, 4205 Odana Rd, 238-4382, on Tuesday, December 19, at 7pm. Bring a dish to share if you can. All are welcome. If you have any questions or need a ride, call Rosemary.

Prairie Playreader's Plan for the Strollers

Theater in January

You're invited to join the Playreaders at the theater. production of "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead" by Tom Stoppard. This Tony Award Winner tells the tale of Hamlet through the eyes of the bewildered Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Very funny, brilliant and witty.

The date planned is Saturday, January 6th at 4pm. Call the Bartell (formerly the Esquire) for reservations 238-8183. If you prefer, you can call Susan Hagstrom, 267- 4797 days, (by December 28) and she'll add your name to the reservation list.

After the play, those who are interested can go out to dinner. Call Pat Watkins, 233-5795, by December 31st if this appeals to you. The Chinese Buffet at Hilldale is a possible choice.