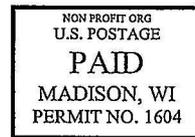




Barbara & Bob Park
5610 HAMMERSLEY RD
MADISON WI 53711-3408



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.
The two most recent issues may be seen on Prairie's Web site at <http://www.prairie.madison.uua.org>

January 24, 2003

President: Ken Skog; (608) 273-4813 Editor: Wendy Williams; webet@chorus.net; (608) 249-7790

PRAIRIE CALENDAR

Sunday, January 26
9:00 a.m. Choir
10:00 a.m. From Doleta's Lay Ministry, "A Posse of Giddy Girls" Wyoming Territory's 1869 battle for women's suffrage.

Monday, January 27
6:30 p.m. Spanish Speakers Potluck.

Tuesday, January 28
Prairie provides breakfast for Men's Drop-In Shelter.

Sunday, February 2
9:00 a.m. Choir
10:00 a.m. Bruce Miller on Peace efforts in Colombia.

Sunday, February 9
9:00 a.m. Choir
10:00 a.m. Amy Owen presents a program on "Forgiveness."
11:30 a.m. Book Club "Empire Falls"

February 9-16
Madison Interfaith Hospitality Week

Sunday, February 23

11:45 Annual Prairie Service Auction immediately after the service. Lunch will be available for purchase at a reasonable cost. Childcare will be provided. See additional information in the Our Society section.

Next Prairie Fire deadline is Sunday, February 2, 2003

DETAILS OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, January 26
"A Posse of Giddy Girls" brings to life heroes and villains in Wyoming Territory's 1869 battle for women's suffrage. Territory Governor John Campbell, South Pass City Justice of the Peace Esther Morris, two candidates for the first territorial legislature and a gutsy journalist set the stage for the U.S. Constitution's nineteenth amendment. They provide models of courage for today's struggle against infringement of our Constitutional rights.

Sunday, February 2
In December, an issue of the Madison Times, featured a front page story on Bruce Miller and his Christian Peacemaker Team work in Columbia. He has been there nine times and will present details of the work he and his team have done.

Sunday, February 9

Amy Owen, a member of James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation, who spoke to us last year on the conference in South Africa, will do a program on Forgiveness, which is the subject of her dissertation.

OUR SOCIETY

SERVICE AUCTION DONATIONS

The Annual Prairie Service Auction is coming up on February 23. The Service Auction is a great way to connect with Prairie members in a different way and contribute to Prairie at the same time.

Start thinking about a service **you** can offer. In past years the services have included home baked pies and breads; guided nature and photography walks; meals served for 6-8 people; special help with computers, taxes or preparation of a will; child care opportunities; weekends at a farm or camp; art work such as stained glass, pottery, or stationary; and help with tasks such as washing windows and cars.

Consider the talents, abilities, or interests you have that others might appreciate. Call or email Kathryn Converse (238-2856 or conversekrtm@msn.com) or Aileen Nettleton (238-6053 or aanett@execpc.com) with your services. You may also let them know if there is a service that you need. They may be able to find someone who can offer that service!

Mark your calendars and bring you checkbooks for this very enjoyable fundraiser. Orange Schroeder is the auctioneer for this major fundraiser of the year. The auction will begin immediately after the Sunday service and will last from 11:45 to 2:00. A lunch will be provided at a reasonable price and child care will be provided. You can call or email Kathy Converse if you would like to help with the lunch or child care (238-2856 or conversekrtm@msn.com).

Spanish Speakers Potluck

On January 27, 2003, at 6:30 p.m., there will be a Spanish Speakers Potluck at the home of Prudence Barber, 1050 Jenifer Street. You may contact Rosemary Dorney at 238-4382 for more details or

Prudence Barber for information or directions at 251-0852.

Step Right Up to Chair a Prairie Committee . . .

The Committee on Committees is now meeting to find committee chairpersons for this spring. Committee chairpersons also serve on Prairie's Board. If you are interested in chairing a committee, or if you would like to nominate someone else for the chair of a committee, please contact one of the following: Brian Kuzdas (273-4813), Bob Lawrence (845-8065), Aileen Nettleton (238-6053), Paula Pachciarz (273-4806), or Linda Sheehy (273-3895).

. . . or to Offer Ideas for a Lay Ministry

The committee on committees also would like to hear from people who have ideas for Sunday morning services or who would like to develop an idea into a lay ministry. A lay minister organizes several (4 to 8) services that are presented over a period of several months. If you would like to discuss being a lay minister or ideas for the theme of a lay ministry, please contact one of the committee members listed above.

Book Group

In the last issue of the Prairie Fire, the list of books for the coming months was provided. Unfortunately, the author for the April selection was incorrect. It is A LIFE OF HER OWN by Emilie Carles (not Carr).

WOW

On Monday, February 3, at 7 p.m. at Prairie Metje Butler shows the women's group booklets given to her about Hiroshima and Nagasaki by people in Japan. We may write letters against using nuclear weapons. We may eat out before hand. Call Mary Mullen at 298-0843 a few days before to find out if we will be sharing a meal and the time and place we will do so.

Sunday, February 16, after Prairie morning service we will meet at Prairie. Bring finger food to share. This is the regular meeting where we check in with each other - a good way to get to know each other.

Report from the Peace Rally in Washington, DC

Submitted by Judy Skog

We have returned tired, but happy from our trip to Washington, D.C. to stop a war. Our group included Erica, Kate, and Judy Skog, Brian Kuzdas, Brian Glueck, Emily Gilles (friend of Kate's), Dan Proud, Gabby & Terecita Reed (Kate's friend and her mom), Ariel Franklin-Hudson (also Kate's friend), and Reannon Peterson (MUUYACM). Through your generosity, Prairie provided scholarships for 4 people to attend the rally (people who **would not** have gone otherwise).

We had a great, although cold, time. The creativity of all the signs we saw at the rally was amazing. I wish I could remember more. One said "Middle-class suburban homeowner for peace". Another said "Soccer mom for peace".

We saw lots of Unitarian Universalists. They identified themselves to us because we had the Prairie banner. It is hard to know how many people REALLY attended the rally in Washington, but I have seen 500,000 mentioned in the newspaper. We really could not tell from where we were standing. All we saw were lots and lots of people.

We listened to speakers for two hours & then got to march (which is very good, considering how cold some of our toes were). I think the group we ended followed went in the wrong direction to what the organizers intended, but that is OK.

We chanted a lot, made a lot of noise, and marched peacefully down the street past the Capitol, many government buildings, and a few police. The whole point is to put the energy out to the Universe for peace, not war, and we did that, even though we did not end up at the Navy Yard like the organizers had planned.

We had a very late lunch at the food court at Union Station and then we had extra time before the bus returned to Madison. We took a taxi to the Lincoln Memorial (the Smithsonian museums were closed) and walked to the Korean and Vietnam War memorials on our way to the pick-up point. An orange full moon was just rising to the left of the Capitol. We had an awesome view of it from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

Through your generosity, there is a group of young people who know that they can take direct personal action to solve a problem, even one as big as war.

UUA News

A statement from President William G. Sinkford

Friends,

I understand that there has been considerable discussion and distress over what was published in a newspaper article recently.

I am writing to share with you what happened, to address your concerns, and to assure you that I share many of the concerns you have expressed.

Here is what happened. This past Sunday (1/12) I preached a sermon entitled "The Language of Faith" at First Jefferson UU Church in Ft. Worth, Texas. I also addressed this issue in the column I wrote for the upcoming March-April issue of UU World; this article has been posted on our website at <http://www.uua.org/president/030115.html> and I encourage you to read it.

Following the service, I did an interview with a reporter from the local newspaper, an interview which covered a number of issues including the points about religious language I made in my sermon and magazine column. The reporter published a story that reported things I did not say, and drew conclusions that I did not reach. In particular, the reporter's first sentence read, "A former atheist who is now president of the Unitarian Universalist Association will push to put the word 'God' into a new statement of principles."

Let me be very clear: I spoke of the need to periodically revisit—that is, to read and reflect upon—our foundational language. I did not call for the Principles to be rewritten. I spoke of the need for individuals to consider supplementing the language of the Principles with religious language in describing their own faith. I did not call for the inclusion of the word "God" in either the Principles or in anyone's individual descriptions of their

personal faith.

I understand the alarm and genuine distress that many of you felt on reading the news story and accounts of it. I would be similarly alarmed if any UUA president presumed to do what the story suggested I had done.

You need to know that I did not in fact make the statements reported in the Ft. Worth paper. Here is the text of what I said in my sermon at the Ft. Worth church about God language and the Christian tradition:

But "religious language" doesn't have to mean "God talk." And I'm not suggesting that Unitarian Universalism return to traditional Christian language. But I do feel that we need some language that would allow us to capture the possibility of reverence, to name the holy, to talk about human agency in theological terms-the ability of humans to shape and frame our world guided by what we find to be of ultimate importance.

I have learned from these events that I need to exercise greater care in addressing the broader world, including reporters, about Unitarian Universalist language and beliefs. I mistakenly assumed that the reporter would understand my remarks with the same level of nuance and clarity that I had intended them. That did not happen, and on reflection I see that it was unlikely ever to happen. I should have better anticipated how someone not steeped in our tradition might easily draw the erroneous conclusions he drew.

That said, I still believe that it is time for us to have a conversation about our foundational language. Indeed, we have a bylaw requiring that the Board of Trustees review the Principles and Purposes every 15 years (see Article XIV, section C-14.1 of the UUA Bylaws, on the web at <http://www.uua.org/ga/bylaws.html#Section%20C-4.1>). My hope is that both the sermon and the World column will serve as a stimulus to get this conversation going.

I ask your help in moving past this misunderstanding, and I ask your further help in

redirecting our energy to where it can do the most productive good. If you speak with someone not on this e-mail list who is concerned about what they have heard, please forward this e-mail so that they can read what actually happened.

Unitarian Universalism today is strong and vibrant. We are increasingly claiming the Good News of our liberal faith. Let's use our energy to make Unitarian Universalism even stronger, and to share our Good News with a world that badly needs it. This incident has the potential to lead us into a rich discussion of who we are and how we describe ourselves. I welcome that discussion.

In faith,
William G. Sinkford

From the Office Administrator

Prairie Fire Submissions

Last issue I wrote that my schedule forced me to hold firm on the Sunday 7:00 p.m. deadline. While that is still true, I fear I may have frightened some of you off. The submissions were on the thin side for this issue. Please share what is happening in your committee or corner of Prairie. Your contributions are welcome.

New Phone Number

Please note that my phone number has changed following the close of my practice. Please call me at (608) 249-7790. That is my home and partner's business. So, if the phone is answered "Massage Works" do not be alarmed. You have the right number.

New Office Hours for Office Administrator

Tuesday and Friday: 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.

Shaarei Shamayim Calendar

2nd, 3rd & 4th Sat 9am-2pm. Upcoming Religious Services will be on February 9, 16 & 23rd.
Prairie Liaison: Bill Littman 829-1909