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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.*

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

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September 12, 2003

## PRAIRIE CALENDAR

### Saturday, September 13

Book Club meeting at the Fall Retreat. DEAD MAN WALKING by Sister Helen Prejean.

### Sunday, September 14

NO SERVICE AT PRAIRIE—Prairie UU Society Fall Retreat at Bethel Horizons Center.

### Saturday, September 20

3:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m. R.E. Volunteer Training at Prairie.  
For info: Anne Urbanski

### Sunday, September 21

10:00 a.m. "Emerson is 200," given by Nels Oas.

### Wednesday, September 24

6:30 p.m. Spanish Speakers Potluck, 4205 Odana.  
Info: Rosemary Dorney 238-4382. All welcome!

### Sunday, September 28

NO SERVICE AT PRAIRIE—12:30 Potluck and 2:00 Program at Rock County Unitarian (Janesville).

### Sunday, October 5

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal  
10:00 a.m. Lay Ministry Series: The Living Tradition I, by Al Nettleton.  
11:30 a.m. Membership Committee at Prairie.

## Next Prairie Fire deadline is Sunday, September 21, 2003

### DETAILS OF UPCOMING EVENTS

#### Friday–Sunday, September 12–14

We're all looking forward to our yearly retreat where we can relax among prairie grasses, enjoy hiking trails and views from cliffs, take part in scheduled programs, enjoy good food and reconnect with one another.

Friday evening: Come to the Prairie Center at the top of the hill, our home for the weekend.

7:00–8:00 Registration, Room Check-In, Finger Foods (bring to share), Mixer Games

Bring: Finger foods to share on Friday evening; linens, blankets, towels, pillow, soap; a camera, your copy of "Rise Up Singing" if you have one; board games; a flashlight, insect repellent, warm clothes and shoes for outdoors; and, of course, your TALENT SHOW instrument and music or skit and props, and dancing shoes for folk dancing. In case of rain, bring your "Top 3 Books of the Year" to share, along with rain gear.

To get to Bethel Horizons, take Highway 18 (Verona Road) west to Dodgeville. Turn right on Hwy 23 and go north, past Governor Dodge State Park until you

reach County Road ZZ. Turn right (east) on ZZ and in a mile follow signs leading to Bethel Horizons.

On arrival, check in with Rick Ruecking at the Prairie Center. He'll direct you to your accommodations, provide a map of the grounds, Bethel guidelines, etc. After unloading, you must park your vehicle in the parking lot at the top of the hill.

Mealtimes are at 8 a.m., 12 noon and 6 p.m. Please arrive promptly. Our Sunday fireside service will end around noon.

Rick is our on-site coordinator for the retreat. If you have questions about registration or the facilities, please check with him. He will be our liaison with the Bethel staff. Robin Carre is the program coordinator. We look forward to an enjoyable weekend together as a community.

### **Sunday, September 21**

Throughout this year, 2003, Ralph Waldo Emerson is a frequent topic in the news as the world celebrates his birthdate anniversary. Lecturers, essayists, conferences in both religious and secular circles are calling attention to his legacy. Among Unitarians he is recognized as the preeminent 19th century inspiration for poetry, sermons and theology. His appeal ranges from the poetry that romanticizes nature's gifts to his essays that inspired early American love of democracy and personal self-expression. The Emerson celebration at Prairie UU Society will be led by Dr. Nels Oas, a former Lutheran pastor and psychotherapist who is currently a consulting Unitarian-Universalist minister in Florida at Panama City.

### **Sunday, September 28**

"Reach out to touch and be with one another..." Prairie will hold a joint service in Janesville with members of the newly organized Rock County Unitarian Church, now numbering forty members.

Potluck begins at 12:30. Janesville will provide tableware and beverages. At 2:00 we will meet briefly and then break into get-acquainted discussion groups.

The starting time is a compromise between Prairie's mid-morning and Janesville's evening meetings.

The Janesville congregation is not in a position to provide RE classes or infant/toddler care. They are willing to hire a supervisor for post-toddler aged children if needed. Older children are welcome to join the adult discussion groups. Contact Doleta Chapru at 238-4970 or dchapru@aol.com if you need child supervision.

Meeting place: 23 West Milwaukee Street (the former Dubes Jewelry Building), second floor, Nineties Room. Park in the downtown parking plaza over the river. Enter the Dubes Building from the Alby corner of the parking plaza. (To find a map on the Web, search on the address plus the word "map." On a site for Janesville law firms, scroll until you find the address.) Detailed driving directions will be available later on Prairie News and in the next *Prairie Fire*. Folks without cars, notify Doleta if you cannot find a ride.

## **OUR SOCIETY**

### **MINISTERIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (MOD)**

A MOD Program visiting minister will not be available for Prairie for 2003-2004.

As you may recall, Prairie had applied in May to have a student from Meadville Lombard Seminary serve as a visiting minister for Prairie in 2003-2004. We recently received word from Angela Merkert of the Central Midwest District that the person they had identified will not be available.

The person graduated from Meadville Lombard and it was thought that they may be able to fit work with us into other activities, but the person found a full-time job and is not available. The other students serving as MOD student ministers in 2003-2004 are serving in congregations where a minister is on a short sabbatical. If Prairie members are interest in having a MOD minister in 2004-2005, the prospects look much better, as there are more students expected to be available than were available this year.

*Ken Skog*

**PRAIRIE BOOK CLUB ANNOUNCES FALL AND WINTER SELECTIONS**

SAT., SEPT. 13 —at Bethel Horizons retreat—**DEAD MAN WALKING** by Sister Helen Prejean. We are reading this book because of its theme of Criminal Justice and Prison Reform, the new UUA-adopted study issue. The book club welcomes your participation in the discussion at the Retreat even if you have only seen the movie.

The book is a "gripping story of two condemned men and the courageous nun who became their spiritual adviser. One day in 1982 the Prison Coalition of Louisiana asked Sister Helen Prejean, a Catholic nun who lived and worked among the poor of New Orleans, to correspond with a death-row inmate—a convicted killer of two teenagers. As she got to know Patrick Sonnier and to measure his fear, remorse, and humanity, her aversion to capital punishment—an integral part of her faith and philosophy—developed into a conviction that it can, and must, be abolished." The website [www.randomhouse.com/vintage/read/deadman/](http://www.randomhouse.com/vintage/read/deadman/) offers some excellent discussion question about the book and the criminal justice system. Aileen Nettleton suggested this book.

SUN., OCT. 12 —After Prairie service—**WELCOME TO THE WORLD BABY GIRL** is a new novel by Fannie Flagg, author of *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe* and the prize-winning co-writer of the movie by that name. Suggested by Sarah Lord.

SUN., NOV. 9 —After Prairie service—**THE PIANIST** by Wladyslaw Szpilman.

SUN., DEC. 7 —After Prairie service—**JOURNEY INTO THE WHIRLWIND** is a personal account of the first three years of author and professor Eugenia Ginzburg's 18-year ordeal during the Stalin purges of the 1930s.

SUN., JAN. 11 —After Prairie service—**THE TIPPING POINT** by Malcolm Gladwell is a non-fiction book that compares commercial successes with the model of epidemics.

This is an open book club. Anyone who has read the book or wants to hear the book discussed may come to any meeting. When we meet at Prairie, participants bring food to share. Books are available at Border's West on University Avenue at a 20% discount if you mention this is a Prairie Book Club selection.

**CALL FOR SINGERS: CHOIR REHEARSALS ARE STARTING!**

Prairie's choir will begin rehearsing on Sunday morning, Sept. 28, at 9 a.m. All are welcome to participate. You don't need to be a great singer or have previous choral experience.

We rehearse at Prairie every Sunday at 9 a.m. and sing about once per month. Hope you can join us!  
*Barbara Park*

**RETURNING PRISONER SIMULATION EXERCISE SEPTEMBER 23 AT FUS**

Our new Study/Action Issue is Criminal Justice and Prison Reform. Madison Urban Ministry has presented programs for several years on the Criminal Justice System, including returning prisoner simulation exercises (Circles of Support Simulation). An exercise will occur on Tuesday September 23 from 6:30 p.m.–9:15 p.m. in First Unitarian Society's Gathering Room. To participate, contact Wendy Cooper, Social Justice

**LOST AND FOUND**

**WHOSE MOOSE?** Doleta Chapru seeks the owner of a small, sleepy-eyed, bearded, white-antlered stuffed moose left grazing on a pedestal at Prairie after the August 17 music service. Another stuffed moose is missing. Please check your moose herd and contact Doleta at 238-4970 or [dchapru@aol.com](mailto:dchapru@aol.com) if you have

a stray or are missing the sleepy-eyed critter branded "Product of Korea."

Madison, WI 53704  
Same phone: 244-7099

## SUNDAY SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Program Committee asks that announcements be sent in advance to the Administrator at [prairieu@execpc.com](mailto:prairieu@execpc.com) for inclusion in the Sunday bulletin. This will help people to remember your news, and shorten time spent on announcements in the service. Submission deadline is Friday night.

## MEMBERSHIP

Circle dinners are being planned, with signups starting at the Fall Retreat. This year we are forming circles by topic, with the intent of giving each circle a yearlong topic for conversation or activity.

For those new to circle dinners, the dinners are scheduled by each group (circle) of 8-12 people once a month at members' homes, or at Prairie if necessary. It is an excellent way to get to know people in the congregation and to enjoy each others' culinary talents! Families with children are welcome at many of the circles.

Please sign up for the circles on the signup sheet by October 5. If you would like to form a circle with your own topic, please contact Judy Skog by September 21.



Changed addresses:

Dave and Marcia Johnson  
W12413 Cumberland Rd.  
Coloma, WI 54930  
(715) 228-3190

Brian Kuzdas  
6214 Schroeder Rd. Apt. 16  
Madison, WI 53711  
(608) 438-7060 (cellular phone)

Anne Pryor  
5317 Lighthouse Bay Drive

## Shaarei Shamayim Calendar

2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sat. 9 a.m.-2 p.m.  
Prairie Liaison: Celeste Robins 249-5933  
[CelestialR@charter.net](mailto:CelestialR@charter.net)

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Prairie's new RE year got off with a bang at the Ingathering Service on September 7. The RE Committee showed the congregation how to "build a strong foundation" for the RE program by volunteering to help with various RE-related activities and errands. Kristi Sprague-Klepzig, Director of Religious Education, discussed changes to the YoUUth Circle model that was introduced last year as well as the RE Committee's expectations about volunteering. (Everyone in the congregation should have either picked up a letter at Prairie about the RE changes or received that letter in the mail recently.) In response to comments from several experienced RE teachers, the RE Committee has adjusted the Sunday morning RE schedule as follows:

10:00 Adult service begins  
10:15 Children leave and go to YoUUth Circle  
10:15 - 10:35 YoUUth Circle ritual  
10:35 Break out into age-appropriate Friendship Circles  
10:35 - 11:20 Friendship Circles  
11:20 Reconvene in YoUUth Circle room  
11:30 Dismissal

To help Prairie members and friends feel more confident about volunteering to help in RE, the committee has scheduled two volunteer orientation sessions, to be held Saturday, October 4, and Saturday, October 18, both from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. at Prairie. We will have refreshments and provide

take-home materials, so please contact Anne Urbanski or Kristi Sprague-Klepzig to pre-register. With your enthusiasm and energy we'll make this a great year for RE.

**Office Hours for the Office Administrator**

Mondays 7–9 p.m.  
Saturdays 10 a.m.–12 noon

**LETTERS**

Dear Editor:

Could you please let your members know about the following information. First Unitarian Society organized a singles group this summer. About 35 people are on the mailing list so far, and the ages range from young to retirees. The following is about an upcoming event, the purpose of which is to socialize and to generate ideas for the group:

UU Singles' Snack-a-thon: Friday, September 19, 7:30 - 9:15 pm, Gathering Room of the Lower Meeting House, First Unitarian Society, 900 University Bay Drive, Madison. Come and join us to meet and mingle with other single UUs and help create the kind of singles group that is exciting, fun and enriching. Several activities and lots of eating. We'll greet you at the door. Bring a snack, dessert or non-alcoholic beverage to share.

Thanks,  
F.U.S. Singles' Group

**WANTED: ARTISTS, POETS**

The Prairie Fire needs some artwork, some poetry, and other works of creativity that might be bubbling forth from the minds of our youth.

If anyone in the ages 2–12 (well, we might stretch it to 22, or even 102, but we haven't had a lot of luck with those groups lately!) would please send in submissions, we would love to print them in future editions of the Prairie Fire.

**WANTED: REPORTERS**

There are a great many new people in our fellowship that we would like to get to know better. The staff at this paper, however, needs help. Specifically, are there any school-age volunteers who would be interested after church on a Sunday sometime in interviewing a member and taking their picture? It's great experience, it's fun, and you can get your name in this paper in addition to the person you interview!

Please talk to Dan Proud or e-mail your name to [prairieu@execpc.com](mailto:prairieu@execpc.com) —don't wait, you might be late!

**UUSC NEWS**

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**Human rights situation deteriorates in Guatemala**

Political violence in Guatemala, both in the urban and rural areas, has increased markedly in recent weeks, including the July 24–25 riots that paralyzed Guatemala City and were allegedly orchestrated by the ruling political party, the Guatemalan Republican Front (FRG). Increased attacks and threats against human rights defenders, journalists, judges and Mayan priests have all been documented. This rise in political violence and intimidation makes the prospects appear very bleak for a free and fair presidential election in November 2003. For more details and background, visit <http://www.uusc.org/info/article082003.html>.

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**UUSC joins civil liberties court case**

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee has signed on to a legal challenge to the government's power to arrest and detain American citizens indefinitely who are accused of being "enemy combatants." The Service Committee took this action to alert the public that everyone's rights—even those of U.S. citizens—are endangered by the administration's disregard of civil liberties and human rights. For a

complete report, visit  
<http://www.uusc.org/info/article082103.html>.

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**Remembering Sergio Vieira de Mello**

UUSC joins the human rights community in mourning the loss on August 19 of Sergio Vieira de Mello, the U.N. Special Envoy to Iraq and a lifelong human rights activist and peacebuilder, who was killed when a truck bomb exploded in front of the U.N. headquarters in Baghdad. We are saddened by the loss of such a compassionate advocate who devoted his life to remembering and helping those trapped in violent conflict and bloodshed through his dedication to human rights work. For our complete statement, visit  
<http://www.uusc.org/info/article082703.html>.

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**Volunteer opportunities at Arizona/Mexico workcamp**

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee has teamed up with BorderLinks, a nonprofit organization based in Tuscon, Ariz., to offer a new workcamp experience along the Arizona/Mexico border. The workcamp is scheduled for Oct. 15-19, and openings are still available. For more details:  
<http://www.uusc.org/ontheborder1.pdf>.

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**UUSC partner organizes fall video tour**

The Chiapas Media Project, a UUSC program partner organization since 2002, is organizing a fall tour of the United States, featuring media produced by indigenous video makers in Chiapas and Guerrero, Mexico. The tour offers local community organizations, congregations, and college and university audiences an opportunity to learn about the human rights situation in Mexico through the eyes of the people who live it. For more details and information on how you can organize an eye-opening educational event with CMP for your group during the fall tour, visit  
[http://www.uusc.org/info/article090303\\_1.html](http://www.uusc.org/info/article090303_1.html).

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**OTHER NEWS**

**PERSONAL STORIES OF THE MAYAN PEOPLE: FORUM AT FIRST UNITARIAN**

A free public forum on “Guatemala and Chiapas: An Amazing Journey with the Mayan People” will be presented on Sunday, Sept. 14 from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. in the West Living Room of First Unitarian Society, 900 University Bay Drive. The presentation will include a 30-minute video, “We Can’t Stay Silent,” and personal stories from a returning Madison human rights delegation. Panelists include Leila Pine of First Unitarian Society and Lydia Bertrand, Pat Evachenko and Rom Maczka of Trinity United Methodist Church.

Information will also be available on future delegations to Guatemala, the Guatemalan Accompaniment Project, and on how to help protect the human rights of indigenous people during the upcoming November presidential elections in Guatemala.

For Prairie and Madison Social Action news, visit  
<http://www.homestead.com/prsac/files/home.htm>

**WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES FOCUSES ON VIOLENCE IN THE U.S.**

The World Council of Churches (WCC) Central Committee has designated the United States as its 2004 focus during the Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV) (2001–2010). According to the Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick, stated clerk of the Presbyterian Church (USA), "If ever there was a part of the world where work for peace is important, it is the USA."

In its report to the Central Committee, the Programme Committee acknowledges the opposition of US churches to war in Iraq, and their work in alleviating suffering at home and abroad.

However, it notes that because of the unchallenged power of the USA, "The US administration seems to see itself in a position where it can afford to disregard the international order, refuse to be accountable to the UN, and ignore the concerns of the world's populations."

It also notes problems of "poverty, violence, racism in all its diverse forms, inter-faith relations, migration and

inequality in education and employment." "We live in a nation where the cause of peace needs a much greater emphasis," Kirkpatrick commented.

The DOV's US focus will be to strengthen and resource churches and movements working for peace in the USA, encourage a commitment to mutual accountability, and deepen the churches' understanding of issues such as power, militarism, and community-building.

Information on the Decade to Overcome Violence is available at: <http://www2.wcc-coe.org/dov.nsf>

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*The World Council of Churches (WCC) is a fellowship of churches, now 341, in more than 100 countries in all continents from virtually all Christian traditions. The Roman Catholic Church is not a member church but works cooperatively with the WCC. The highest governing body is the assembly, which meets approximately every seven years.*

