



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." (Bond of Union)

November 18, 2005

Prairie Fire is the semi-monthly newsletter of Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society. The two most recent issues may be seen at www.prairie.madison.uua.org

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PRAIRIE CALENDAR

Sunday, November 20

- *10:00 a.m. "Our Blessings: Apparent or Not" presented by the Rev. Jody Whelden
- *11:45 a.m. Fall Business Meeting at Prairie

Wednesday, November 23

- 6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal@ Prairie
- *7:30 p.m. Madison UU churches' Joint Thanksgiving Service at James Reeb UUC

Sunday, November 27

- *10:00 a.m. "Harvest Celebration" intergenerational program led by Mary Mullen, Galen Smith, and Bob Radford

Tuesday, November 29

- *2:00 p.m. Prairie Elders meet at Oakwood West

Wednesday, November 30

- 6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal@ Prairie
- 7:30 p.m. "Minding Our Mind" adult religious education, session 4, led by the Rev. Jody Whelden

Sunday, December 4

- 9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal
- *10:00 a.m. "Jesus and Empire" presented by Bob Reuschlein

(* = Details follow in this issue.)

NEXT PRAIRIE FIRE DEADLINE: SUNDAY, NOV. 27

Wednesday, December 7

- 6:30 p.m. Midweek Meal@ Prairie

Sunday, December 11

- 9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal
- *10:00 a.m. Children's R.E. Nifty Gifty program

DETAILS OF COMING PROGRAMS

Sunday, November 20

Thanksgiving and the Holidays fill us with mixed feelings. There are moments of great joy and satisfaction. And, there are often feelings of being alone and without as much love as we need, or enough places to share our love. Today's reflections address how we might hold our hearts and others with compassion and grace, whether our blessings are apparent or not.

Sunday, November 27

Join us in our autumn "Harvest Celebration" intergenerational program, which will be led by retired elementary teacher Mary Mullen, botanist Galen Smith, and our Religious Education Director Bob Radford. Members of all ages in the congregation will participate together in expressing our thankfulness for individual people, groups of people, parts of nature, and anything else we feel thankful for. Kids and adults alike can look forward to making their own small pumpkin globe and putting stickers on it to indicate where maize, potatoes, pumpkins, wheat, cranberries, turkeys, and other traditional harvest-season foods were first domesticated. We will also get a chance to make a toy from cornhusks and feathers.

Prairie members are requested to bring cookies or quick breads or other snacks that include traditional foods of the season such as pumpkin, cranberries and pecans to share with others during the service.

Sunday, December 4

Bob Reuschlein spent five years in two-hour classes every Sunday afternoon discussing the "Teachings of Jesus" lead by Boyce Tutz at the local Friends Meeting House on Roberts Court. Starting with the book "Jesus Before Christianity" by Albert Nolan, he learned this man was far more subtle than the simplistic deity he's been portrayed as by modern religion. His message of radical egalitarianism contrasts with the "corrupted by power" individuals who preach in his name today.

Marcus Borg, one of the main Jesus Seminar types, has concluded that the main mission of Jesus was to challenge the system of dominance of some people over others. In this very fundamental way he challenges the essence of empire, which is control. That control alienates the rich and powerful from others, diminishing them as "hollow sepulchers full of dust", as they cut themselves off from the "kingdom of heaven", i.e., enjoying the full fellowship of human experience. Thus, we can see Jesus as one of the first Unitarian Universalists. Bob will cite several scriptural passages to support his conclusions.

OUR SOCIETY

AGENDA FOR NOVEMBER 20 MEETING

Prairie's fall business meeting on Sunday, **November 20**, begins at 11:45 a.m. Here is the agenda:

1. Convene (Mike Briggs)
2. Minutes of April 2005 meeting
3. Report on 2006 budget (Norma Briggs, Finance)
4. Reports of officers and committees
5. Resolution (Bob Park): *That Prairie's growth planning should be guided by a realistic assessment of the financial capability of the adult membership of Prairie.*
6. New business at the call of at least ten members
7. Adjourn

Mike Briggs, President

THE VIEW FROM MY BRANCH



Thanksgiving is coming and the five Unitarian Universalist Congregations* are planning a joint service at James Reeb UU Church.** It will be on Thanksgiving Eve, Wednesday, November 23, at 7:30 p.m., and will be a service for all ages. I hope many of us will come for all the obvious reasons: (1) It is always fun to have all the congregations together; (2) it is wonderful to be part of a service designed for all ages; and (3) it can strengthen our connection to our faith as we go into a busy weekend.

There is another reason, too. When we come together with other UU congregations, at times when it might be easier to stay home, we grow the strength of our free-thinking religious faith. We strengthen others as they strengthen us. We help each other remember that we are not alone in forging this UU path.

Yes, there are lots of important reasons to come which are personal. They are core for why we are members of a congregation. However, I believe, an equally important reason to come to joint services is to reinforce how much we value a free faith that we share with others. It is a way to say, "We love our faith, and we know we are a part of something bigger than ourselves, and that matters."

Please come as an expression of a freethinking faith, as well as for sustenance for your own living. In that act, you will minister to others, as you minister to yourself and your family. Both Bob Radford, our DRE, and I will be participating in the service. We hope to see you there!

*The Rev. Jody Whelden
Consulting Minister*

* First Unitarian Society-Madison, Free Congregation of Sauk County-Sauk City, James Reeb UU Congregation, Prairie UU Society, and Rock County UU-Janesville

** James Reeb UU Congregation, 2146 E Johnson St., Madison, WI 53704-4727; (608) 242-8887; www.jruuc.madison.wi.uua.org; office@jruuc.org

PRAIRIE ELDERS MEET NOVEMBER 29

The next Prairie Elders meeting is Tuesday, **November 29**, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Note that this is the fifth Tuesday, a departure from our usual meeting time. Please bring a small snack to pass.

Discussion Topic: *What, in your lifetime, are you most thankful for?* Led by Mona Birong. This promises to be a fascinating discussion given the rich lives of Prairie Elders participants.

Location: Oakwood Village West, Oaks Building, Second Floor Exercise Room. Newcomers, please call contacts listed below for directions or rides.

Program: Typically, three minutes of topic-related comments per person gives us all an opportunity to share and allows time for discussion, snacks, visiting, and the necessary comings and goings of those who must juggle appointments and transportation.

Shuttle: Warren Hagstrom will wait at the entrance to Oaks from 1:30-1:50 p.m. To shuttle anyone who needs it. Look for a tan VW Passat wagon.

For further information please call Donna Murdoch 238-3802, Rosemary Dorney 238-4382 or Doleta Chapru 238-4970.

Doleta Chapru

CRADLE CLUB BABY ITEMS DONATIONS

Don't forget to pick up that new baby item for the Cradle Club when you're out shopping. Check your local Walgreens; your gift need not come from Neiman-Marcus!

Pat Watkins

MODIFICATION OF PRAIRIE FIRE DEADLINES AND PUBLICATION DATES

To avoid conflict with holidays, the deadline and publication dates for the Prairie Fire in November and December will be advanced by one week:

<u>Deadline Date</u>	<u>Publication Date</u>
November 13	November 18
November 27	December 2
December 11	December 16

The normal newsletter deadlines of the first and third Sundays will resume in January.

CIVIL RIGHTS BOOK IS DECEMBER BOOK CLUB SELECTION

“Daddy and Roger and ’em shot ’em a nigger.” Those words were whispered to ten-year-old Tim Tyson by a playmate. The adult Timothy Tyson, son of the white United Methodist minister whose family was driven out of Oxford, North Carolina, for trying to get the town to face its racism after the murder of the 23-year-old Vietnam veteran Henry Marrow, is now a professor of Afro-American studies at the UW–Madison. He says this event and the hell that broke loose in Oxford because of it during the summer of 1970 marked him “for good and forever.” His biography and history, *Blood Done Sign My Name: A True Story*, is the Prairie Book Club selection for **December 4**. Interestingly enough, it was required summer reading for all incoming freshmen to the University of North Carolina during the summer of 2004.

The Prairie Book Club is open to all who have read the book or just wish to hear Prairie people discuss the book. Bring food to share. Usually the discussion starts about 11:30 and ends by 1:30.

I highly recommend two Internet resources to check out before reading the book. One is a full-length interview and call-in program with author Timothy Tyson and his father, Vern Tyson, on the North Carolina public radio station WUNC, Chapel Hill, NC. Follow the link from www.ibiblio.org/wunc_archives/sot/index.php?p=101. During the program the author reads a brief section from his book where he tells about his dad taking him and his brother to see a KKK rally. He also tells how his own daughter here in Madison came home from school saying, “I thought Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was black.” The brochure she got at school made King look white and just said that he had died, not referring at all to his assassination. The interview ends with the Huddie Ledbetter version of the song, “Blood Done Sign My Name.” A detailed written review by Cynthia Greenlee-Donnell is available at AOL’s Black Voices site: <http://archive.blackvoices.com/reviews/books/bk20040622blood.asp>.

Mary Mullen

CARING COMMITTEE NEWS

Dear Prairie Folks,

In 2002, the Caring Committee identified a need for Prairie members to feel like there is someone they can call if they ever need support in times of need. At that time, each Prairie member was placed in a "caring group." Each Caring Committee member adopted a group and sent a letter to the members of his/her group notifying them. As new members join Prairie, they are added to existing groups and notified.

Two changes have recently occurred: (1) Marilyn Ruecking has recently withdrawn from the committee, after many years of service....Thank you, Marilyn! KK Anderson has taken over Marilyn's group; and (2) Jody Whelden has become our quarter-time consulting minister.

It seems to us like a good idea to periodically remind you of the Caring Committee's mission, and to reacquaint Prairie members with their primary Committee contact. You are always welcome to contact Jody, or another member of the Caring Committee, even if that person is not listed as your primary contact. Here are some examples of times you might want to call your primary contact:

- If you are in the hospital and would like someone to know, and perhaps inform others so you get some visitors – either in an emergency situation or a scheduled surgery
- If you are recovering from illness or surgery and you would like someone to organize people to bring meals to you for awhile
- If a relative has died and you would like Prairie people to know
- If you would just like a sympathetic someone to talk with about a problem that has arisen

Caring Committee members and the names of the people in their caring groups are listed here:

Aileen Nettleton 238-6053

Kerry Beheler	John Lewis
George & Ruth Calden	Donna Murdoch
Glenn Chambliss & Diane Derouen	
Randy & Kathy Converse	Orange, Dean Schroeder
Cindy Haq	Rachel Siegfried
Savannah Jarling	Linda Sheehy

Erin Bosch 238-6285

Jorie Conca	Sarah Lord
Karen Deaton & Andy Garst	Kate Liu
Marty Drapkin	Mary Mullen
Bob Durkin	Marilyn & Rick Ruecking
Ron and Corrine Hornbeck	Judy & Ken Skog
Betty & Jack Jallings	Kim Truog
Kristen Long & Andy Swartz	

Linda Sheehy 273-3895

KK Anderson	
Martin Arnold & Rachel Long; Phyllis Long	
Metje Butler	Paula Pachciarz & Carl Wacker
Pat Cautley	
Nancy Graham	Nancy Schraufnagel
Dorothy Krause	Mary & Andy Somers
Rosemarie Lester	Anne & Lee Urbanski
Al & Aileen Nettleton	Pat Watkins

KK Anderson 235-3596

Erin Bosch	Dirk & Sue Herr-Hoyman
Barb Boyd	Marcia & Dave Johnson
Doleta Chapru & Warren Hagstrom	Jean Matos
Barbara Chatterton	Bob & Barb Park
Mary Lou Diehl	Sharon Scratfish
Susan Hagstrom	Kate Tucker

Dean Schroeder 256-8813

Norma & Mike Briggs	Rick Owens, Amy Wilcox
Robin Carre & Beth Potter	Dan & Robin Proud
Rosemary Dorney	Bob Reuschlein
Brian Kuzdas	Jerry Simmons
Anne Lundin	Rose & Galen Smith
Larry Nahlik	Steve & Pam Vorass

Barb Park 273-8775

Phoenix Wardell

HOUSEKEEPING AT PRAIRIE

I recently dredged out the refrigerator at Prairie. I would like to make a couple of requests.

Please label everything that you put into the fridge with the date and "Prairie UU". Shaarei Shamayim is very good about labeling their things, but none of our stuff gets labeled.

Please do not put anything into the refrigerator unless you are positive that you, personally, will cause it to be eaten or otherwise go away within one week. I threw out 2 nearly full ketchup containers

and 2 of mustard, plus the usual unidentifiable nasty stuff. If you plan an event, please check the fridge for what you need (like ketchup), or plan to take it home with you afterward.

Please do not leave any food on the counter, especially if it is open--even if it is "re-sealed". We have had mice in the building on more than one occasion. Please do not leave food out for them.

I would also like to thank Bob Radford for pro-actively using up the RE items that make their way into the fridge from time to time.

Thanks for your consideration.

Judy Skog

NO CHOIR REHEARSALS

There will be no choir rehearsal on November 20 or November 27. See you the following Sunday to work on our song for the Christmas program.

Barb Park

PRAIRIE WEB SITES

Society Home Page: prairie.madison.uua.org
News Group: groups.yahoo.com/group/prairienews/
Views Group: groups.yahoo.com/group/prairieviews/
Social Action: socialaction.madisonwi.us
Humanist Union: <http://humanist.madisonwi.us>
Long Range Planning: www.execpc.com/~prairieu/planning (no space)

LETTERS

Dear Prairie Society,

You are invited to attend our First Unitarian Society Library Committee meetings. The next one will be Sunday, November 20, in the library at 10:30 a.m.

One of our goals is to communicate, collaborate, and share with other local UU congregations. We hope that a representative of Prairie can attend. Contact me at anns@fusmadison.org for details.

Thank you!

Ann Smiley, FUS Library Committee chairperson

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

UPSTAIRS, DOWNSTAIRS: NOT SO DIFFERENT

It is fun to think about our building--the one we're in and the one we're dreaming about. I think of our kids' area in the basement and the adults meeting upstairs and try to visualize how they differ. I was proud to be part of the minister startup and the new member orientation as I learned about how Prairie is and has been and listened to how you might want it. I hope we can all be as happy and as flexible as children are when we come to church--we are all exploring so much. Thanks for your teachings.

We are in a nice holiday season. Did you notice the Sukkah in the side yard? You are invited to two intergenerational Thanksgiving services--one at James Reeb UU on the Wednesday evening before and our Sunday, November 27 10 a.m. service. We'll make holiday presents on Sunday, December 11 as we do our traditional Nifty Gifty. Are there rituals or traditions your family likes that we can discuss?

The RE Committee, teachers, and families are working hard to coordinate and present a consistent, safe, and enjoyable program of classes and activities. The challenges and rewards seem built in. We didn't have any teens go to the Fall Youth CON--maybe we'll go in the Spring or we'll arrange a local event.

We continue to get nice feedback on the Fall Frolic and Service Day, including a \$10 donation! The parent-teacher conferences and teacher-substitute orientations have been helpful--we're ready to support even more new adults and ideas! Thanks to all the adults, teens, and kids that make RE happen.

Don't forget that we provide skilled, professional child-care service on Sunday mornings from 9:45 to 11:45 for your little ones and that we can help your family and friends feel at ease. We welcome visitors and drop-ins during most of our RE class sessions and we have room to grow. Is there an activity or lesson that you can share with the Prairie kids?

Thank you. See you in church.

Bob Radford, DRE

ALL ABOUT NIFTY GIFTY DECEMBER 11

Nifty Gifty is a chance for you to make gifts that you can give to family, friends, teachers, and classmates during the holidays. There will be seven different projects, plus you'll be able to wrap your presents! We'll have snacks and music and FUN!

What you should bring...

- a photo of yourself, about 2 inches square
- pages of Sunday comics (in color)
- one dollar, to pay for supplies
- A list of people to make presents for

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST NEWS

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST NEWS JOINT THANKSGIVING SERVICE

The five South Central Wisconsin congregations will sponsor the Joint UU Thanksgiving Eve Service this year, at 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, November 23 at James Reeb UU Congregation, 2146 E. Johnson. It is an inter-generational service for all ages. A dessert reception (finger food items like brownies and lemon bars, and hot beverages) will immediately follow the service. The Rev. Jody Whelden, Consulting Minister, Bob Radford, Director of Religious Education, and Patty Stockdale will participate in the service.

BLOOD DRIVE AT FUS

The American Red Cross is planning a blood drive at First Unitarian Society (FUS) on Sunday, November 27, from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. FUS is located at 900 University Bay Drive, Madison.

OTHER NEWS

ALLIED DRIVE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Last weekend in the Allied Drive community, a woman died, leaving 11 grandchildren she had been caring for. The woman's one remaining daughter is currently caring for all the children in 2 apartments on Allied Drive. Rita Adair has requested volunteers to bring in ready-to-eat meals temporarily. Anyone who would be willing to bring in a meal should call Dianne Stevens at 271-2179.

Volunteers are also sought to support a woman expecting her second set of twins within a less than 2-year period. Individuals are needed who can come in for a two-hour stretch once a week or once a month to supply an extra set of arms and ears and fresh nerves. Call Nurse Susan at 274-7006.

Emergency Funding is needed to keep the Wellness Center open. Please call Dianne Stevens at 271-2179 for donations, ideas, or other support.

Dianne Stevens, Allied Drive

NCC AGAINST TORTURE

The General Assembly of the National Council of Churches USA and Church World Service recently commended anti-torture provisions in the Senate Defense Appropriations bill. But as the House of Representatives begins debate on the bill, some high-ranking U.S. government officials declined to support the provisions.

"As delegates to the General Assembly of the National Council of Churches USA and Church World Service, we find any and all use of torture unacceptable and contrary to U.S. and international legal norms," the delegates said. "We find it particularly abhorrent that our nation's lawmakers would fail to approve the pending legislation disavowing the use of torture by any entity on behalf of the United States government."

"Torture, regardless of circumstance, humiliates and debases torturer and tortured alike," the General Assembly declared by unanimous vote. "Torture... denies the preciousness of human life and the dignity of every human being."

SOULFORCE ONLINE AUCTION

Help bid discrimination goodbye in the first annual Spirit of Justice online auction! Nearly 150 items, including autographed books, music, crafts, art,

pieces of civil-rights history, and retreat weekends are up for grabs to the highest bidder on eBay.

100% of the proceeds will go to support Soulforce's justice work for GLBT people.

The online auction is happening now and bidding will continue until November 20. To browse or to place a bid, go to www.soulforce.org/auction.