



Prairie Fire

11/22/08

Volume 1, Number 1

In this issue:

- Calendar
- Programs
- RE news
- Rev. Ralph's Ruminations
- Society News
- New Members
- Denominational News

The full-featured **Prairie Fire** is published on the 21st of every month. The **Prairie Fire Bulletin** is a calendar-only newsletter that is published on the 6th of every month. Both are published by Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society. View past issues at www.uuprairie.org

Contact Us:

Minister
Rev. Ralph Tyksinski
minister@uuprairie.org
873-6041

Youth Coordinator
Rebecca Malke-Eliganti
youthcoordinator@uuprairie.org
695-3435

Editor/Administrator
Kate Liu
admin@uuprairie.org
271-8218

President
Rachel Long
608-328-4899

Calendar

Saturday, November 22nd

8:00 am to Noon - UU Blood Drive at First Society.

Sunday, November 23, 2008

9:00 am - Choir Rehearsal.

10:00 am service - Intergenerational Thanksgiving Service, "A Global Banquet," presented by the Religious Education committee.

7:00 pm - Meditation.

Tuesday, November 25, 2008

1:00 pm - Prairie Elders meet at Oakwood.

7:30 pm - Committee on Ministry meets at Prairie.

Wednesday, November 26, 2008

7:00 pm - Joint Thanksgiving Service at First Unitarian Society.

Sunday, November 30, 2008

NO Choir Rehearsal.

10:00 am service - "Prairie Reflections," presented by Ruth Calden, Warren Hagstrom, and Al Nettleton.

11:45 am - Prairie Board meeting. Tentative.

7:00 pm - Meditation.

Saturday, December 6, 2008

Men's Homeless Shelter Breakfast. Please contact Kathy Converse to volunteer.

9:00 am - WOW meets offsite.

Sunday, December 7, 2008

9:00 am - Choir Rehearsal

10:00 am - service - "This I Believe," featuring Marcia Johnson, Rick Ruecking, and Tom Lovett.

7:00 pm - Meditation.

Saturday, December 13, 2008

6:00 pm - HumanLight Celebration, presented by the Humanist Union.

Sunday, December 14, 2008

9:00 am - Choir Rehearsal

10:00 am - Service - "Symbol Tree Intergenerational," presented by Erin Bosch.

11:45 am - Prairie Book Club meets to discuss [The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf](#).

Details about many of these items follow inside

Upcoming Programs

Sunday, November 23

Intergenerational Thanksgiving Service: A Global Banquet; presented by the Religious Education Committee. This service will include a potluck brunch. Think about dishes you may wish to share, from your own ethnic heritage or another that you appreciate.

Sunday, November 30

Prairie Reflections - Ruth Calden, Warren Hagstrom, and Al Nettleton will reflect on 40 plus years of Prairie and lead a discussion on Prairie's origins and evolution --- its places, people, activities, and organization. Every activity and ritual has had its origin, and most have changed in response to new members, new inspirations, and new problems.

Prairie Web Sites:

Society Home Page
www.uuprairie.org

News Group
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairie_news/

Views
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairie_views/

Social Action
<http://socialaction.madisonwi.us>

Humanist Union
<http://humanist.madisonwi.us>

Sunday, December 7

This I Believe - Anne Lundin will present another installment of this fascinating series. Marcia Johnson, Rick Ruecking, and Tom Lovett will share their own spiritual journeys in the ongoing lay ministry that explores religious background and current beliefs. The emphasis in the series is on the diversity of beliefs in our shared community.

Sunday, December 14

Symbol Tree Intergenerational, led by Erin Bosch. This Sunday will be our traditional Symbol Tree intergenerational service where all (including children) are welcome to come forward, share some words with the congregation, and place a related symbol on the tree. Following are some possibilities to get you thinking: Was there an important milestone event that happened to me this year? What did I learn this year that might help others? Do I have a story to share about something that others might find uplifting? If you are perhaps less comfortable sharing personal experiences, you would also be welcome to share a poem or quotation or other short reading with a more universal quality. Please bring cookies or other festive finger foods so we can munch as we mingle after the service.

Sunday, December 21

A Child's Christmas in Wales, presented by Rev. Ralph Tyksinski. This service will feature a reading of "A Child's Christmas in Wales" by Dylan Thomas. Readers, back by popular demand, will be Andy Somers, Al Nettleton, Warren Hagstrom, and Rev. Ralph. Choral performances will also be part of the service. Through the lyrical language of Dylan Thomas and beautiful Welsh and English carols, the readers and singers will paint a warm, wry, and sympathetic picture of the human spirit and the wintry observance of Christmastide.

Wednesday, December 24

Christmas Eve, Carols, and Candlelighting, presented by Rev. Ralph Tyksinski. We celebrate with readings, singing of carols, and candlelighting the story of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. This, an intergenerational service, draws from Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by seeking peace and good will for humankind. No childcare will be available.

Religious Education



The holidays are here! For some it's an exciting time to celebrate with family and friends. For others it's a time of stress as we try to finish all that needs to be done before the end of the year. For RE it's a time of giving.

Last month our young people went trick-or-treating for UNICEF. Our goal was to raise \$100 and we surpassed that! Our students raised \$137.00 !! Thank you to all who helped raise money this year. Our top fundraisers (going by who had the heaviest box) were: Rachel Hughes, Ellie Thayer and Elena Miller. Good Job!

On November 9th our RE students did their annual leaf raking for our Service Sunday project. We had planned to rake the front yard of Prairie along with one home in the neighborhood and another home on the West side of Madison. I was in the group with chaperones Randy Converse and Kim Miller along with students James Hughes, Cheyenne Hale, Duncan McFarlane and Elena and Lydia Miller when a man in our neighborhood asked us if we could do his lawn too! It was such a great way to get to know our neighbors and for our children to really see the help that others needed in raking leaves. We were awarded with plenty of candy afterwards! I'd like to thank our other volunteers for helping that day: Doug McFarlane, Susan Herr-Hoymann and Judy and Toby Wacker.

This Sunday is our Thanksgiving Intergenerational service where our students will have the chance, along with their teachers, to tell the congregation what they have been learning in their classes and share their knowledge of world hunger with the rest of us. Each class has been assigned a continent and had the chance to pick which countries from that continent they would like to study. Then they learned about the foods eaten in that region. This service will not only educate us about the world around us but remind us why we are so lucky to have family, food and warm houses to go home to in this time of need.

Coming up on Sunday, December 7th is our annual Nifty Gifty event. This is a time for our young people to make homemade crafts to give to friends and family. There will be food, music and lots of fun as we spend the morning making gifts for our loved ones. This is easily a favorite amongst young and old alike so if you are interested in helping the children make crafts let me or RE Chair, Karen Deaton, know asap before spaces fill up!

Rebecca Malke (YREC)
youthcoordinator@uuprairie.org

Our Society

Fall Parish Meeting Summary

We had yet another successful Parish Meeting on 11/9/08. We have so much agreement in our congregation that we got our business done in just over an hour. Is that a record? Here is a brief summary of what was decided.

- We approved the 2008-9 component of our Strategic Plan.
- We created a Green Committee to help guide us through the steps to becoming accredited as a UUA "Green Sanctuary."
- We explained plans for an Adult RE Task Force to evaluate options for how to best coordinate our adult offerings.
- We elected officers who will serve until the Spring Parish Meeting:
 - Treasurer – Mary Somers

- Finance Chair – Barb Park
- Communications Committee Chair – Bob Park
- Youth Member – Reuben Arnold
- We started a capital fund with more than \$44,000 in donations by our members.
- We explained the modified budget, with removed items put in after the land sale.

We will have more information about some of these items on the greeting table for your review if you missed them the first time. Thanks to all who came for your input and support.

Rachel Long, President

Prairie Book Club Selections

Prairie Book Club meets once a month after service to discuss a chosen book. Here is the list of selections and the dates they will be discussed for the next couple of months:

The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf, by Mohja Kahf, December 14th.

Blink, the Power of Thinking Without Thinking, by Malcolm Gladwell, Sunday, January 18th.

Interpreter of Maladies, by Jhumpa Lahiri, Sunday, February 15th.

Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, & Madness at the Fair that Changed America, by Erik Larson, Sunday, March 15th.

Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals by Michael Pollan, Sunday, April 19th.

Happy reading!

Movie Group Meets Thursday, December 18

The Movie Group will view Singin' in the Rain, the 1952 Gene Kelly, Debbie Reynolds and Donald O'Connor musical. This film was added to the Library of Congress National Film Registry in its first year, 1989. Bring snacks to share, movie starts at 7:00 pm.

Green Committee News

Greetings from the Green Committee! We still need LOTs of Prairie folks to fill out a Personal Assessment of their ecological habits (e.g. using fluorescent light bulbs, using cloth grocery bags, etc.) so Prairie can move forward in its quest to become an accredited Green Congregation! Hard copies are available in the lobby of the meetinghouse on Sunday mornings. We will display a poster in the lobby to show progress toward our goal of 100% member participation in filling out the Personal Assessment.

If you want to do the assessment online here is the link:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=_2fhhbmT2Kd06dnP_2bJTbN4rUg_3d_3d

Prairie WOW News

Prairie WOW is the women's group at Prairie. We meet once a month for a breakfast potluck and conversation, sometimes at a member's home and sometimes at Prairie. When we met in November, we had a small baby shower for Kate Franzmann. Kate is due to have her baby ~November 21.

The December 6th WOW meeting will be held at Barb Park's house, 5610 Hammersley Road, Madison, at 9:00 am. Details to follow.

Housing and Property Notes

Here's a few things that are going on that you should know about:

The building has been re-keyed. If you have a small, unnumbered key, it will no longer work in the locks. If you have an old key, you can bring it to the administrator or Al Nettleton, the Housing and Property chair, and we will make sure it gets recycled. If you want a new key, you will need to pay a small deposit on it and agree that you will not duplicate it. You can ask Kate Liu, the administrator, any Sunday for a new key, or make an appointment to see her during the week.

The basement sump system is about to be worked on, starting Monday, December 1st. This will involve lots of mess and noise but will hopefully eliminate our water problems. Jim Carpenter will be the lead contact person on this project as Al will be out of town. We will need some volunteer labor to empty some of the basement spaces and to refill them when the work is done. Please stay tuned for more details regarding this project.

We had an energy audit done of the building recently. There are many things we can do to improve the energy efficiency of this building, most of which are very simple steps. When you leave the building, make sure the heat is off, the bathroom fans are off, the windows are closed and locked, and all the lights are off. This is not just an energy issue but a security issue: your RE coordinator and your administrator frequently work alone in the building, and your efforts to keep the building locked and secure protect us, too. The heating system is a little confusing with the 2 thermostat system, but there is a note above each thermostat that explains what you should do. In the not-too-distant future, when your administrator has mastered the finer points of ActiveHome, the building will be programmed to turn on the heat before your event and turn it off afterwards, and you won't need to do a thing. Until that happens, though, please take a few moments before you leave to be sure the heat is off. Also, please keep the inner set of double doors to the lobby closed - don't prop it open unless you are carrying in a whole bunch of stuff.

Thank you for helping to take care of our meeting house!

The First Prairie Pretty Good Pancake Breakfast Declared a Success!!!

Since this was the first pancake breakfast Prairie has done, it was hard for the committee to predict the outcome. How many people would come? How much food would we need? Would we get the help we needed? What should we charge? Those are only some of the questions we dealt with. But we made our predictions and proceeded with the planning. Now that the breakfast is over, the entire committee – Amy Armstrong, Kris Long, Mary Somers and myself, Karleen Tyksinski – are so pleased that this event can be called a huge success!

It is said that it takes a village to raise a child. In this case, it took our Prairie community to bring a planned breakfast to fruition. Without all the help that was given by Prairie folks, this event would truly not have happened, so the committee has many people to thank.

For help given during the breakfast, we'd like to thank our younger members for the removal of used dishes from the tables...Elena Miller, Lydia Miller, Bryn McFarlane, and Ellery Rouarke. Cheyenne Hale helped at the beverage table and Maya Urbanski at the serving table. To all these kids, we give a round of applause!

We also thank Doug McFarlane and Martin Arnold for helping at the serving table, Andy Somers for his help, and Vera and Gordon Cunningham for helping set up food and coffee early in the morning.

Fruit was provided by Ruth Calden, Mary Somers, Anne Urbanski, and Kim Miller. Kerry Reheler made four quarts of applesauce for the breakfast.

Sweet breads were provided by Vera Cunningham, Paula Pachciarz, Rose and Galen Smith, Doug McFarlane and Yvonne Hiebert, Mary Franz, Lynn Pawelski, and Karleen Tyksinski.

A big thank you to Rose Smith for organizing the door prizes and to all those who contributed prizes.

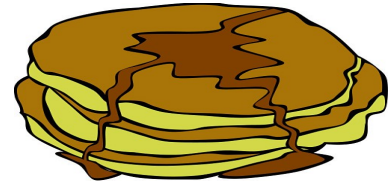
The entertainment during breakfast was wonderful. Thanks to Madeline Arnold, Reuben Arnold, Doleta Chapru, the Ethic Connection group that included Doleta, Ruth Calden and Rosemarie Lester from Prairie, and Mary Mullen and her group, The Dark of the Moon.

Behind the scenes, we give cheers to our pancake makers Bob Cape and Ralph Tyksinski. Kim Miller was washing dishes throughout the breakfast.

Although many people helped with the clean up, special thanks go to Kathy Converse and Heidi Hughes who came to clean up after the event.

Amy Armstrong and Kathy Converse hand delivered over 250 fliers around the neighborhood. As a result we had somewhere around 15 visitors from the neighborhood.

The problem with trying to thank everyone by name is that sometimes someone's name is left out accidentally. If that has happened here, we apologize now.



We served breakfast to approximately 80 people and thank Prairie members for their support. This breakfast was a fundraiser and after grocery and advertising expenses we cleared \$273.45.

Raising \$273.45 was good, but bringing new people into the church, and knowing how well we work as a community made this event truly a success! Bravo to all! Now that we have most of our questions of how to do a pancake breakfast answered, maybe we'll do it again sometime! All in favor say "PRETTY GOOD"!

Karleen Tyksinski, for the Committee.

Humanist Union Celebrates HumanLight

For its December meeting the Humanist Union will again participate in the annual HumanLight celebration (described at <http://www.humanlight.org/>). Join us at the Meeting House from 6 to 9 pm on Saturday, Dec. 13, to celebrate this holiday season with candles, potluck food and song. Also, everyone is encouraged to bring their favorite quotation from the speeches and writing of Barack Obama to read and comment on. Many of his speeches are available at <http://www.barackobama.com/speeches/index.php>.

Interfaith Hospitality Network Week is December 14 to 21

Please consider helping homeless families. You can call Erin Bosch for more information about IHN (238-6285), or... you can go to this website for an explanation of the volunteer jobs: <http://midvalelutheran.org/ihnjobs.htm> ... and you can sign up online at this address: <http://nordengs.com/ihn/group.asp?eg=10&u=true>

New Members

Jill Cornejo

My name is Jill Cornejo. I am 33 years old and have an older brother and a younger sister. Most of my family lives in Portland, Oregon. My husband Brandon and I moved here to Madison in June. We relocated from Denver for my husband's residency program. We lived in Denver for 9 years while he completed his MD/PhD. He is in the "research track" at UW and wants to focus on neuroscience research. We have two children Emily, 7, and Elliot, 4. I speak only Spanish to Elliot and about 50% with Emily. She is attending 2nd grade at Nuestro Mundo Dual Immersion school. They both are loving Madison and have adjusted quite well to their new lives here.

I am originally from Portland and went to nursing school at Oregon Health Sciences University. I spent 3 months in Mexico during nursing school and have always worked in community health clinics serving low income Spanish speakers. I have been on 3 medical teams in Guatemala, Bolivia and Peru. I recently was hired at Access clinic as a prenatal nurse and will work part time doing prenatal care and pregnancy, child birth and breast feeding classes.

I enjoy swimming, biking and walking. I used to do triathlons but my knees keep me from running now. I enjoy reading and my favorite book is "Poisonwood Bible". I prefer foreign movies and "Amores Perros" is my all time favorite movie. I have always been passionate about caring for the environment, animals and our fellow humans.

I was drawn towards Prairie because of its small size and sense of community. I really appreciate the religious education's emphasis on social justice. I originally started to come to church for the kids but I have found that I get just as much out of it and feel quite at home! Thanks for welcoming me as a member. I'm so excited to be part of this great community!



Rev. Ralph's Ruminations

As the festival of Thanksgiving is celebrated on November 27, this year, we, as Unitarian Universalists, may find much for which to be thankful for in our lives.



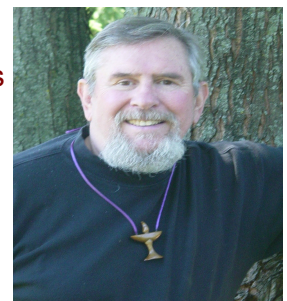
In a profound sense, Thanksgiving, is our most Unitarian Universalist of our holidays. Here's my meaning. Our Unitarian Universalist Principles state that "The living tradition that we share draws from many sources": (condensed by me)...including direct experience of transcending mystery and wonder; wisdom and deeds of love, justice, compassion; Jewish, Christian, Humanist, teachings and the wisdom from other world religions; the spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions. It concludes with this statement: "Grateful for the religious pluralism which enriches and ennobles our faith, we are inspired to deepen our understanding and expand our vision. As free congregations we enter into this covenant, promising to one another our mutual trust and support."

There it is, the word, GRATEFUL! Meaning thankful or appreciative.

We are urged to be grateful for our "religious pluralism". My thought is this: Do we, as Unitarian Universalists, give ourselves an exquisite opportunity to practice tolerance, freedom, and an expanding vision when each of us will be grateful this Thanksgiving in so many differing ways?

We will be gathered in our separate families, with our own distinct recipes, customs and traditions of gustatory delights. Some will dine early and some will sit down late, perhaps after the football games. Some will start with a prayer or perhaps the passing on of the wisdom of the great family cooks and or elders who have gathered. Questions of whether the stuffing should have sage or currants may be discussed. Some will have pumpkin or apple pie or both and some may savor a slice of mince pie brought by Aunt Sue. Some will have a roasted fowl (turkey, chicken, goose or duck). Some will honor their vegetarian principles.

With such differences of opinion, we are afforded the opportunity to practice the arts of gratitude and appreciation, teaching us that there is no one right way or wrong to celebrate the gifts of life. So there is no right or wrong way to share in love or friendship.



This Thanksgiving, November, 2008, let us also be united in gratitude for a world in which there are many faiths; for a nation, that by electing a man of color (Barack Obama), has chosen to rise above the divides of racial and ethnic prejudices. to a higher level of democratic belief. And let us be thankful for a community in which people of many backgrounds can gather in mutual care and respect.

Grateful to be journeying with you,
Ralph

Denominational News

Joint UU Thanksgiving Service

Wednesday evening, November 26th, the annual joint Thanksgiving service will be held at First Unitarian Society at 7:00 pm in the new Landmark Auditorium. Ministers and choir members from area Unitarian Universalist congregations will participate. The service will be followed by a dessert potluck,. This is a great opportunity to mix and mingle with UU folk from all four area congregations: James Reeb, First Society, and the Free Congregation of Sauk City.

Cradle Club Collections Continue

A joint project of the UUA and the Southwest Indian Relief Council, the Cradle Club provides baskets of new baby items for mothers who complete their prenatal appointments and attend parenting classes. As a result of their efforts, prenatal care has increased considerably among this population. Please bring in your donation of NEW baby supplies (onesies, pacifiers, socks, nail trimmers, bottles, etc) or cash to help with shipping the items. (If you donate cash, please give the money directly to Kate Liu, Prairie's administrator, or Mary Somers, Prairie's treasurer, to ensure that the money is secure - don't leave it in the basket with the other baby items.) The collection will run through December 14th, so you still have time to add something to the basket. Thank you for your support of this worthwhile program.

Input Deadlines:

Calendar items and program descriptions are due on the 1st and 15th of each month. Feature articles for the full *Prairie Fire* are due on the 15th of each month. Please send to Kate Liu at admin@uuprairie.org or call 271-8218.



Prairie UU Society
2010 Whenona Dr.
Madison, WI 53711
608-271-8218