



# Prairie Fire

**November 22, 2009**

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News

The full-featured **Prairie Fire** is published on the 22nd 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](http://www.uuprairie.org)

## Contact Us:

Minister  
Rev. Ralph Tyksinski  
[minister@uuprairie.org](mailto:minister@uuprairie.org)  
873-6041

Youth Coordinator  
Rebecca Malke-Eliganti  
[youthcoordinator@uuprairie.org](mailto:youthcoordinator@uuprairie.org)  
695-3435

Editor/Administrator  
Kate Liu  
[admin@uuprairie.org](mailto:admin@uuprairie.org)  
271-8218

President  
Rachel Long  
608-328-4899

## Calendar

### Sunday, November 22, 2009

8:45 am - Choir rehearsal.

10:00 am – service - "A Prairie Family Thanksgiving," presented by Rebecca Malke.

11:30 am - Special presentation: Glenda Cosenza of Dekalb UU on transitioning from consulting to called ministry. Light lunch provided.

Tuesday, November 24, 2009 - 2:00 pm – Prairie Elders meet.

### Wednesday, November 25, 2009

6:30 pm - Joint Madison UU Family Thanksgiving service at James Reeb.

### Sunday, November 29, 2009

8:45 am - Choir rehearsal

9:00 am - RE Committee meeting.

10:00 am – service - "Generosity: Living Out Our Unitarian Universalist Tradition," presented by Rev. Christopher Long.

11:45 am - Book Club meets to discuss Here If You Need Me – A True Story by Kate Braestrup.

Monday, November 30, 2009 - 7:00 pm - Caring Committee meets.

### Wednesday, December 2, 2009

7:00 pm - Program committee meets

### Saturday, December 5, 2009

9:00 am - WOW group meets at Prairie for breakfast potluck, conversation, and gift-making.

6 - 9pm - Bollywood Night at Prairie. Dancing and movie "Om Shanti Om."

### Sunday, December 6, 2009 - 8:45 am - Choir rehearsal.

9:00 am - RE committee meets.

10:00 am – service - "Our Lady of Hope Clinic."

11:45 am - Humanist Union potluck, followed by presentation by Richard Russel at 12:30.

Thursday, December 10, 2009 - 7:00 pm - Movie group meets to view "Ugetsu."

### Sunday, December 13, 2009

8:45 am - Choir rehearsal.

10:00 am – service - "The Work of a Peacemaker," presented by Sami Rasouli.

11:30 am - Prairie Board meeting. Potluck begins at 11:30 in downstairs kitchen area, meeting begins at 11:45 in the "couch room."

## Upcoming Sunday Programs

**Sunday, November 22, 2009, "A Prairie Family Thanksgiving," presented by Rebecca Malke, Youth Religious Education Coordinator.** Thanksgiving is a day to spend time with your friends and family. Here at Prairie we are family, and will celebrate by making a Thanksgiving lunch. Children will gather at the "kiddie table" to make craft centerpieces while Prairie folk come together to make pumpkin pie and casseroles. While we prepare our food we'll share stories and songs of how we celebrate Thanksgiving at home and share favorite childhood memories. At the end we'll celebrate by coming together for a potluck lunch.

**Wednesday, November 25, 2009 6:30 pm - "Radical Gratitude," featuring the Reverends Kelly Crocker, Ralph Tyksinski and Darrel Richey.** We'll explore how claiming the gift of gratitude in times of challenge can lead to transformation. This year, the multi-congregational service on Thanksgiving Eve will be hosted by James Reeb UU Congregation. Please come to their newly-remodeled building and bring the whole family! Directors of Religious Education have planned children's activities during the service. Children will attend the beginning part until after the Message for All Ages *and* a song from the three-congregation Choir before heading off for stories, crafts, and games. A pot luck reception for all will follow the service. JRUUC is located at 2146 E. Johnson Street with plenty of free street parking. The joint choir will gather at 5:45 to rehearse.

**Sunday, November 29, 2009, "Generosity: Living Out Our Unitarian Universalist Tradition," presented by Rev. Christopher Long.** As we enter, full throttle, this season of giving, how do our Principles and Sources as Unitarian Universalists, or Friends of this Living Faith Tradition, inform the forms of giving your? Who is our neighbor in such times? Come! Let's explore what grounds our giving in this season of plenty during such times as these! Rev. Chris Long is currently working out of the James Reeb UU Congregation launching a pilot Outreach Ministry to minority populations in the Madison area. Rev. Long recently completed the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) program at the Starr King School for the Ministry (Berkeley, CA). Over the past five years he has spoken at more than 30 different UU congregations across the country on topics that explore our Living UU Faith Tradition and how congregations may more effectively bring this message to under served and minority communities.

**Sunday, December 6, 2009, 10:00 am - "Our Lady of Hope Clinic," presented by Dr. Michael Kloess.** Our Lady of Hope Clinic is the area's only full-time free clinic for the uninsured. Funded primarily by benefactors—whose support qualifies them to receive their own primary care at the clinic—Our Lady of Hope Clinic aims to provide more than 3,000 free visits for those in need annually. Dr. Michael Kloess will discuss the clinic's unique and timely mission.

## Religious Education News

Religious education is about having fun and learning and that goes for your youth RE coordinator. I had the privilege of going to James Reeb to meet with their new Director of Religious Education, Virginia Harrison. Virginia and I met to discuss plans for the Joint Thanksgiving service being held at Reeb this year. This will be a family friendly event. We will have a story for all ages and then crafts and dancing provided by our very own Doleta Chapru. Doleta will be playing her accordion while teaching us some fun folk dances.

November 8th Virginia came to Prairie to observe our RE program. Next month I'll be at Reeb to see their RE program in action. I hope to get over to First Unitarian Society sometime next year to see how they run their RE morning. I hope this experience will

### Prairie Web Sites:

Society Home Page  
[www.uuprairie.org](http://www.uuprairie.org)

News Group  
[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairie\\_news/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairie_news/)

Views  
[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairie\\_views/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairie_views/)

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

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

### 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](mailto:admin@uuprairie.org) or call 271-8218.



bring the three RE programs closer and get some useful tips on how to better run our own RE program. I'm already getting some great ideas from both Virginia and Leslie Ross from FUS.

I've also been busy in hiring a new childcare provider. Rev. Ralph and I have been interviewing several candidates and hope to have someone in place by next week. Having more children in the nursery is a wonderful "problem" to have! I've really enjoyed seeing all the new beautiful faces this year and hope to see more.

Earlier this month students completed work in the butterfly garden for the rest of the year. They cleaned the yard and placed all leaves in a compost pile for next spring. RE is working closely with the Green Sanctuary Committee who has been a big help in teaching our students our 7th principle: We believe in caring for our planet earth, the home we share with all living things.

This weekend is our intergenerational Thanksgiving service and December 6th will be our annual Nifty Gifty event. I can't believe it's almost December! Nifty Gifty is always such a fun time. There are great craft projects, food, hot cocoa and lively holiday music playing throughout the morning. We already have some volunteers signed up. Being a volunteer is easy; you show our children how to make the craft, help them if needed and you get to sneak in some cookies for yourself! If you would like to help kids wrap gifts or make a craft or two please let me know.

Wishing you all a very Happy Thanksgiving!

Rebecca Malke (YREC)  
[youthcoordinator@uuprairie.org](mailto:youthcoordinator@uuprairie.org)

## Our Society

### Highlights of Fall Parish Meeting

Our meeting 11/15 (following a terrific pot luck) had 44 members in attendance. We discussed a number of the major issues facing Prairie this year and beyond. Written reports were emailed ahead for most of the issues discussed, though some were distributed there. Written materials from the meeting will be available on the greeting table for the next couple of weeks.

Rachel Long reviewed the progress we have made on our Strategic Plan. Many of the action items are already complete or nearly completed. We should give ourselves a giant pat on our collective back! A written handout is was distributed describing the great things we have accomplished since the Plan was written, and who is responsible for making sure we keep moving ahead.

Robyn Perrin (Chair of Long Range Planning) summarized the plans for workshops and discussions exploring the topic of ministry and ministerial arrangements, which will help us to decide whether to begin taking steps to call a settled minister. We hope to make that decision at the Spring Parish meeting, if readiness polls and an initial vote indicate we are prepared to make such a decision.

Barb Park presented recommendations from our building consultant, which we will be considering. We will look first at the "low hanging fruit" - that is, things that will improve our building aesthetics and function, and are easy and inexpensive. No big decisions will get made without involvement of the whole congregation.

Rachel Long did a presentation on governance, and the need for a small group of folks to consider what the best structure would be for Prairie right now, given our changes in staff and size. Let us know if you want to help with that vision.

Many reports were shared from committees, Board officers, and the Minister. It was announced that we are seeking a new Program Chair; we are grateful to Lynn for her service

and tremendously hard work in this capacity this fall. We are significantly increasing the Minister's role on that committee so that he can be responsible for planning and coordinating the logistical details of pulling off our Sunday programs, rather than leaving such details to the committee chair. As a result, the Program Committee will be freer to work on vision and content of our programs. Additionally, members who want to help logistical tasks involved can approach our Minister with their interest, rather than working through the Committee. The end result is less burden on the Program Committee Chair.

Thank you to all those who helped prepare for the meeting, those who attended, and those who couldn't make it but took the time to read up on what is happening in your society.

*Rachel Long  
President, Prairie UU Society*

### **Recapping "Thinking About Immigration"**

Sunday, November 15th's service, "Thinking About Immigration," brought out many disturbing facets of immigration. Speaker John Powell detailed the historical attitude of Wisconsinites toward immigrants and some of the motivations for those attitudes, pointing out the uncanny similarity to the "debate" today although the immigrant groups are different now. Leila Pine, who spends half of her year in Tucson, Arizona, told of her work with the primary social action initiative of the UU Church of Tucson (UUCT), "No More Deaths." No More Deaths ministers to Spanish-speaking immigrants making the danger-fraught journey through the unforgiving Arizona desert or caught up in the legal nightmare when they are apprehended. Roz Woodward, an immigrant to the United States 43 years ago, shared her personal experience with the trials of being an immigrant. Coming from England, she spoke English, but still encountered language issues, food differences, and non-recognition of her occupational skills. Those who attended the service also had the pleasure of hearing professional soloist Amber Nicole Dilger. Prairie members generously responded to Leila Pine's plea for donations with a special offering of \$182 for "No More Deaths."



Unfortunately, the long program allowed for only very minimal discussion. Visitors to Tucson are invited to participate in "No More Deaths" or other border organizations by contacting Leila Pine [sabinosanctuary@gmail.com](mailto:sabinosanctuary@gmail.com) or Rev. Diane Dowgiert [ddowgiert@uuctucson.org](mailto:ddowgiert@uuctucson.org) at the UUCT. It would be well to make contact about a month in advance in order to make the most of such a visit. Actual volunteering for border organizations often requires training.

Since there is clearly a lot of interest in the immigration topic, a discussion session may be arranged in the future to allow us to share our own knowledge, experience and feelings as well learn more about the issue with an eye to action through our Prairie community. Leila has provided contact information for several articulate and knowledgeable Latinos in Madison who could lead such a discussion. You could help this happen by contacting the Program Committee to express your desire for a discussion meeting or other initiative.

*Mary Mullen  
Program Committee*

### **Prairie Elders Meet November 24th**

Prairie people over 65 are invited to the Prairie Elders meeting Tuesday, November 24th. Prairie Elders aims to provide good times and mutual support for Prairie UU Members and Friends over 65. Current participants range from age 65 to 90-something. We welcome other UUs who live in the facility where we meet. Informal conversation begins at 1:30 pm and discussion on the topic is from 2:00-4:00. Newcomers welcome.

This month, our topic will be "Stories from Our Lives." This open-ended title is sure to elicit fascinating personal tales. Expect to hear revelations ranging from high drama to hilarious comedy to stories that warm your heart. Share your own brief vignette or just come and listen.

We meet in the Nakoma Room in the Heritage Oaks building, Oakwood Village West. Parking is available in front or underneath the building. You can bring your own beverage cup and snacks to share. Call contacts

listed for directions or a ride: Donna Murdoch 238-3802, Gordon Cunningham 230-3367, Rosemary Dorney 238-4382 or Rose Smith 233-3363.

### **Two Humanist Union Sponsored Events**

On December 6, 2009, Humanist Union will meet for a potluck lunch at 11:45 am, followed by 12:30-1:30 pm presentation and discussion on "How We Decide: from Logic to Faith" led by Richard Russell. And on December 23rd, the Humanist Union hosts a HumanLight Celebration, co-sponsored with the Madison Brights, Madison Skeptics, and FUS Doubters Group. From the HumanLight website, "HumanLight illuminates Humanism's positive secular vision. In Western societies, late December is a season of good cheer and a time for gatherings of friends and families. During the winter holiday season, where the word "holiday" has taken on a more secular meaning, many events are observed. This tradition of celebrations, however, is grounded in supernatural religious beliefs that many people in modern society cannot accept. HumanLight presents an alternative reason to celebrate: a Humanist's vision of a good future. It is a future in which all people can identify with each other, behave with the highest moral standards, and work together toward a happy, just and peaceful world."

*Bob Park, Humanist Union*

### **Book Club Announces New Selections**

The Prairie Book Club meets monthly, after the Sunday Service at Prairie, about 11:45 a.m. Bring potluck food to share. This is an open book club. You may come whether or not you have read the book. Here's what the book club will be reading from November 2009 through March 2010 :

Sunday, November 29 – [Here If You Need Me – A True Story](#) by Kate Braestrup. This is the memoir of a middle aged woman who becomes a UU minister after being widowed and serves as a chaplain in Maine's Forest Service. (full review in October 22nd Prairie Fire.)

Sunday, December 20 – [The Yiddish Policeman's Union](#) by Michael Chabon. is a "detective story set in an alternate history version of the present day, in Sitka, Alaska, which it depicts as a large, Yiddish-speaking metropolis." (from Wikipedia) (full review in October 22nd Prairie Fire.)

Sunday, January 24, 2010 - [The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society](#) by Mary Ann Shafer and her niece Annie Barrows. The book is written as a series of letters that tells the history of a small group of Channel Islanders during five years of Nazi occupation. The reviews point out that book lovers will love it because it is a novel in letters about books, bibliophiles, publishers, authors and readers. 243 pages. Recommended by Rose Smith.

Sunday, February 21, 2010 - [Cutting for Stone](#) by Abraham Verghese, a story involving a complex Indian family, takes place in Ethiopia and America. The author is a renowned physician, and a number of the characters are physicians. 541 pages, recommended by Mary Frantz.

Sunday, March 21, 2010 - [Remarkable Creatures: Epic Adventures in the Search for the Origins of Species](#) by Sean Carroll. "Tells the stories of the most dramatic expeditions and important discoveries in two centuries of natural history — from the epic journeys of pioneering naturalists to the breakthroughs making headlines today — and how they inspired and have expanded one of the greatest ideas of modern science: evolution." 352 pages, recommended by Galen Smith.



*Mary Mullen, 608.298.0843 or mmullen(at) chorus.net*

### **Ministerial Options: Q & A with DeKalb UU Past President Glenda Cosenza**

On Sunday, November 22nd after the service, the Long Range Planning Committee is delighted to invite all interested members to join us in a meeting with Glenda Cosenza of the DeKalb UU Church to learn more about

Ministerial Options. We are very fortunate that Glenda has agreed to share the experiences of the Dekalb congregation, as it moved from having a year-to-year "contract minister" to making the decision to have a "settled" minister several years ago. Glenda was the president of the board during this process and will share how the change has impacted the relationship between the minister and the congregation. There will be time for questions for Glenda about their situation and changes that have taken place.

We will meet in the upstairs Meeting Room immediately following the service. Pizza will be provided (donations encouraged). Child care will be available. If you can let Aileen know if you need child care, that will help us know how many children to anticipate.

This is one of the opportunities your Long Range Planning Committee is setting up as part of our year of exploring ministerial relationships as Prairie looks to its own future. Please plan to join us! Questions? Contact any committee member: Robyn Perrin, Ken Skog, Christina Klock, Aileen Nettleton, or Mary Mullen.

*Aileen Nettleton, Long Range Planning Committee*

### **Spanish Speaker's Potluck**

The Spanish Speaker's potluck will take a break for the month of December, but will resume in January. The next gathering will be Thursday, January 7th at 6:30 pm at the home of Dave and Marcia Johnson, 305 S. Segoe Rd. Please call Dave and Marcia at 441-0271 for directions, or Rosemary Dorney at 238-4382 for more information.

### **Green Committee News**

As a result of our signing up for Green Power, Madison Gas and Electric contacted Prairie and has put together a small blurb about Prairie's Green Congregation project to put on their Web site. If you would like to see it, the link is <http://www.mge.com/Environment/Green/bizprofiles/GPTBiz.htm?id=230>

*Al Nettleton, Green Committee*

### **WOW group**

Prairie's Women's group, known as WOW, will meet next on Saturday, December 5, at the Prairie UU meeting house. This month we will make holiday gift baskets to give to PUU members or other suggested parties. Please bring any medium size baskets and holiday decorations for the baskets (i.e. ribbon and tissue). Also bring small items (packaged) to put in the baskets such as jams, jellies, other spreads, cookies, crackers, cocoa, teas, coffee, and personal items such as lotion, soaps, small books, puzzles, games, candles, and ornaments. If you can't come to the meeting items can be dropped off at PUU. Please place in a bag and label for the WOW meeting.

Our potluck contributions range from breads, egg dishes, fruit, cheese, salad, granola, yogurt, and chocolate.

All women are WELCOME! Most importantly come, say hi, and have a delightful breakfast. New members are always welcome. For more information or to get on the Prairie WOW email list, contact Kathy Converse, [conversekrm\(at\)msn.com](mailto:conversekrm(at)msn.com) or 238-1856.

### **Movie Group**

The movie group will resume on December 10th at 7pm with a viewing of "Ugetsu," a 6th century Japanese feudal war epic by director Kenji Mizoguchi. Please bring snacks to share.

## **Social Action News**

### **Emergency Disaster Relief Efforts in El Salvador**

Hurricane Ida caused tremendous damage and flooding in El Salvador. Rosa Centeno, President of CRIPDES (the US-El Salvador sister city organization,) says, "The affected Salvadoran population is in need of food, clothing, bedding, water, hygiene kits, medicine, and shelter. We are calling out to our friends and supporters to assist us in our efforts to help the hurricane victims and work to rebuild their lives."

Sister Cities is calling for financial donations to the CRIPDES Disaster Relief effort, which is supporting the affected communities in all parts of the country. Please make a donation today by sending a check to: U.S-El Salvador Sister Cities, P.O. Box 2543 Plattsburgh, NY 12901.

Email them at [Sistercities@gmail.com](mailto:Sistercities@gmail.com) to tell them amount of the check you are sending, and they will try to advance the money to the aid effort ahead of time.

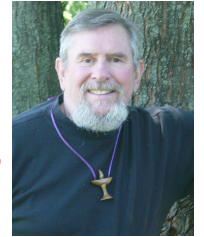
*Mary Somers, Social Action Chair*

## Rev. Ralph's Ruminations

Since Daylight Saving Time has ended and we are back on Central Standard Time, I can't help but notice how daylight has shortened and how darkness comes just after 4:00 pm in the afternoon. I welcome the change because it ushers in the time of holidays, (Thanksgiving) and the many holidays of December, (Hanukkah, Winter Solstice, Christmas, Kwanzaa, etc.) May I suggest that Prairie UU Society members and friends, across the generations, especially the children, consider giving our own meanings to December nights by lighting candles to illuminate the darkness of the season and our times. So I invite you to light a candle just about any, even every, night in December. Here are some dates that you might consider observing and remembering.

Light a simple candle on World AIDS Day (Dec. 1), acknowledging that the suffering and devastating losses from this disease are borderless and ongoing.

Put on your porch lights for Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day (Dec.7). On this 68th anniversary, we need all the light we can get as we recall the horrible losses of WWII and all wars.



Let the lights glow on Bodhi Day (Dec. 8), the anniversary of the Buddha's enlightenment. May it remind us all to keep our minds open and searching and receptive to life's deepest truths.

Light a candle in honor of the birth (Dec. 10), of John Murray, (b.1741, d. Sept. 3, 1815) founder of Universalism in America. Also, in observance of ,Human Rights Day, the Fifty-First Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Sundown, Dec. 11, light your menorah candles for Hanukkah and let these candles burn bright for eight nights to remind us all of the political and religious freedoms we enjoy and the required sacrifices needed to maintain them.

Let there be lighted candles everywhere on St. Lucia's Day (Dec. 14), a festival of lights reminding us of the importance of our families and the delight of sweet things in our lives.

Carry the lighted candles on the Festival of Posadas (Dec. 16-25), an Hispanic event honoring Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem. Let them remind us of the need to provide safe and secure shelter for the homeless.

Light a candle (Dec. 17) in honor of the birth Thomas Starr King, (b. 1824 d. March 4, 1864) Unitarian minister and the name given to our UU seminary in the California Bay area.

Share the light on the Feast of Tsijola (Dec. 19), a Guatemalan celebration of the messenger of the Great Sun God. Let it remind us of our dependency on the natural rhythms honored in our 7<sup>th</sup> Principle: **Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.**

Let Solstice lights glimmer (Dec.21). On the longest night of the year, in the depth of darkness, let the return of the sun's light be welcomed and celebrated.

String Christmas (Dec.25) lights wherever you can. Let them shine for the beauty of each child that is born and for the peace which the world awaits.

Make sure the Kwanzaa (Dec. 26-31) candles blaze for seven days, reminding us all of the great principles of unity, self-determination, collective responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith.

And light a candle and ring some bells on Omisoka (Dec. 31), the Shinto New Year. In Japan near midnight, temple bells ring to drive away the 108 troubling desires.

May Peace and Light be part of your lives during this season of lightings!

Glad to be journeying with you,  
*Rev. Ralph*



## UU Community News

### Fair Wisconsin to Speak at First Society

The LGBT Welcoming Committee of The First Unitarian Society of Madison warmly invites the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender & questioning members of the Reeb and Prairie Unitarian Universalist congregations to a potluck on Friday, December 4, at 6:00 pm in the Landmark Auditorium of the First Unitarian church. A speaker from Fair Wisconsin will be on hand to update us on the current status of LGBT rights in Wisconsin and answer questions. An award will also be presented to Bill Wartmann for his impressive humanitarian work on behalf of Unitarian LGBTs. Please join us for an evening of community and celebration! Bring a dish to pass, a desire to meet your fellow UUs and a sense of fun. RSVP to Liz Dannenbaum

([liz.winter.dannenbaum@gmail.com](mailto:liz.winter.dannenbaum@gmail.com) or phone 221-3997) by Sunday, November 29th so seating numbers and childcare can be arranged.

*Liz Dannenbaum, First Unitarian Society*

### Bayside Unitarian Universalist Family Camp

Mark your calendars now for Bayside UU Family Camp, July 11-17, 2010, at Wesley Woods Conference Center, Williams Bay, Wisconsin. See the camp website at [www.yahoodrummers.com/bayside/](http://www.yahoodrummers.com/bayside/) or talk to Jill Delisle at 238-5536 for more information.



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