



Prairie Fire

April 22, 2010

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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

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Calendar

Saturday, April 24, 2010

5:00pm - 8:30pm - Spring Fling at Prairie with Spring Sunset Walk in the arboretum.

Sunday, April 25, 2010

8:45 am - Choir Rehearsal.

10:00 am – service - "The Boston Pilgrimage," presented by the Prairie High School RE class.

11:45 am - Prairie Book club meets to discuss The Gate to Women's Country by Sheri Tepper.

Tuesday, April 27, 2010 - 2:00 pm - Prairie Elders meet at Oakwood.

Saturday, May 1, 2010 - Prairie Fire Bulletin items due.

9:00 am - Prairie WOW (Women's group) meets for potluck breakfast and ribbon weaving project.

Sunday, May 2, 2010

8:45 am - Choir Rehearsal.

10:00 am – service - "Terratheism: A New Way to View Science and Religion," presented by Andrew Kerr.

11:15 am - Q&A about ministry with Andrew Kerr.

11:45 am - Humanist Union Potluck, with guest speaker Andrew Kerr at 12:30pm.

Sunday, May 9, 2010

8:45 am - Choir Rehearsal.

10:00 am – service - "Women Composers II," presented by Jim Reilly.

Saturday, May 15, 2010 - Prairie Fire item deadline.

9:00 am - 1:00 pm: Outdoor workday at Prairie. (Rain date May 22.)

Sunday, May 16, 2010

8:45 am - Choir Rehearsal.

10:00 am – service - "Transitions," presented by the RE committee.

11:45 am - Spring Parish Meeting. Potluck at 11:45, meeting begins at noon.

Wednesday, May 19, 2010 - 7:00 pm - Program committee meets.

Tuesday, May 25, 2010

2:00 pm - Prairie Elders meet at Oakwood. Topic is "Housing Transitions."

Sunday, May 30, 2010 - Memorial Service for Mary Lou Diehl, 3pm, at Prairie

Sunday, June 20, 2010 - Retirement Party for Rev. Ralph Tyksinski.

Upcoming Programs

Sunday, April 25, 2010, 10:00 am: "Pilgrimage to Boston," presented by Prairie High Schoolers. The high school class, led by teacher Barb Park, has been taking part in the Coming of Age curriculum provided by the Church of the Larger Fellowship. They have spent the year learning about our seven UU principles, history of Unitarianism, Universalism and the merger. They've also learned about various forms of spirituality and had different people from the congregation come and talk to the students about their beliefs and practices. As an end to the class Barb took the students on a pilgrimage to Boston to see where it all began. While spending their nights in the Eliot & Pickett Houses (the UUA's B&B) they took a tour of the UUA, had a meeting with the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries and took the heritage walk through Boston. The students have learned about the structure of a UU service and have selected the readings and music for this service. They will tell us what they have learned and their experience at our UU birthplace.

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>

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.

Sunday, May 2, 2010, 10:00am: "Terratheism: A New Way to View Science and Religion," presented by Andrew Kerr. An exploration of terratheism, the belief that Earth's community of life has a lot to tell us about the nature of God, because Earth's living things struggle to achieve God's hopes as the means to succeed in the struggle for life. Our presenter, Andrew Kerr, is the Speaker with the Free Congregation of Sauk County. Andrew and his wife, Jennifer, operate Greenspirit Farm, near Dodgeville, a family run farm specializing in a wide variety of lovingly grown, organic vegetables and small fruits.

Sunday, May 9, 2010, 10:00 am - "Women Composers, II," presented by Jim Reilly. Jim Reilly will return to Prairie for his third visit. When he was here last year for Mothers' Day he performed music by a variety of women composers, and this year he returns to that theme---"Women Composers II". He will both play on the piano and sing for us a variety of music ranging all the way from the French composer of salon music Cécile Chaminade to Billie Holiday. Interspersed will be readings by members of Prairie of works by women. The choir, under the direction of Barbara Park, will perform a work by Elizabeth Alexander. Jim Reilly, a pianist and a tenor, is former Director of Music at First Universalist Church in Minneapolis and Music Director Emeritus of Mindekirken (The Norwegian Memorial Lutheran Church) in Minneapolis. He performs most often as a vocal accompanist, but this past year has included solo vocal performances in Chicago and Madison and solo piano work in Minneapolis and Iowa. He is in town to sing at the Unitarian Society Friday Concert Series here (on Friday May 6) with pianist Jeffrey Wagner from Chicago. Jim grew up in Syracuse, N.Y. in the same Universalist Church as our own Barbara Park.

Sunday, May 16, 2010, 10:00 am - "Transition Sunday," presented by R.E. Committee. Like green caterpillars transitioning into beautiful butterflies we all go through many changes in our lives. In the UU RE tradition these transitions start with a child dedication and end with the Coming of Age program. This service will honor our youth as one begins their journey into Unitarian Universalism and another completes the Coming of Age program and graduates from high school. At the end of the service RE students will present a gift to the congregation.

Religious Education News



Spring wouldn't be spring without Prairie's annual Spring Fling event! Saturday, April 24th at 5:00 we'll be meeting in the Prairie side yard for a family bar-b-q and potluck dinner. Since we're all family at Prairie everyone is invited. We already have people from James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation attending. After dinner we'll all head over to the UW-Arboretum for their Spring Sunset nature walk from 6:30-8 p.m.

The next morning our high school students will present: "The Boston Pilgrimage". Students have been participating in the Coming of Age program and will share what they have learned during the school year and talk about last month's trip to Boston.

This will also be the last official day of RE classes, but no worries, there's still plenty of RE activities for the month of May. May 2nd will be our last Spirit Circle. We'll talk about the RE year and then take a tour of the nearby community gardens to look at Prairie's new garden plot. There's already lots of activity in the gardens so hopefully we'll get a chance to talk to some of our fellow gardeners.

May 9th will be an RE game day at Marlborough Park and the 16th will be our Transition service. We'll have a toddler in our nursery room going through the child dedication ceremony and we'll be recognizing graduating senior, Madeline Arnold.

The service will end with the RE students presenting a very special gift to the congregation. I hope to see you all there!

As always, see you on Sunday,

Rebecca Malke
Director of Religious Education

Our Society

WOW to Meet May 1st

Prairie's Women's group, also known as WOW, meets monthly for breakfast potluck and conversation and an occasional project. We will meet next on Saturday, May 1st, at 9:00 am, and are planning to do a ribbon weaving project. Please bring a dish to pass and a small donation to help cover the cost of supplies for the project, and enjoy the great food and conversation.

Prairie Elders meetings

Prairie Elders is a group of over-65 Prairie members who meet once a month (generally on the 4th Tuesday of the month) at Oakwood, in the Nakoma room, for conversation and mutual support. New members are always welcome. Topics alternate between general interest and more personal items. For April 27th the topic is "Something you always wanted to know but were afraid to ask." Afraid of feeling stupid? Topic too grand? No way. Such a topic spurs fascinating discussions in our loquacious bunch. For the May meeting, on the 25th, the topic is "Housing Transitions." When, why and where do we choose to move if we can no longer stay alone in our home? What are good outside sources of information and advice? When do alternatives to moving make sense? Some of us have

made transitions, some are pondering them and others have current or prospective help at home. Let's share what we know.

All meetings begin with informal conversation at 1:30 pm, followed by discussion beginning at 2:00 pm. If possible, please bring some snacks to share and your own beverage cup. For more information about the group or to arrange a ride, please call one of the following: Donna Murdoch 238-3802, Gordon Cunningham 230-3367, Rosemary Dorney 238-4382 or Rose Smith 233-3363.

Your Pledge.... "A Drop in the Bucket?"

I recently read a meditation by Rev. Gordon McKeeman in one of the Skinner House meditation series titled "A Drop in the Bucket" that reminded me of our pledge process. He says that when trying to accomplish significant things in life we can feel like our contribution to anything that is important - fighting racism, social injustice, environmental degradation, overpopulation- is just a drop in the bucket. This feeling can prevent us from acting at all. What is the use? But he reminds that we are not asked to fill the bucket - especially all alone. "It might even be wise to remember that your drop may be one of the last ones needed. (Why is it that our image is of the first drop in the bucket?)"

Clearly a pledge process is like that. We might feel that our small contribution is just that - too small and insignificant to make any real difference. Not So. Every contribution makes a difference. We all support our Prairie community with our time, our love, our ideas, our music, our care of one another. None of us question that those contributions make a difference. Pledging is the same. Each pledge gift becomes a part of the whole. We are all strengthened by each individual contribution.

Thanks to all of you who have already pledged. It is deeply appreciated and helps our vibrant community continue and thrive. I look forward to hearing from those of you who have put off filling out your forms. If you have misplaced it, just e-mail me or Kate. It's that easy!

Thank you all for your ongoing support of Prairie - with heart, time, and -yes- with contributions.

Barbara Park, Finance Chair

Looking Ahead: Prairie Fall Family Retreat!

Please set aside the weekend of September 17-19 for the annual Prairie family retreat at Pine Lake Camp in Westfield, Wisconsin. It is located in a beautiful, wooded area about an hour and a half drive north of Madison. Facilities include a volleyball court, a baseball diamond and a basketball court. There is also a picnic area with a fire pit. At the lake itself there are canoes, rowboats and paddle boats, as well as fishing. One cabin is set up to accommodate crafts. There are many rooms available for meetings and workshops. Since it will be earlier in the fall than last year, we should be able to take advantage of some of these outdoor facilities.

Once again, Phyllis Long will be serving as Program Coordinator. If you are interested in offering a program, please let her know. It would be helpful, if you want to offer a program, to let her know when you will arrive at Pine Lake and how long you plan to stay. We will also need people who would be willing to devote an hour or so to child care, as we expect some babies and toddlers. You can contact her by email plong373 (at) gmail.com, or call 608-325-7397. Of course, you can also let her know Sunday morning!

This year there will be an additional, lower-cost option available for accommodations. We are taking advantage of the Birch Cabins, which are bunk-house style. If you'd like to see the cabins (and the rest of the camp), you can visit their website at <http://www.pinelakecamp.org/birchcabins.html>.

Another new event we are planning this year is that we will all cook dinner together at the Oakwood Center on the Saturday night of the retreat. Plans are underway for a fabulous spaghetti dinner with sauces to accommodate the full range of eaters, from vegans to carnivores. Maybe we'll even be able to include some veggies from Prairie's garden plot!

If you have any questions about the retreat, please contact Phyllis or Kate Liu (Prairie's administrator.) Registration for the retreat will begin in August, which will come up sooner than we think!

Phyllis Long, Retreat Program Coordinator
Kate Liu, Prairie Administrator admin (at) uuprairie.org

Long Range Planning Q & A with Speaker Andrew Kerr of Sauk City UU

In connection with Prairie's year-long exploration of ministry/ministerial relationships, the Long-Range Planning Committee invites you to a brief Q&A session with Andrew Kerr of the Free Congregation of Sauk County directly after his service presentation on Sunday, May 2. To meet the ministry and logistical needs of the congregation, the Free Congregation of Sauk County engages a Speaker (Mr. Kerr), who is responsible for two services per month, and an Administrator. Mr. Kerr will remark on the roles of Speaker and Administrator, and how the congregation arrived at this arrangement. Mr. Kerr has served as part-time Speaker since May, 2008; prior to this, he completed 8 years of doctoral studies in Religion and Philosophy at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago. More information on his background is available at <http://www.freecongregation.org/about-us/staff/andrew-kerr/>. Information about the Free Congregation's current Administrator, Michael Whaley, is available at <http://www.freecongregation.org/about-us/staff/michael-whaley/>. The Q&A session will occur immediately after the service and conclude at 11:45 am.

Robyn Perrin
Long Range Planning Chair

Humanist Union News

On May 2nd we will meet with Andrew Kerr, Speaker of the Free Congregation of Sauk County, and have a chance to find out how he combines the outlook of a secular humanist with a naturalistic theism. We start with a potluck lunch upstairs at noon followed by program and discussion. All with an interest in humanism are welcome to join us.

Parish Meeting Sunday, 5/16/10

Come one and all! Our annual spring Parish Meeting promises to be action-packed as usual. Below is the tentative agenda:

1. Approval of minutes of previous Parish Meetings
2. Update on Strategic Plan
3. Results of Ministerial Planning Workshops
4. Questions on Committee, Task Force, Minister, and Officer's Reports
5. Approval of Proposed 2010-11 Budget
6. Proposed Bylaws Change
7. Election of Officers
8. Gratitude for Service
9. Brief Announcements

The Parish Meeting will follow the Transitions Service, and we hope most of our families will be able to stay for the meeting. We will have a youth RE party during the meeting, and hopefully a few of you can volunteer to play with our youth instead of attending. Watch for details and reports coming to you by email and printed out ahead of time. See you there!

Rachel Long, President, Prairie UU Society



Social Action Notes

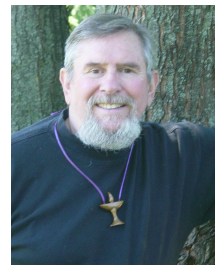
The Prairie Social Action committee will begin collecting white socks for migrants in Arizona. The UU Church of Tucson's ministry of No More Deaths gives medical aid to migrants found in the desert or deported to an aid station in Mexico. A frequent medical care given to migrants is to dress blistered and bleeding feet. The UU Church of Tucson will be receiving the Bennet award at General Assembly this June in Minneapolis for their work, and this is a small but important way Prairie can support our larger UU social justice ministries. Mary Somers and Nancy Graham will be able to take the socks to Tucson in the fall when they return. There will be a basket in the lobby of Prairie for members to leave socks.

Mary Somers
Social Action Chair

Rev. Ralph's Ruminations

Dear Prairie Members and Friends;

It's Springtime and the daytime temperatures have gone from Winter brisk to Summer heat! Living in South Central Wisconsin conditions us to deal with the kinds of changes that our weather brings that can challenge our sensibilities. We have little to control the way our weather changes. However, this is not the case for the way we deal with change in our congregational life. I have found the following piece to be helpful and meaningful in providing a "framework" for understanding the social and interpersonal dynamics of congregational life. It is especially insightful about the way a congregation faces "transitions" and how individuals bring their internal needs, desires and expectations to deal with "big" changes. I hope you will find some of the insights that Ken Brown makes applicable to making Prairie a healthier congregation.



Change in Small Congregations

by Rev. Dr. Ken Brown, District Executive for the Pacific Southwest District

Change is always difficult, yet it happens every day in our lives in small and big ways. It is also a regular component of congregational life. When a visitor shows up on a Sunday, the dynamics in a congregation have changed, particularly if the newcomer stays. We all need to be aware of the small changes, but the leadership needs to plan for the bigger changes, like finding a new meeting space, calling the first minister, changing the time of the worship service. In small congregations the impact of such change can be more immediate and problematic. Thus it is vitally important for the leadership of small congregations to plan for such change. Having a clear shared mission on which the congregation can build change is the beginning. Any change of import must be based on a plan that helps fulfill the congregation's mission.

William Bridges suggests, in his book *Managing Transitions*, that it is not the change that impacts organizations like congregations, it is the transition. Once the plan for a change becomes clear to those in charge of the planning, the leaders need to plan for the transition. Too often the leaders of any change try to push or pull people into the change without allowing for the transition that people must go through.

Bridges states that change is external, representing the different practice, structure, or policy that a congregation faces. The transition is internal; it is what impacts people; it is the psychological reorientation that people go through that leads to the change. There are three different processes that a congregation moves through to get to the change.

The first is saying goodbye to whatever must be given up in order to move toward the change. Leaders need to be in conversation in multiple ways with congregational members, to listen to their feelings and to help them understand that any change means that some ways of doing things will end. Only by listening to congregational members can you help people understand

that while they may be giving up something they love, by moving to a new site, for instance, or bringing in a new minister, that there are other things that will be gained that will help the congregation achieve its mission.

The second step in the transition involves helping people move into the neutral zone. Even after people have become willing to let go of the way things were done in the past, they are not immediately able to start anew. Bridges suggests that the neutral zone is the place where people can process their feelings and begin to understand how the change will help them and the congregation achieves their mission. This may be an uncomfortable phase but the wise leader allows space for people to sit with the impact of the change. The wise leader will not push people into the third stage but will let them work things through and calmly answer people's questions.

The last stage is moving forward into what Bridges calls "the new beginning." Moving into this stage means that people have worked through enough of their emotions and questions to accept the change. The trick is to recognize that not everyone will move to stage three; in fact, at any given time some folks will not move out of stage one. Leadership needs to recognize this fact of community life and still move ahead.



One problem in many congregations, particularly small congregations, is that we allow a few people to block a change that has been well thought out and fits with the congregation's mission. This last step of communicating with those who insist on not moving into the third stage is crucial. We need to say to these people that while we care about them, the congregation is moving forward, and we hope they will move with us, but if they cannot we understand. You might even suggest they take time off for a while but if they have to leave you understand. Leadership cannot be held hostage by a few people. Threats of withholding pledges, quitting the congregation, or other such actions should not prevent a congregation from moving forward. This is difficult in small congregations where people feel they cannot lose any members. But if a congregation is to survive into the future such choices must be made.

Transition work leaders must also recognize that the more time one spends on managing the various stages, the longer it will take to move to the new beginning. Yet if the leadership is willing to take this time, the change will be easier in the long run.

Change is part of being human, part of any congregation. Taking time to understand transition is very important for making change in our congregations. If you want to learn more about the work of William Bridges, you can read his book *Managing Transitions*, from Perseus Publishers. Also remember that your District staff understands the role of transitions in congregational life and may be able to help your congregation in such situations."

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Glad to be journeying with you,
Rev. Ralph

UU Community News

Food and Faith--A Sacred Connection

"Eating is perhaps the most intimate way in which we engage with the world around us... The manner and substance of our eating should reflect our spiritual and ethical values, and a positive relationship with the earth."

-- Jack Kloppenburg, Professor of Community and Environmental Sociology at UW-Madison

Well-known UW professor and food activist, Jack Kloppenburg, will kick off an afternoon of thought and action on the theme "The Sacred Act of Eating" on Sunday, April 25 from 2:00 to 6:30 p.m. at the First Unitarian Meeting House, 900 University Bay Drive, Madison. This, the fourth annual "Food, Faith and Earth Day" event will feature an interfaith panel reflecting on sacred food traditions, music, workshops, and exhibits. It will culminate in a community meal featuring locally-grown food prepared by Chef Barbara Wright of The Dardanelles Restaurant in Madison.

The event is free except for dinner which is \$8 with an advance reservation or \$12 at the door. For more information or dinner and childcare reservations, go to www.foodfaithearthday.org.

Sauk City UU Seeking part-time administrator

The Sauk City Unitarian Universalist Congregation is seeking a part time administrator to begin July 2010. For more information about the position, please visit their website <http://www.freecongregation.org/about-us/staff/admin-position/>.

Home Hospitality for WIAA Track meet in LaCrosse

At the UU Fellowship of La Crosse, their youth will be attending the Heifer International Global Village in Perry, AK, this summer. They are hoping to take advantage of the influx of WIAA state track meet visitors in May by offering home hospitality to fellow UUs from around the state. Their suggested donation is \$60 per night. If you will be traveling to the meet and would like more information, please contact Kim Cobb, RE committee, at [kimcobb \(at\) charter.net](mailto:kimcobb@charter.net).

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of North Bay Offers WINE COUNTRY HOLIDAY

The UU's of Napa, California proudly announce a new season of our Wine Country Excursions. Again, we offer a variety of options for an inside look at one of America's most beautiful areas, internationally known for fine wines, gourmet dining and spectacular vistas. There much to see and do in the Napa and Sonoma Valleys: e.g. wine tasting at renowned and boutique wineries; visits to art galleries and museums; exploring the natural beauty of our hills and valleys on miles of hiking and bike trails or by car on our highways and back country roads. *We offer two choices:* Both start with comfortable lodging in members' homes with full breakfast (up to 3 nights). You can choose a 2-day "Wine Country Excursion," a guided, personalized tour conducted by one of our members--some with wine industry experience--or lodging and self-guided touring. If desired, we provide guidance, maps, etc. The program runs from April through October. Our fees are below market rate for similar services and *all proceeds go to our small fellowship*. For complete details contact: Tom Wilson (707-254-7443) or [2wilsons1dog \(at\) comcast.net](mailto:2wilsons1dog@comcast.net). *We look forward to sharing our lovely "home" with you!*



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