



# Prairie Fire

**November 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](http://www.uuprairie.org)

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## Calendar

### Tuesday, November 23, 2010

2:00 Prairie Elders meet at Oakwood. Topic is mid-term election outcomes.

### Wednesday, November 24, 2010

7:00 Joint UU Thanksgiving Service at First Society.

### Sunday, November 28, 2010

10:00 Service - "This I Believe," presented by a panel of Prairie members.

### Wednesday, December 1, 2010

Calendar items and announcements due for Prairie Fire Bulletin.

### Thursday, December 2, 2010

7:00 Prairie Board meeting.

### Saturday, December 4, 2010

9:00 WOW (Prairie's women's group) will meet at Prairie for breakfast potluck and conversation.

### Sunday, December 5, 2010

8:45 Choir Rehearsal

10:00 Service - "How Benedictine Values Affirm and Promote the 7th Principle," presented by the Sisters of the Holy Wisdom Monastery.

11:45 Humanist Union meets.

### Monday, December 6, 2010

7:00 RE Committee meets.

### Sunday, December 12, 2010

8:45 Choir Rehearsal

9:30 Nifty Gifty!

10:00 Service - "In the Midst of Darkness," presented by Rev. Jane Esbensen

### Wednesday, December 15, 2010

Articles and more due for Prairie Fire Newsletter.

7:00 Program committee meets

## Holiday Services and Events:

Sunday, December 19<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am: "A Very Prairie Holiday," presented by Karen Deaton. (Santa Lucia and Symbol Tree.)

Thursday, December 23<sup>rd</sup> at 5:30 pm: HumanLight Celebration & Humanist Union holiday party.

Friday, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 pm: Christmas Eve service of carols and candle light, presented by Doleta Chapru and Kate Liu.

## Upcoming Programs

**Sunday, November 28, 2010, 10:00 am: "This I Believe," presented by a panel of Prairie members.** This popular lay ministry series presents the spiritual journeys of three of Prairie's members. In this installment, we get to learn the beliefs and share the stories of Kate Liu, Prairie's administrator; Nick Abts, chair of the Program Committee, and Dorothy Krause, chair of the communications committee. The emphasis in this series is on the diversity of beliefs in our shared community.

**Sunday, December 5, 2010, 10:00 am: "How Benedictine Values Affirm and Promote the 7th Principle," presented by the Sisters of the Holy Wisdom Monastery.** This is the second in the lay series: How the world's religions use their beliefs and practices to care for our environment. Benedictine sisters Mary David Walgenbach, and Mary Lynn Adams from Holy Wisdom Monastery will share how their values of commitment to justice and peacemaking, caring for the earth and progressive attitude and approach to life affirm and promote our principles specifically, our 7th principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. In March 2010 the U.S. Green Building Council awarded Holy Wisdom Monastery a Platinum rating – the highest level of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) certification available and is currently the highest-rated LEED-New Construction building in the United States.

**Sunday, December 12, 2010, 10:00am: "In the Midst of Darkness," presented by Rev. Jane Esbensen.** These are the contemplative days of winter, where the outside world often more poignantly reflects our inner world. Come and join us for a service of poetry and of peacefulness, of music and song and silence, as we attend to the darkness and find beauty and hope.

**Sunday, December 19, 2010, 10:00 am – "A Very Prairie Holiday," presented by Karen Deaton.** Come enjoy Prairie's winter holiday traditions. We will celebrate the light of hope in the dark of winter with our children's candlelight Santa Lucia procession. We will also decorate our Symbol Tree. Bring a trinket, picture, or note that commemorates something significant in your life this year. Tell the congregation a little about it, and hang it on the tree. As the tree is covered in sad, funny, troublesome, joyous, and thought-provoking momentos, it becomes a symbol of the richness of our lives.

### 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.

## Religious Education News

Our children in the Preschool-Kindergarten class have been having lots of fun with RE teacher Carl Wacker. They have been learning about sharing, taking turns and the environment. I was pleasantly surprised when my own son, Indy, and student Gil Pawelski excitedly showed me their bag of garbage they had collected from the neighborhood that morning. I've now noticed that when we are outside at home Indy will promptly throw away any garbage he sees into the bins. Thanks Carl!

Ruth Calden and Patty Stockdale have really put together an exciting 1st-3rd grade class this year. Each week students learn something new about Jewish and Christian holidays. Both teachers have put in a lot of time and energy into planning their sessions making sure they're fun and exciting with crafts, stories and music. Thank you!

Robin Proud and Mary Frantz have been teaching students in their 4th-6<sup>th</sup> grade class about Jesus and what it must have been like for him to grow up. They have created a model of what his village might have looked like. Come downstairs and check it out sometime! They've also spent a lot of time practicing for this Sunday's service. Many thanks to Robin for directing this play.



On Sunday, October 31st our middle and high school class took a trip to Circle Sanctuary, the pagan center near Barneveld, to take part in their annual Samhain festival. We attended a Native American workshop about their views on the afterlife, took part in a pagan ritual and had a wonderful potluck lunch with all who attended the festival. It was a very fascinating experience.

This month students will learn about Christianity and take a field trip to Holy Wisdom Monastery in Middleton on Sunday, Nov. 28th. We will attend their service, have a Q&A session with one of the Sisters and then take a tour of their 95-acre Prairie land.

If you would like to attend any of the field trips or listen to any of our speakers you are most welcome to join us. This is an educational experience that is not limited to RE youth. Teachers are Dan Proud and Robin Perrin.

Coming up on December 12th is our annual Nifty Gifty event! As always we will be making 10 crafts downstairs to be given to family and friends for the holidays. If you would like to help our children with craft making that day please let me know. There will be festive music and food along with simple craft making and gift wrapping.

It's the most wonderful time of the year...

*Rebecca Malke*  
*Director of Religious Education*

## Our Society

### **Prairie Elders meetings**

Prairie Elders is a group of over-65 Prairie members who meet once a month (generally on the 4th Tuesday) at Oakwood, in the Nakoma room, Heritage Oaks building, Oakwood Village West, for conversation and mutual support. The next meeting will be Tuesday, November . Call contacts below for directions, parking or a ride. If convenient, bring your own beverage cup and a few snacks. Newcomers welcome.

This month's meeting: Tuesday, November 23, at 2 pm. Topic: Midterm Elections. Any aspect you wish to comment on, including anticipated changes and suggestions for future action.

Prairie Elders aims to provide good times and mutual support for Prairie UU Members and Friends over 65 and UUs living at the facility where we meet. Our "round robin" format makes it easier to hear and gives all the option of speaking. Topics alternate between general issues and personal interests. Contacts: Donna Murdoch 238-3802, Gordon Cunningham 230-3367, Rosemary Dorney 238-4382 or Rose Smith 233-3363. Call Donna to add your name to the mailing list.

*Doleta Chapru*

### **WOW News**

WOW – Prairie's wild, outstanding women, meet once a month for breakfast potluck and conversation. Our usual meeting time is 9am on the first Saturday of the month, sometimes at Prairie and sometimes at a member's home. In December we will meet on the 4<sup>th</sup>, at Prairie. In addition to our regular check-in, in December we will make gift baskets.

Any questions or emails to add to the email group call 276 8397 or email marysomers44 (at) charter.net

*Mary Somers, WOW coordinator*

## Prairie Book Club Update

The Prairie Book Club meets monthly, usually the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month after the service at Prairie, at 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. For more information, contact Mary Mullen, 608.298.0843 or mmullen(at)chorus.net.

Sunday, December 19 – White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son is a non-fiction book by the anti-racist writer and educator Tim Wise. It is a personal account of how he became aware of white privilege and racism in American society through his experiences with his family and in his community, and how this led him to become an activist and writer against discrimination and racism.

Sunday, January 16 - Rabbit Redux, by John Updike. This one is the sequel to Rabbit, Run. It follows Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom, working a dead-end job in Brewer, PA. His wife leaves him and his 12-year-old son. During this chaotic time when the nation is also in chaos (1969), Rabbit and his son are joined in their household by an African American Vietnam vet and a wealthy white teenager, Jill. Published in 1971.



*Mary Mullen*  
*Book Club Coordinator*

## Humanist Union News

The Humanist Union's next monthly meeting will be on December 5, starting as usual with a potluck lunch at 11:45 am followed by presentation and discussion 12:30 to 1:30 pm. Our presenter will be Prairie member Galen Smith and his topic is "Religious aspects of population growth". All who are interested in hearing Galen talk about global population growth, which has long been one of his concerns, are invited to attend.

*Bob Park*  
*Humanist Union*

## Social Action News

### Help Feed the Hungry

WHEN: Saturday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 5:00 a.m. to around 7:30. (You may leave earlier if you need to.)

WHERE: Grace Episcopal Church (on the square)

WHAT: Provide breakfast for men in Drop-In Shelter (a joint service project with James Reeb UU Society)

EXACTLY WHAT: crack open and beat eggs, chop green peppers and precooked bacon, cook eggs, pass out juice, serve up scrambled eggs, hand out lunches. You don't have to make coffee or wash up.

### PERKS:

- \* Meeting a part of the Madison community you may not have had the opportunity to meet before.
- \* Being the recipient of their appreciation.
- \* Getting to know some of the great folks from Reeb
- \* Greeting the dawn when you leave the church.
- \* Feeling great that you've done it.
- \* Being able to get to the Farmer's Market when everything is at its freshest.

Please email or call me if you would like to volunteer on the 4th. There's a possibility that volunteers can carpool. If you have never volunteered at the shelter before, don't worry, there will be one or more experienced volunteers there to show you the ropes.

Paula Pachciarz  
273-4806  
pjpchz(at)gmail.com

## Ponderings From Atop a Prairie.....

Ah, the lovely days of November are here! And what a blessedly mild November we have had! Unfortunately, even these seemingly mild days are not always easy days for those of us who are jobless, or are going through family crises, or are experiencing health problems, or have received a scary prognoses, or are feeling that our lives are really hard to live.....

November, December and January are historically low point months in many people's lives, especially in these colder climates. The chilly weather, the early darkness, the difficulty in getting around can all wreak havoc upon our psyches.

This is exactly when a community of kind, thoughtful, open-hearted members of a religious organization comes into play in a very major way. It is here we are reminded that we are not alone. It is here we see that we have each other on Sunday mornings, in committee work (yes, committee gatherings can be very nourishing!), over Circle Dinners or just by calling each other up and saying, "Do you want to come over for a bite?"



In the Scandinavian cultures, this "come over for a bite" is a part of the everyday life, a part of the fabric of society, and this coming together on a regular basis has, over time, created a culture that focuses more on the "other" than it does on "one's self", which plays itself out in humanitarian ways, for when there is a focus on the "other" the "self" is healed and nurtured, gladdened and calmed. When we come together, when we take time for one another, our lives are made richer, along with the lives of those we are lucky enough to share some time with.

So, I encourage us all in these coming months to pick up the phone and give a call to someone, invite them over, take some time to just be together. You don't have to spend money, or clean your house, or change into nice clothes, or find a place for the kids, or or or or or.....Just pick up the phone and make the call and see what happens. Our culture used to be more like this, but we've become more isolated over time, and many of the stresses we feel come from that disconnect.

So let's start some healing for ourselves and for others, for this fragile country of ours. Over a few decades, we have lost some simple acts of neighborliness which I believe would help us pave the way toward rebuilding the nation of unity that we envision, if we were to take up these gestures again. Let's do what is simple, but somehow forgotten, in these dark months ahead – let's welcome each other into our homes and into our lives, for the good of us all.

And Happy Thanksgiving to YOU!

Most affectionately,  
Jane

## New Member News

Please give a warm welcome to new member, Carol Gruba! Carol and her husband Mike are listed in the most recent Prairie directory (from October 2010.) A profile on Carol will appear in next month's Prairie Fire.

## UU News

### Welcome a Guest at Your Table

Starting now, Prairie will be participating in the Guest at Your Table program. Guest at Your Table supports the human rights efforts of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC.) Families are encouraged to pick up a box and the booklet "Stories of Hope" which chronicles personal stories of people working with the UUSC. Every time you sit down to a meal together, put a little something in the box; then at the end of the collection period, bring your box back to Prairie and we will pool our collections together to make a donation to support the UUSC. If you have any questions, please contact Christina Klock, chair of Denominational Affairs, who will be organizing our participation. You can pick up your box on the table with the "Standing on the Side of Love" items, and the boxes will be due back to Prairie on December 19<sup>th</sup>.



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