

Prairie Fire

January 2014



Prairie Calendar

(See descriptions of programs below)

- Sat. Jan 4 9-11 am - **WOW@Prairie**
Sun. Jan 5 10 am - **Service: "What 3 People Would You Like To Have Dinner and a Drink With?"**
12 noon - **Humanist Union potluck and discussion**
5:30 pm - **Men's Group**
Sun. Jan 12 10 am - **Service: "Our First Principle: Some Philosophical Thoughts on Personhood"** - Matt Tedesco
11:30 am - **Book Club**
Sun. Jan 19 10 am - **Service: "The Wisdom of Martin Luther King, Jr."**
Mon. Jan 20 6:30 - **Spanish Speakers Potluck**
Sat. Jan 25 4 pm - **Wild Wintering**
Sun. Jan 26 10 am - **Service: TBA** - Sandra Ingham

WOW @Prairie: Women of Wonder meets every 1st Saturday of the month 9-11 am at Prairie. Bring a breakfast/brunch dish to share. Contact: Anne Urbanski 221-4053
<mailto:anneu53714@gmail.com>

"What 3 People Would You Like To Have Dinner and a Drink With?": This will be a DIY service. The congregation will share their ideal dinner party guest list and why they were chosen. This could tell you a lot about your fellow participants in this exercise.

Humanist Union will have a potluck followed by discussion. Ken Haydock will lead our discussion on "Dr. Tyson Identifies Himself: A Consideration of Labels." The YouTube video titled "[Neil deGrasse Tyson: Atheist or Agnostic?](#)" will be part of the discussion.

Men's Group: The Men's Group meets the 1st Sunday of the month at Prairie. Bring a dish to pass. Contact: Dan Proud <mailto:derrproud@att.net>

"Our First Principle -- Some Philosophical Thoughts on Personhood": Our own Matt Tedesco, a professor of Philosophy at Beloit College says about his presentation, "My goal is not to defend any particular position on the moral status of abortion generally, or 20-week bans specifically, but rather to engage some philosophical literature on personhood. But it might be a little bit provocative, because some views of personhood entail that newborn children are not persons. My hope is really just to present some interesting questions, in order to spark some thought and discussion."

Book Club will discuss the second half of *The Chocolate Wars* by Debra Cadbury. The author is a descendent of the Cadbury dynasty and is a best selling author and TV producer for the BBC.

"The Wisdom of Martin Luther King, Jr.": Martin Luther King, Jr. was more than his "I Have a Dream" speech. The Prairie Readers will bring to life some of his lesser known, but inspiring works.

Spanish Speakers Club will meet at the home of Ray Nashold, 5410 Esther Beach Rd. Please bring a dish to pass, if you can - everyone welcome! More info or to arrange a ride contact Rosemary Dorney 238-4382.

Wild Wintering invites you to join the Children's Religious Education program for our annual event. This "wild wintering" includes snow activities, taffy pulling, gingerbread decorating and an overnight for kids 10 years of age and older. If you would like to volunteer to assist with any activity, or need more info regarding the event, contact Rebecca at dre@uuprairie.org.

Prairie News

"Guests at Your Table" Reminder: If you still have a box at home, be sure to return it by the end of January! Thanks to all who have participated!

Adult Religious Education Classes: Rev. Sandy wants to know if there is any interest "out there" in Adult Religious Education classes. If so, what specifically would you like to know more about: Unitarian Universalist history; Perhaps a "Building Your Own Theology" class; or maybe an exploration of Islam or Buddhism or Native American spirituality? What are the best times and days of the week for you to attend a class? Thanks for your input!

Clean Sweep in 2014: In the new year, a crew from the Hospitality Committee will be cleaning and organizing the Prairie kitchen at the meetinghouse. We ask that you pick up any items you may have left there by January 4th. Unclaimed dishes or other items will be donated or thrown out. Unmarked food or food that is not clearly designated will be handled the same way. We hope that a few simple guidelines will cut down on the accumulation of donated items and food that we don't need. We understand that it is easy to forget a dish or food container after a potluck and only ask that you try not to let too much time go by before you pick it up.

- * CHECK before donating to see if the item or food is wanted and will be used soon. (Paula Pachciarz, Barbara Chatterton, or the group or individual it's going to.)
- * LABEL anything you leave with the date, your name, and the name of the group or individual it is going to.
- * Donate only FAIR TRADE or EQUAL EXCHANGE, & USDA ORGANIC, tea, coffee, or hot chocolate for Sunday morning coffee. No loose-leaf tea please!
- * PLAN FOR the back end. If something needs to be done with the item/food after it is used, make sure someone is responsible for that (washing, returning, disposing, etc.) so that it's not left for the Hospitality Committee to do.

Thank you for helping out, Paula Pachciarz, Hospitality Committee

Interfaith Hospitality Network Week is January 19 to 26: One of Prairie's social action commitments is being a buddy church for Midvale Lutheran as they house homeless families as part of the Interfaith Hospitality Network, which is part of The Road Home. Please consider volunteering to serve dinner or various other jobs to help Prairie honor its commitment to this wonderful organization. You can call Erin Bosch for more information about IHN (238-6285), You can go to this website for an explanation of the volunteer jobs and to sign up online: <http://midvalelutheran.org/share/our-community/road-home>

...and Now a Word from the Rev.

~ Sandra Ingham

While looking for a reading for the Sunday before New Year's Day, I found something that seemed as if it had been written just for me. In a meditation titled, "Unexpected New Year", Unitarian Universalist minister, David Blanchard wrote this, "There are such things as "new years" in all of our lives. But rarely do I think they begin and end according to the Roman calendar. They begin and end... at rather arbitrary moments of transformation... when we begin a new job,... write a poem, change our mind, get sick, lose a friend, look in a mirror."

Ah, yes, I have had that experience and I am eagerly anticipating having it again very soon, having been sick for several days, including Christmas Day. I am rarely sick and even more rarely do I admit to it. But, reading Blanchard's words, I remembered that I usually rebound from my rare times of illness into something that is akin to starting a new year. Only this time, my recovery looks to be on track for coinciding with the "real" New Year's Day, Wednesday, the first of January.

All of which reminds me of words that I used on December 29th, words from UU minister Marilyn Sewell: "What is the dragon you will do battle with in the new year?... Treat your body like a friend: care for it, and make it strong. Whatever you disrespect in yourself, stop doing it, for strength to fight the dragon can only come from within, from a pure heart." Any day now, I hope to be ready to slay dragons, my own and any other ones people ask me to help them with. Let me know how -- and if -- I can help you.

Whatever illness I had, resulted in my losing my voice. I trust that it will soon completely return and that I will remember to take better care of myself, so I can be full-voiced when the dragons come around. What will you do with your voice in the new year, assuming you haven't lost it? I hope that you will use it wisely and appreciate what a wondrous gift it is.

Happy New Year! Rev. Sandy

RE Circle of Friends

~ Rebecca Malke, Director of Religious Education

What a year it has been! I've had the pleasure of seeing a lot of new smiley faces in children's religious education. We've seen a growth in all age groups, especially our preschool through 5K class. Our high school class has doubled in size! And it's not just an increase in the number of students but an increase in regular attendance. Last year I saw an average of 10 students across

all age ranges attend Sunday morning RE classes. This year there has been an average of 20 students per week! This year we had our largest Nifty Gifty attendance of 27 students.

I've also seen new faces in the teaching staff. I would like to give another warm welcome to our three new teachers: Johanna Hatch (Preschool-5K), Kent Wenger (1st-3rd grade) and Ken Haydock (8-12th grade). And I would like to welcome back Paula Pachciarz (Preschool-5K), Karen Deaton (1st-3rd grade) Robin Proud, Rick Ruecking and Anne Pryor (4-7th grade), Rachel Long and Carl Wacker (8-12th grade).

The RE Committee has even seen an increase. Prairie's newest member, Joceyln Cooper, joined the RE Committee a few months ago and has been a wonderful addition to the group. Her insights, comments and suggestions have helped us expand the program. Thank you, Joceyln!

Our theme, "Our Religious Sources: World Religions" will continue this spring with classes starting Sunday, January 5th. Our children have been focusing on Judaism and Christianity and will move on to Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Paganism. Students in grades 4 and up will continue to have field trips to various places of worship and visits by speakers of those faiths. We'll be using Skype to talk to Hindu families in India and hopefully be able to Skype a speaker when we get to Islam.

Nifty Gifty was on December 8th and was once again, a huge success. In addition to the number of children, we had some new volunteers as well. Phil and Kial helped children make necklaces and lapel pins, Penny Eiler helped make garlands, Anne Pryor and Randy Converse helped children wrap presents, and Cecelia Whitehead, our high school student was in charge of the very popular snowflake rulers. Thank you to all who volunteered: Paula Pachciarz, Sky Wacker, Anne Urbanski, Patty Stockdale, John Richards, and Carl Wacker for taking pictures.

A special thank you to the Converse family for making this event possible. Randy and Mei-Lien not only helped out the entire time, but also stayed to help me clean up. And it wouldn't be Nifty Gifty without the queen of crafts, Kathy Converse. Kathy spent a lot of time coming up with ideas and meeting with me to plan out crafts, supplies and arrangements. Thank you!

Spring semester will have some very fun events for the children and for everyone at Prairie UU Society. Saturday, January 25th is Wild Wintering. Everyone is invited to make gingerbread cookies, eat dinner, play games and join in on taffy pulling! February and March will be Mystery Friends, so if you're interested in being a friend to one of our youth be sure to see me early. This is a very popular program and every year I end up having to turn away adults.

If you haven't already picked up your spring semester calendar from the visitor's table or downloaded it from the Prairie UU Society website, please be sure to do so. Up-to-date information can always be found at www.uuprairie.org/re, RE bulletin boards and the visitor's table. I wish you all a safe and happy new year. - See you on Sunday!

Who's New @ Prairie



Tom Robinson and Cheryl Robinson were Prairie UU members in the late '80's and early '90's. We recently moved back to the area from Carbondale, IL. We have a son, Mark, who has lived in Madison since 1987. He and his wonderful wife Gianna have recently blessed us with our first grandchild, Bianca, who is now 6 months old.

We are both retired. Tom's career and education were in all facets of commercial construction, from carpentry to estimating to project management. Cheryl's education and career years were in direct client service in training independent living skills to children and adults with developmental disabilities. Later, her jobs were in supervision of staff and programs to train differently abled persons to live and work more independently. ,

We love to go camping in our fifth wheel camper. We were full-time RV residents for most of four years, until this past September. We served as Campground Hosts for 7 months of the year at a State Campground in 2008 and 2009.

Tom enjoys biking and "fixing" things mechanical and electrical. Cheryl enjoys decorating. Tom & Cheryl have owned a total of four older homes from the 1920's and the Victorian era, and have restored and decorated them extensively while they lived in them. Cheryl also likes to take exercise classes, especially water aerobics. Other than camping, and traveling when we can, we both enjoy visiting with friends, babysitting our granddaughter, reading, and the companionship of our Golden Retriever, Roxie.

Visit Prairie's website (see below) for further information

Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society

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