

# Prairie Fire

**October 2014**

## Prairie Calendar

(See descriptions of programs below)



- Sat. Oct 4** 5-7 am **Men's Shelter Breakfast:** Prairie & Reeb  
9 am **WOW@Prairie**
- Sun. Oct 5** 10 am **Service - The Literacy Network** - Jeff Burkhart  
11:45 am **Humanist Union**  
5:30 pm **Men's Group**
- Sat. Oct 11** 9:30 am **Final Choices Workshop**
- Sun. Oct 12** 10 am **Service - "Conflicted about Compassion"** - Rev. Sandra Ingham  
11:30 am **Prairie Book Club** (with potluck)
- Sat. Oct 18** 9:30 am **Final Choices Workshop**
- Sun. Oct 19** 10 am **Service – Not known at this time**  
**Soup Sunday**  
1:30 pm **CROP Walk**
- Sat. Oct 25** 9:30 am **Final Choices Workshop**
- Sun. Oct 26** 10 am **Service – Not known at this time**
- Tues. Oct 28** 1:30 pm **Prairie Elders**

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**Men's Shelter Breakfast: Prairie & Reeb:** If you can help make breakfast, please let Paula Pachciarz know. (pjpchz@gmail.com)

**WOW@Prairie:** Women of Wonder meets every 1st Saturday of the month at Prairie. Bring a breakfast/brunch dish to share. Contact: Anne Urbanski, 221-4053; anne53714@gmail.com

**The Literacy Network**, established in 1974, is a not-for-profit organization. It is committed to providing basic literacy services to adults and families in Dane County, so they can succeed in the workplace, better understand health issues, and provide supportive environments for the education of children. Jeff Burkhart is the executive director of the Literacy Network and will speak to us about the Literacy Network's wonderful services to the community.

**Humanist Union** will discuss *The Moral Landscape: How Science Can Determine Human Values*, by Sam Harris. We'll start at 11:45 with our usual potluck lunch. At 12:30, Susan Hagstrom will review the book, followed by discussion on issues raised by the book: moral relativism, actuality/illusion, etc. Those at the meeting may also want to comment on media coverage of the Sunday Assembly launch events in many cities on Sept. 28.

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

**"Conflicted about Compassion":** Compassion is a word Unitarian Universalists use willingly and frequently. But, do we truly understand what the word means? Do we really know how to act compassionately? If so, why aren't we more compassionate beings? Why don't we practice compassion more frequently? Someone who appears not to be conflicted about compassion in the least is author and theologian Karen Armstrong, who has been called "one of the most original thinkers on the role of religion in the modern world". One of her most recent books is "Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life". The Charter for Compassion was her idea. Aren't sure what that is? Come and find out on October 12. We can learn a lot from Armstrong. Maybe we will even decide to sign the Charter for Compassion.

**Prairie Book Club** will be discussing *The Orchardist*, by Amanda Coplin. It is a tale of the Northwest at the turn of the 20th Century. Goodreads review states, "Set in the untamed American West, a highly original and haunting debut novel about a makeshift family whose dramatic lives are shaped by violence, love, and an indelible connection to the land."

**Final Choices Workshops** is a series of three workshops which will be held at Prairie this month for interested Prairie members. (See also Prairie News)

**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. The topic this month is "Food and Me: Likes, Dislikes, and Hang-ups." If convenient, bring your own beverage cup and a few snacks. Newcomers welcome. Nakoma Room, Heritage Oaks building, Oakwood Village West. Call for directions, parking or a ride. Rosemary Dorney (238-4382) or Donna Murdoch (238-3802).

## **Message from the President**

**~ Gary Gates**

Prairie is a wonderful place! Let's keep it just like it is! This is a very natural and understandable reaction as we contemplate something we love. It is also an impossibility. Everything changes. If we try to keep what we love just like it is, we'll lose out on chances to discover new opportunities to love. We'll also lose what we have now, no matter how hard we try to hold onto it.

Let's start a process of looking at what we need to do to keep Prairie thriving and relevant as the world changes. Let's explore how the Prairie we love can help make a better world and how we can continue to be proud of it in the future.

In the next month or two I'd like to appoint a task force, committee or whatever we choose to call it to explore our Bond of Union, Mission, Congregational Covenant of Good Relations and what we can do to ensure that we are actively putting our principles into action.

If you would like to be part of this process I'd like to hear from you, especially if you'd like to lead this effort. If I don't hear from you, you may be hearing from me!

## **Musings from the Minister**

**~ Reverend Sandra Ingham**

Two events occurred during the last full week of September, within just three days of each other -- two things that signify change. First was the autumnal equinox; next came Rosh Hashanah, the beginning of the Jewish High Holidays, which will culminate in ten days with Yom Kippur. The equinox, of course, marks the changing of the seasons, this time from summer to fall. Rosh Hashanah, for our Jewish friends, marks the beginning of a period of contemplation and soul-searching. It is a time to ask forgiveness of ourselves and then of each other, in order that we can change our ways and hopefully, become better people, more compassionate, forgiving, and understanding beings.

Though I am not Jewish, sometimes I wonder if perhaps someone in my ancestral tree was because the High Holidays mean a lot to me. I do try, every year, to observe them in some way. I have been contemplating the idea of change the last few days. There is a saying that the only constant in life is change... and, yet, I don't know very many people who welcome change; who feel they are enriched and energized, challenged and stretched for the better by change.

On the contrary, I am much more likely to hear people say, "I don't like change." How does this apply to our Prairie community, I wonder? Because I think that Prairie is changing -- in a good way, I mean. Our numbers are getting just a little beyond the point where a congregation is often referred to as a "family church" (or society or fellowship). But, as we gain more members, we are moving into a different stage, more of what is sometimes called a "program church".

I would like to have a dollar for every time I have heard this statement: "We (meaning Prairie UU) want to grow, but we don't want anything to change." ... Why do people say this? Perhaps because the general opinion regarding change is that it is a bad thing and that adjusting to change is painful. It doesn't have to be that way, though. Growing beyond what can be described as a "family church" does not mean we cease to be a community that cares about one another. Change can be a positive thing. Change can be challenging in the best sense of that word. One way to prepare for change and to make adjusting smoother is to talk about our concerns and fears about Prairie's future.

So talk to each other. Talk to me. Ask me questions. Give me your opinions about where Prairie is going and where you would like it to go. Some of my goals are to have us be ever-more inclusive; to stretch us so that people of all theological beliefs are indeed welcome here; to spread the word about Unitarian Universalism in general and Prairie in particular; and to have us be engaged in as many social justice projects as possible.... As it says in the song, "Enter, Rejoice, and Come In", one of my favorite hymns: "Don't be afraid of some change. Don't be afraid of some change. Today will be a joyful day; enter, rejoice, and come in."

## **Prairie News**

**Prairie Choir Begins for the New Season!** Prairie's Choir is a group of 10-20 people who like to sing and are willing to get up early on Sunday morning! We have begun practicing and you are all welcome to join us. We are open to anyone who likes to sing and there is no audition.

The choir meets every Sunday morning at 8:45 and sings about once a month. We will be beginning with some easier pieces and work our way to some more challenging ones. Have kids? Childcare is provided with you in mind. Come join us! Questions? Call Barb Park, Director (608) 273-8775 or [barpark@gmail.com](mailto:barpark@gmail.com)

**Final Choices Workshops**, a series of three workshops will be held at Prairie in October for interested Prairie members. The purpose of the workshops is for participants to plan ahead for end-of-life decisions. Regardless of what age or stage we are at, we need to address the legal and medical decisions to meet our personal wishes and get our plans in order. The workshops, sponsored by the Caring Committee, will include speakers, discussions, and personal planning. We will use the First Society resource "Final Choices" as a framework, with copies for participants. The three workshops are as follows:

**October 11 10am-12 noon Session I:** Legal Matters: Estate Planning, Durable Power of Attorney, Personal Representative Presentation by Heather Wilson

**October 18 10am-12 noon Session II:** Conversations about Our Decisions for End-of-Life: Presentation by Jim Jaeger

**October 25 10am-12 noon Session III:** Participants will choose one of these topics for the final workshop:

- Follow-up with Jim Jaeger
- Emotional Issues Related to End-of-Life
- Pre-planning for Funeral/Memorial Service, Obituary, Cremation/burial

**Circle Dinners** sign-ups for this year begin Sunday Oct 5, and continue until Oct 19. Circle Dinners are rotating potlucks among assigned groups of Prairie members/families. If you join, you agree to host one meal for your group during the year. This is a fabulous way to learn more about a set of Prairie friends. People usually host in their home or creatively find another location such as at the Prairie building, a community site, private club or park shelter, or arrange for a meal at a local restaurant.

The clipboard for sign-ups will be available in the foyer. Some preferences as to group size limits, schedules and other conditions can be made. The Membership Committee will try to accommodate requests but revises the group members every year and assigns new and established Prairie members and friends to all groups. Both Rick Ruecking 838-8540 and Dan Proud 212-3793 are available to answer questions or concerns about the Circle Dinners. Please join us!

Prairie will conduct a Circle Dinner kickoff lunch during the Soup Sunday on October 19. At that time you will meet your group and begin to set a meal schedule.

**The next "New UU" orientation** will take place on Saturday, November 8, from 9 am until noon. Anyone new to Prairie who wants to learn more about Unitarian Universalism in general, and Prairie UU in particular, is invited to attend. Childcare will be provided. (NOTE: Please let Erin Bosch or Heidi Hughes, co-chairs of the Membership Committee know if you will need

childcare in order that they can plan accordingly.) There will be coffee, tea and bagels -- and maybe some pastry, too! You don't have to be new to Prairie to attend this orientation. It is a good way for all -- new and "old" -- to get to know each other.

**Men's Shelter Breakfast:** For those of you new to Prairie, we and the James Reeb Society have a tradition of providing a scrambled egg breakfast for the guys at the men's drop-in shelter at Grace Episcopal once a month. Prairie and Reeb usually send two volunteers each, but it's flexible. Sometimes a family will do the breakfast, sometimes another small group from either church wishes to provide this service. The prep and cooking go fast and the hot meal is much appreciated by the guys at the shelter. If you are interested in helping with the breakfast, or would like more information, please contact me. New volunteers would be working with experienced ones. Paula Pachciarz 608-206-1770 [pjpchz@gmail.com](mailto:pjpchz@gmail.com)

### **Tis a Gift to Be Simple** ~ Penny Eiler

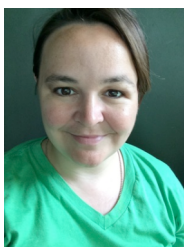
The holiday season is fast approaching and too many people have come to dread the approach of the holidays, a season that should—and can—be the most relaxed, intimate, joyful, and spiritual time of the year. Two years ago I did a program on Bill McKibben's book, *The Hundred Dollar Holiday*. It offers some suggestions on how to rethink Christmastime, so that our current obsession with present-buying becomes less important than the dozens of other possible traditions and celebrations.

The Center for the New American Dream has created a gift registry to help you further simplify your holidays. (<http://www.sokindregistry.org/>) It is a way to let your circle of family and friends know what gifts would be meaningful to you. And you can suggest that your family and friends, in turn, start thinking outside the commercial Christmas box and register for gifts that are meaningful to them. The website has all kinds of great ideas for all gift giving occasions. A few ideas that I've used that were well received are:

- National or State Park annual passes
- Tickets for the Nutcracker Ballet for a multigenerational family outing
- A water buffalo from Heifer International
- Gift certificates for massage, car wash, or zip line tour
- Ranger Rick magazine subscription

Our families are scattered from coast to coast. I can shop on line for gift certificates. This saves me the aggravation of shopping at the mall and the long lines at the post office. Hope this helps you to a more meaningful holiday season. Peace, Penny

### **RE Circle of Friends** ~ Holly Teller, Director of Religious Education



Lots going on downstairs at Prairie! We currently have 29 students enrolled this year, which is four more than last year! We also have 11 students from last year who have not yet re-enrolled. We hope to see them soon!

RE kicked off our fund raising campaign for CROP walk this Sunday. Students will be collecting contributions and pledging to walk either a 1 mile or 3 mile course to help raise awareness and funds to combat hunger both worldwide and locally, right here in Madison! Please consider making a donation or walking with us! The CROP walk will take place immediately after October 19<sup>th</sup>'s Soup Sunday. Registration begins at United Church of Christ at 12:45 and the walk begins at 1:30. Please see Holly Tellander or Lynn Pawelski with questions/donations.

Our Halloween party is coming up and promises to be a spooky sensation! Costumes are encouraged and our party will take place here at Prairie from 5-7 on Halloween evening. There will be contests, games, entertainment and prizes! Drop in and say hello or stay for the entire party!

Prairie RE has a new **Facebook page**! As someone who researched Prairie from afar before making my first visit, I can attest to the need for this type of page. This will be a wonderful opportunity and place to share inspiration, information and our sense of community with each other and with those who may not have found us yet. We have a vibrant, thriving and energized group of students and teachers downstairs and they are a true testament to the caring community here at Prairie! In the Facebook search bar at the top of any FB page, you can type "Prairie UU Religious Education Program" and will be directed to our page. Once you 'like' the page you will receive RE updates and have a chance to share your own voice. We look forward to seeing you there!

## Who's New at Prairie



**Jayme, Ryan, Blake, Ronan and Zane**

Jayme and Ryan Camp live in Verona with their 3 boys, Blake age 6, Ronan age 3, and Zane age 1. They moved to Verona from Fort Wayne, Indiana 5 years ago when Ryan got a job at Epic. Jayme is a Stay-At-Home Mom with multiple businesses (including L'BRI, Pink Zebra, sewing/crochet, and photography). Ryan was raised Missouri Synod Lutheran and Jayme was not raised in the church. Both now identify more as Agnostic. Currently Ryan is finishing the basement of their new house and the movie theater should be ready in the coming months for movie nights!

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



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