

# Prairie Fire

**September 2015**

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## Prairie Calendar

(See descriptions of programs below)

<b>Fri</b>	<b>Sept 4</b>	5:00 p.m.— <b>Board Game Night</b>
<b>Sat</b>	<b>Sept 5</b>	9:00 a.m.— <b>WOW</b> —at Prairie
<b>Sat</b>	<b>Sept 5</b>	5:30 p.m.— <b>Men's Shelter Breakfast</b>
<b>Sun</b>	<b>Sept 6</b>	10:00 a.m. service— <b>Overcoming Confirmation Bias: Advice from An ex-pastor</b> by Rob Brink
<b>Sun</b>	<b>Sept 6</b>	11:45 a.m.— <b>Humanists' Q&amp;A with Ex-Pastor Rob Brink</b>
<b>Sun</b>	<b>Sept 6</b>	5:30 p.m.— <b>Men's Group</b> —at Prairie
<b>Sun</b>	<b>Sept 13</b>	10:00 a.m. service— <b>Water Ceremony/Annex Dedication</b>
<b>Sun</b>	<b>Sept 20</b>	10:00 a.m. service— <b>Churches We've Visited</b>
<b>Sun</b>	<b>Sept 20</b>	11:30 a.m. Book Club— <b>Orange is the New Black: My year in a Women's Prison</b> by Piper Kerman
<b>Sun</b>	<b>Sept 27</b>	10:00 a.m. service— <b>Humanism: Hubris and Humility</b> by Rev. Sandra Ingham.
<b>Tues</b>	<b>Sept 2</b>	1:30 p.m. <b>Prairie Elders</b> will meet at the Prairie Annex.
<b>Mon</b>	<b>Sept 28</b>	<b>Spanish Speakers</b> will meet at Prairie. There will be a pot luck dinner. Call Rosemary Dorney (238-4382) or Donna Murdoch (238-3802) if you need a ride.
<b>Sat</b>	<b>Oct 24</b>	<b>Prairie's Flash Flea Market</b>

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September 6—Each of us has a natural bias built into our brain. We are naturally drawn to whatever confirms our beliefs, and we just as naturally reject whatever doesn't, which means we're consistently, predictably, far more certain than we should be. Rob Brink will offer practical advice on facing this universal problem.

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September 6--On Sunday Sept. 6th Rob Brink, Prairie's Sunday morning speaker, will also lead the Humanist Union program. He will provide us with an opportunity for "Q & A with an Ex-Pastor." Rob has been active with Sunday Assembly Madison, a secular congregation which has been meeting monthly since last September. Previously he served as minister at UCC congregations in Wisconsin and Michigan from 2000 to 2014. Our potluck lunch starts at 11:45 am, program 12:30 to 1:30 pm, both in the Meeting House.

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September 13—The Water Ceremony, an annual Prairie tradition, marks the end of summer and the beginning of a new year for Religious Education. We pour water, which we brought back from our travels over the past year, into a communal bowl and share our experiences from our travels. (If you forgot to collect some water, substitute water will be provided.) This year's ceremony will take on extra meaning because we will use the combined water of the community to dedicate the Annex.

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September 20—This is one of our DIY services. This will be an opportunity for you to share your experiences while visiting other churches. It can be the church down the street you visited with the RE students, a cathedral in Europe, a temple in the holy land or an outdoor chapel. Was it a piece of art? Was it a scent? What was memorable? What moved you? The program committee is looking forward to gleaning some new ideas from this program.

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September 20—Book Club selection—Orange is the New Black: My Year in a Women's Prison by Piper Kerman (non-fiction, 208 pages) (suggested by Pam Gates) Convicted and sentenced to fifteen months at the infamous federal correctional facility in Danbury, Connecticut, the well-heeled Smith College alumna is now inmate #11187-424—one of the millions of people who disappear “down the rabbit hole” of the American penal system. (Goodreads review). Meet at 11:30 after the Sunday service, in the main meeting room. Bring a pot luck dish to share.

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September 27—A long-time humanist -- your minister -- decides that it is time to review her long-held humanist beliefs. Are these beliefs still valid, after all these years? Are they adequate for life in the twenty-first century? (More than adequate would be better.) What are the weaknesses of humanism? Do humanists tend to err on the side of hubris or humility? Or both, at various times? Rev. Sandy believes that these questions cannot be considered properly without first understanding the history of humanism within Unitarian Universalism -- could be the first of at least a two-part series on the subject.

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October 24— On October 24 Prairie will hold its first Flash Flea Market. "Flash" because it's a one-day-only sale, and flea market because it's NOT a typical garage sale. We invite individual Prairie members to sign up for a table to sell their own items, which can be nice quality garage sale-type items OR hand-crafted items. The RE kids will also be involved; we will have two tables for them, one for regular sale items and another for the kids to sell cider and baked goods to flea market shoppers.

The public, especially Dunn's Marsh residents, will be invited to attend as potential buyers. A seller's participation form will be sent out later in Prairie News and in the October Prairie Fire, spelling out details of how you can be involved.

Anne Urbanski, Flea Market Coordinator

## **Musings from the Minister—Reverend Sandra Ingham**

What do these things have in common: Moses, Crop Walk, Story Telling? They are three examples of the "Great Turning". What is the Great Turning? It is an alternative way of being human, a returning, really, to better ways of relating to each other and to the natural world than we humans have managed to do since the Industrial Age began.

Moses is an interfaith organization that is working on ways to reduce Wisconsin's high prison population, especially the disproportionate number of African Americans in our prisons. Prairie is a member of Moses. Everyone is invited to celebrate its third anniversary on Saturday, October 10.

The Crop Walk is an interfaith annual event in which Prairie has participated for several years. The goal is to reduce hunger -- right here in Madison and around the world. NOTE: We will NOT be participating this year unless someone volunteers to coordinate the event, which will be on Sunday, October 18. SEE ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR MORE INFORMATION.

Story telling is a means by which we: confront and combat our despair for the brokenness in the world; reassure each other that we are not alone; pass on what works and what doesn't in the process of transforming our human story from one based on money and markets to one based upon sacred life and living earth.

We have been telling some of these stories during our Congregational Response times on Sunday mornings this summer. We are beginning to realize that blaming corporations and/or bashing politicians will not solve anything. If humanity is truly going to make a turn away from death and destruction and towards life and creativity, then we must have the corporations and the politicians making this journey, as well, along with us. It is up to us to encourage and educate these entities about the importance of making decisions based upon the greater good, the larger picture. Then, they, too, will play a vital part in bringing about the Great Work, also known as the Great Turning.

This is my "fall challenge" to all of us, including myself: What work will we do, as individuals and as a community, to further the work of the Great Turning? (HINT: great places to start: Moses, Crop Walk, Story Telling)

Enjoy the end of summer! Rev. Sandy

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## **Circle of Friends—Holly Tellander, Dir. Of Religious Education**

### **Prairie RE August Happenings**

#### **2015/2016 Classes**

Our first day of RE class will be Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, which is also the day of the Intergenerational Water Ceremony. In this ceremony people bring small samples of water

from their summer adventures and share a short story, reflection or anecdote about the passing of another summer. Children will be upstairs for the majority of the service but we will have a time to go downstairs to have a short introduction to their teachers and class.

## **Curriculum:**

### **Nursery – PreK**

For our youngest learners we focus on building a trusting community. We want our children to feel safe and secure during their time at Prairie while at the same time having lots of fun! Our childcare workers strive to introduce UU values through play and problem solving.

### **Kindergarten – Second Grade**

**“World of Wonder”** - “This program delves deep into our Unitarian Universalist seventh Principle. It instills respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part, and appreciation of its beauty, excitement, and mystery. It is founded on the premise that direct experience in nature is essential to children's physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual development. Time spent experiencing and exploring nature during the early years can set a pattern for the rest of children's lives, bringing lasting openness to the wonder nature can spark.”

### **Third Grade – Fifth Grade**

**“Harry & UU”** - This social action curriculum is based on J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series. The class forms Dumbledore's Army and fights seven real-world Horcruxes, such as Illiteracy, Hunger, Poverty, Animal Cruelty and more! Students will achieve tangible results to real problems facing the world.

### **Sixth Grade and above -**

Our older students have big plans for the upcoming year! Two Sundays a month will be used for a discussion and reflection class using the “Compass Points” curriculum, developed by Gaia Brown. This curriculum guides adolescents on a yearlong spiritual journey with opportunities to explore their identities, their beliefs, their Unitarian Universalist faith, their relationships with others and their connections to the world.

They will use class time on other Sundays to work on their original project which they have entitled “The Year of the Cow”. They have big plans to spend the year raising money for Heifer International. We are extremely proud of the initiative and organization they have shown in organizing this effort! Look forward to great stories and great accomplishments from this group!

This year we will be introducing a thematic workshop model. One Sunday a month will be designated as “Workshop Sunday”. On these Sundays we will have guest speakers as representatives from each of our six sources followed by service projects that will relate to the monthly theme. Please keep an eye on our Facebook page (Prairie UU Religious Education Program) for updated information about speakers and service projects. As a congregational outreach opportunity, we also plan to extend class until 1:30 on these Sundays. This will give us time to wrap up our service project and enjoy lunch and some free time together. Our hope is that parents and caregivers will see this as an opportunity

to spend time running child-free errands or maybe enjoy a delicious lunch in our wonderful city. As a congregational outreach opportunity, we hope many of our members from all walks of life see this as an opportunity to spend an afternoon volunteering with our youth!

### **Coming up – Mark your calendars!**

**September 27<sup>th</sup>** – Our first Workshop Sunday & extended Principal Action Day afterwards - Buddhism & Blankets for Critters! (Please contact Holly Tellander if you would like to volunteer from 11:30 – 1:30 p.m.)

**October 3<sup>rd</sup>** – FALL FROLIC – Join us for some Roller Skating! Details coming soon...

Our website is always being updated and if you haven't done so yet, please 'Like' Prairie's RE Facebook page: [Prairie UU Religious Education Program](#).

☞ As always, thanks for your support! ☞

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### **Message from the President—Gary Gates**

Scott Prinster's presentation of August 16 on evolution started me thinking of personal and organizational evolution. We are always evolving and changing; from being a baby to young child to teen to young adult and on and on. We are never the same person from day to day. We are constantly evolving and the same is true for an organization.

We long for the comfortable, the familiar, the unchanging welcome we have found in Prairie. Yet Prairie is continually changing. It is the same only in the sense that the changes may be so slow we don't notice them or perhaps that we bury our heads in the sand and pretend they aren't happening.

When I joined we had no minister. Now the minister is an integral part of the face we show the world. The Board and committee structure has been upended. The day I first attended Doleta Chapru's death was announced and from what I have heard people say about her it is clear that Prairie is no longer what it was with her presence. New members are constantly joining and former members are leaving. Many recent Sunday services have been led by members who weren't here when I arrived. We now have a second building (and what a change that has been).

Not changing is not and never has been an option, The only question is how will we change. We often feel we should plan what the changes will be, but a brief review of past changes will quickly get rid of any illusions that we can control the changes.

On the one hand I feel that, as President, I should be doing more to identify where we will go in the future. On the other hand outlining what will be the future strikes me as an exercise in futility.

This does not mean we should never think about how we want things to change. It simply calls for humility and acceptance when things change in unexpected ways. We can and should try to encourage that changes will help us more fully realize the seven principles of Unitarian Universalism in our lives.

Where am I going with these thoughts? I don't know. They are just evolving. Hopefully they will result in some evolution in your thoughts also. Thank you.

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### **From Rosemary Dorney with Donna Murdoch—Historical Tidbits**

#### Prairie Playreaders

Back in the early 1970s, our young minister, Dave Meyer, added much creativity to our Prairie UU Society. Numerous Sunday services, at his instigation, contained poetry readings or even brief dramas. I especially recall a poignant one on the tragedy of war, mourning the loss of WWI poets. Several of us read Wilfred Owen's war verses, with Dave's commentary linking them. Other services presented plays, including a philosophically-oriented one called "Three Blind Men."

In Fall 1971, we had moved to Portal Foster. Our greater space led to increased membership. With Dave Meyer at the helm and much enthusiastic support, a Prairie Playreaders group was born. The late Bob Koehl and Pat Watkins, as well as yours truly, became prime movers. Among our more challenging tasks was obtaining uniform copies of the planned play-of-the-month. Madison Public Library kept a list for this purpose, but it was not all-encompassing. Disastrous disconnects followed, when we tried to read from unmatching editions! We rotated meeting at one another houses, sometimes tricky as Playreaders became immensely popular. Not everyone's home could hold our sometimes 20-30 members - even with some sitting on the floor!

Our first "official" play reading was held at Dave and Pat Meyers' in January, 1972. Pat Watkins, Bob and Lilo Koehl, the Nettletons hosted us in subsequent months. Our play choices ranged from "Twelfth Night" to "Harold and Maude," from Odets' "Rise and Sing" to "Antigone." Everything was game. We loved reading, and post-play discussions over coffee and cake.

Those were the heyday of Majestic Theater's art films, as well as an abundance of campus film groups and the inception of Broom Street. "Wilson St. East" a dinner theater in the old Hoffman House restaurant building, was visited by Playreaders, who also enjoyed theater parties to many other venues.

Over time, however, entertainment opportunities in Madison increased enormously. Also, nowadays most adults in a family are employed full-time. Membership in Playreaders declined, and by the early 2000s the group dissolved. But what fun it was!

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**NEEDED:** Someone to coordinate Prairie's participation in this year's Crop Walk. Crop Walks are community-wide, interfaith events organized by religious groups, businesses, schools and others throughout the world to raise funds to end hunger. A portion of the



money raised on the annual walks goes directly to food pantries within the communities where the walks are held. (For more information, go to [crophungerwalk.org](http://crophungerwalk.org).) This year's Madison Crop Walk will be on Sunday, October 18, starting from First Congregational UCC Church at 1609 University Avenue at 1:00. (Registration at 12:45) Coordinating the walk for Prairie is a wonderful opportunity to be a "Short-Term Volunteer". It does not require a great deal of time to organize, plus it ends at a definite point in time. If you are interested in this project, please let Rev. Sandy know. THANKS!

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**LOOKING AHEAD...** Interested in exploring your beliefs in more depth?? SAVE THE SECOND SATURDAY MORNINGS IN NOVEMBER, DECEMBER and JANUARY for "Building Your Own Theology" workshops. Rev. Sandy recently discovered this classic Unitarian Universalist curriculum when moving her office from 2010 Whenona to 2006 Whenona (aka, the Annex) and would love to share it with those of you who want to delve more deeply into what you really believe.... you just might be surprised by some of the things you discover in this Adult Religious Education endeavor.

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### **New Members—John and Nancy Wunderlin**

John and Nancy Wunderlin are recent empty nesters and moved to Fitchburg last year. They moved from Mineral Point where they had lived for about 20 years. John is attending UW-Madison studying for a masters degree in French horn performance. John considers himself a recovering Catholic and is an enthusiastic amateur astronomer. Nancy plays flute (just for fun!) and manages their software business. She was raised UCC but did not join the church and checked agnostic on the recent Prairie survey. They are still looking for a nice French horn & flute duet to play at Prairie!



John and Nancy Wunderlin

**Please consider volunteering for and participating in one or more of Prairie's committees or groups. A full list is located on Prairie's website, <http://uuprairie.org/aboutus/#com> or call Patty Stockdale for contact information: 608-298-0843.**

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