

Prairie Fire

March 2016

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Prairie Calendar

(See descriptions of programs below)

- Sat Mar 5** 5:00 a.m. —**Men's Shelter Breakfast**
- Sat Mar 5** 9:00 a.m. —**Prairie WOW** meets
- Sun Mar 6** 8:45 a.m.—**Choir Rehearsal** in the Annex
- Sun Mar 6** 10:00 a.m. —**Short and Sweet**—Today will probably be one of the shortest Sunday services you will ever witness!! It will be brief, but full of laughter and joy to set the stage for our **ANNUAL AUCTION**, which will begin at 10:30. The **AUCTION** is a time to celebrate our "Prairie-ness" and to deepen our commitment, through a unique form of stewardship, to this amazing organization of which we are a part. BRING YOUR CHECKBOOKS &/OR YOUR CASH. Get ready to have fun, enjoy yourself, spend money painlessly and help keep alive and well our Unitarian Universalist tradition of congregations being places that provide "A refuge for rebels; a haven for heretics; a shelter for skeptics". WE CAN DO IT!!!! Meet our \$5,000 goal, that is!!!! (How many UUs does it take to change a light bulb?) Rev. Sandy
- Sun Mar 6** There will be no Humanist Union meeting in March due to the Service Auction on our usual day.
- Sun Mar 6** 5:30-7:00 p.m. —**Men's Group**—Potluck followed by discussion
- Sat Mar 10** **Empowering Children and Ourselves to Talk About Race** seminar at James Reeb
- Sun Mar 13** 8:45 a.m.—**Choir Rehearsal** in the Annex
- Sun Mar 13** 10:00 a.m. —**Spirit Gardening** by Kathy Converse and Mary Mullen. The seed catalogs arriving in the mail stirs the souls of a gardener. How do are gardens feed our spiritual growth as well as our bodies?
- Mon Mar 14** 6:00 p.m.—**Finance Committee** meets
- Mon Mar 14** 7:00 p.m. —**Program Committee** meets
- Sun Mar 20** 8:45 a.m.—**Choir Rehearsal** in the Annex
- Sun Mar 20** 10:00 a.m. —**Charles Dickens**— by Robin Proud. Robin will give us insights on the life of Charles Dickens. Stay tuned to find out the fate of little Nell
- Sun Mar 20** 11:30 a.m.—**Soup Sunday**
- Sun Mar 20** 12:15 p.m.—**Book Club**—will meet in the Annex after the Soup Sunday. This month's selection is **They Marched into Sunlight** by David Maraniss
- Mon Mar 21** 6:30 p.m.—**Spanish Speakers** meet
- Tues Mar 22** 1:30 p.m. —**Prairie Elders**—meet in the Annex
- Sun Mar 27** 10:00 a.m. —**Revisiting Easter**— by Rev. Sandra Ingham
- Fri Apr 1** **Board Game Night**
- Sun April 3** 10:00 a.m. —**Embracing Chaos**—by Rev. Jody Whelden
- Fri May 6** 5:00 p.m.—**Prairie Annual Retreat** begins

The Book Club selection for March is *They Marched into Sunlight* by David Maraniss.

608 pages, suggested by Phyllis Long. “Here is the epic story of Vietnam and the sixties told through the events of a few gripping, passionate days of war and peace in October 1967.... [This book] brings that tumultuous time back to life while exploring questions about the meaning of dissent and the official manipulation of truth, issues as relevant today as they were decades ago.” (Goodreads review) This is a Soup Sunday, so we will eat first and then retire to the Annex for our meeting at about 12:15.

March 22—Prairie Elders will meet at 1:30 p.m. in the Annex. This month’s discussion topic will be *Out and About in the Spring—how we shake off our winter blues*. Prairie Elders meet for conversation and fellowship on the fourth Tuesday of each month. All older and/or retired Prairie participants are invited to participate in this monthly event. Discussions are lively and we are able to get to know and appreciate each other. Bring a snack to share. Coffee and tea are provided.

March 27—Easter is a Christian holy day that Unitarian Universalists often don't know how to respond to. Some choose to ignore the day and its significance. I strongly suspect that many UU's can't get past the idea of resurrection, even if we mean it metaphorically, not literally. And then there is all that language that makes some of us squirm and even scoff. Words like sin, forgiveness, redemption, atonement don't seem to have relevance to many Unitarian Universalists, no matter where they are on the theological spectrum. I think that we make a mistake by ignoring Easter or by celebrating it only as the beginning of spring. There is much in this holy day that can be of use to us in our daily lives. Join me on this Easter Sunday as I attempt to *unpack* Easter in some different ways. Rev. Sandy

May 6—Be sure to mark your calendars! Prairie’s Annual Retreat will take place from Friday, May 6 to Sunday, May 8. There will be many activities including workshops, crafts, hikes and of course the Talent Show and Square Dancing. Enclosed in this newsletter is a registration form. Be sure to give it to Kate Liu or mail it to her. See you there!

MUSINGS FROM THE MINISTER—Sandra Ingham

Samuel Willenberg died on Friday, February 19. You probably don't recognize that name. In the early 1990's, I read a mesmerizing book by Willenberg titled "Surviving Treblinka". Samuel Willenberg, age 93, was the last survivor of the Treblinka concentration camp. But he didn't just survive there until the camp was liberated. He was part of a revolt, on August 2, 1943, when several hundred prisoners stole weapons, set fire to the camp and fled into the woods. Most of those who revolted were either killed by the Nazis or captured by villagers and returned to the camp. Willenberg got away, even though he was shot in the leg, as did 66 others.

I wanted to write to Willenberg, and to the authors of similar books (I remember one about the Sobibor death camp.), partly because everything I had learned about the Holocaust up until these books came out was that no one resisted in the camps and partly out of sheer admiration for what these people did in their attempts to escape. Of course, I never wrote to any of them. What would I have said? Oh, so very sorry that you had to endure the concentration camp experience? So sorry about humanity's huge failure in this time period? I have similar thoughts and feelings about Syria and humanity's failure again, here in the

21st century.

There are about 180,000 concentration camp survivors in Israel and about the same number worldwide. More than 1,000 die each month. Within seven years, most of those still living probably will not be well enough to share their memories. This fact makes me immensely sad. I have read a lot about the Holocaust. I have taken graduate-level classes on the subject. Yet, the more I learn, the more baffled I am about how this could have happened. I wonder how I would have responded to the dehumanizing of others, especially if I felt threatened or feared that my loved ones were in danger. For me, the "defining moment" of the twentieth century, the defining moment of my becoming an adult, has been the Holocaust.

I struggle to remember that there are many faith traditions, grassroots movements, social justice organizations, human right groups, just plain brave people out there in the wider world working to counter those who would have us treat anyone as lesser than or as "Other;" people working to preserve memory; people working to re-define and re-image what it means to be human. There is a lot to do. Prairie helps me "keep on keeping on".... May it do the same for you... Rev. Sandy

Message from the President—Gary Gates

On Sunday, February 14th, I offered two different ways of looking at our responsibilities under the preamble to the Seven Principles of Unitarian-Universalism.

Afterward, I received an email from a member who had missed that service but had listened to it on Prairie's audio recordings and pod cast web pages. Frankly, this email expressed my viewpoint far better than I did, so for this month's President's column I have decided to share excerpts from it.

"...your words really touched on something that has been niggling at me for some time.

" I came from a UU church where the congregation, and in particular the minister, were FIERCE proponents of gay rights. They were working tirelessly for equality and education and community presence in this area - and though it wasn't the issue that creates "a fire in my belly" for me in particular, I appreciated the fact that my church stood for something - that it was putting words into actions, that it was living out the UU principles in such a concrete and measurable way.

"One of the...servicesat Prairiewas about how to engage new generations of people, people who found themselves disheartened by the challenges before us, people who didn't even know that UU communities existed (much as I hadn't for many years). At that service someone stood up (I think it was Orange) and said that we didn't have a defining issue. She made an offhand comment that has since resonated with me frequently - that environmentalism is the civil rights issue of our time... Wow. How true is that? We are poisoning and killing and exploiting our planet and leaving the price to be paid by people who aren't even born yet.....

"We have so many environmentalists at Prairie. I've long thought that it is the one issue that we can all unite on - and it is so desperately needed....."

While I share this writer's enthusiasm for environmental causes, we need to explore other options as well before deciding which issue puts "a fire in our bellies." Even more important, we need to decide if there is any issue we especially want to be known for.

It was not clear to me from the feedback on the 14th that the majority of the congregation wants a change.

Circle of Friends—Holly Tellander, Dir. Religious Education

MONTHLY THEMES

March's theme is 'Service'. RE students and families have done a wonderful job already by contributing to our annual Service Auction here at Prairie. Expect to see the newsletter available by email, on the RE website page, and on the front table in the entryway by the first of the month. The newsletter is meant to function as a conversation starter at home throughout the month; a way for families to find deeper connections to UU ideas and practices.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- The guest speaker for March on Sunday, March 27th will be a representative of the Sikh faith tradition. If you will not be traveling for Spring Break – please join us for this informative session!
- Humane Society Tour – Students in grades K-5 will be working on projects to help animals during the month of March. A trip to the humane society to share our projects and learn more about how to get involved in this issue will take place toward the end of the month. More details coming soon!
- Easter Egg hunt @ Prairie, Sunday, March 27th after service – A new twist on an old favorite – you don't want to miss this!

May Day service – plans are underway for Prairie's very own May Pole! Mark your calendars for Sunday, May 1st to participate in this fun activity!

YOUTH CHOIR @ PRAIRIE!

Thanks to Barb Park and Carl Wacker, who have agreed to help launch a new opportunity for Prairie youth! Look for the flyers in the foyer, along with practice and performance schedules. Please contact Holly at prairie_uu_dre@outlook.com if your student would like to participate or if you have any questions.

SUMMER IS COMING!

And that means time outdoors! RE students will be voting soon on their ideas for the outdoor classroom. This summer will be a time to complete two outdoor projects during our regular Sunday class time. One idea that has been proposed is a rain garden – another idea is a Prairie anniversary labyrinth! Students can not only learn about conservation and honor our 7th principle through participation in the planning and development of the outdoor classroom – it is also a wonderful opportunity for some of our child-free members to pass on their wisdom and skills to Prairie youth! Please consider donating your time, energy and enthusiasm for environmental stewardship to our youth this summer. The time commitment is very small and the reward is very great!

As always, thank you for your support!

Here's to a helpful March!



There is still time to sign up to attend the "WHO ARE OUR NEIGHBORS?" workshop to be held MARCH 18 & 19 at James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. Hopefully, this workshop will continue the discussion about race that we began at Prairie on Sunday, February 21. Lisa Presley from the MidAmerica Region of the Unitarian Universalist Association will lead the March workshop. Among other topics, the workshop is designed to help us: build stronger intercultural relationships; improve our communication skills; and, give us insight into some of the components of conflict. REGISTER BY MARCH 13 at midamericauua.org or talk to Rev. Sandy. Registration is \$30 per person, which includes snacks, Saturday breakfast and lunch. (Please talk to Rev. Sandy for scholarship information.)

News from Hogwarts

The members of Twrch House, students in Prairie's own branch of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry (aka Grades 3-5 Religious Education Class), have created lots of magic this winter. Using the magic of our imaginations and creativity, we're making the world a better place and many of you are helping.

Do you remember our holiday food drive? Thanks to all who contributed! Your donations were taken to the Allied Drive Food Pantry.

Did you buy a jar of our Magic Golden Lentil Soup Mix? The money we raised was given to the Guest at Your Table program to help refugees and other displaced people. Or perhaps you collected change in a Guest at Your Table box in January. We counted up all that money to contribute, too. Thank you to everyone who helped us help the refugees!

New Offertory Sharing Process

In an initiative brought to the Board by members of the congregation, Prairie has initiated a 3- month trial of sharing the weekly offertory collection with a charity identified by the Social Action Committee. Collections taken in February which were shared with the Odyssey Project were robust. Two collections from February will be shared with Justified Anger and in March, all 3 collections will be shared with Yahara House. A fourth charity will be identified for sharing for the month of April. It was determined that sharing collections from an entire month was a more effective way to proceed than two week collections as originally proposed. The experiment will be reviewed by the Board and congregation in May.

Social Action Committee

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 contact Karen Deaton for more information at: wisconsinkaren@gmail.org.



PRAIRIE UU SOCIETY SPRING FAMILY RETREAT

Bethel Horizons Center, May 6-8, 2016

Names: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Registrations are due by Sunday, April 10th!

Please complete both sides!

ACCOMMODATIONS: Please read carefully to see what is included in each type of lodging, and note that ***“Kids” are 11 and under.*** Circle the number of nights you are staying.

Prairie Center: (The most “hotel-like.” 4-5/room, private disability-accessible bathrooms, 72 beds total. **Bring all of your own bedding (sheets, pillow, blankets,) toiletries, & towels;** or rent sheets and towels for \$10, but bring your own pillows and blankets.)

adults _____ X \$41 X 1 or 2 nights = _____ # kids _____ X \$21 X 1 or 2 nights = _____

sheet/towel rentals _____ X \$10 = _____

Farmhouse: (26 single beds, shared bathrooms. **Bring your own bedding (sheets, pillow, blankets,) toiletries, & towels.**)

adults _____ X \$25 X 1 or 2 nights = _____ # kids _____ X \$13 X 1 or 2 nights = _____

Camping: (As rustic as it gets. Bring your own tent, bedding, toiletries, towels, etc...)

sites _____ X \$20 X 1 or 2 nights = _____ (one family per site)

Subtotal Accommodations: \$ _____

Please note: for 2016, we do not have the barn available. Everyone, from single adults to couples to families will need to share rooms. Space will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis after accommodation for age and disability.

PROGRAMMING

To help with purchase of supplies and use of Bethel’s Naturalist #people _____ X \$5 = _____

MEALS: If you will be at the whole retreat and want all the meals, choose “All Meals,” or you can pick which meals you want.

Adults:

All Meals: # ____ x \$41.00 = \$ _____

OR

by meal:

Sat. breakfast: # ____ x \$8.00 = \$ _____

Sat. lunch: # ____ x \$9.50 = \$ _____

Sat. dinner: # ____ x \$13 = \$ _____

Sun. breakfast: # ____ x \$8.00 = \$ _____

Sat. all-day-coffee # ____ x \$2.50 = \$ _____

Kids:

All Meals: # ____ x \$19.00 = \$ _____

OR

by meal:

Sat. breakfast: # ____ x \$4.00 = _____

Sat. lunch: # ____ x \$4.50 = \$ _____

Sat. dinner: # ____ x \$6.50 = \$ _____

Sun. Breakfast: # ____ x \$4.00 = \$ _____

Subtotal meals: \$ _____

**Special Diet concerns: #people _____ is/are vegetarians or have other special diet concerns. Please contact Kate (or she will contact you) to discuss.

SCHOLARSHIPS

My family needs a full / partial scholarship of: \$ _____ (subtract)

My family can donate towards scholarships for others: \$ _____ (add)

Final Total All:

+ _____ **Accommodations**

+ _____ **Programming**

+ _____ **Meals**

+/- _____ **Scholarship**

=====

\$ _____

(Make checks payable to “Prairie UU Society”)

Send this form with payment to Kate Liu, 5710 Cedar Place, Madison, WI 53705 (608-238-9153) or bring to Prairie by **Sunday, April 10th**.