

Prairie Fire

February 2017

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Prairie Calendar

(See descriptions of programs below)

- Wed Feb 1** 3:30 p.m. **History Committee** meets in the Annex
- Wed Feb 1** 6:15 p.m. **Finance Committee** meets in the Annex
- Fri Feb 3** 6:00 p.m. **Board Game night**
- Sat Feb 4** 5:00 a.m. **Men's Shelter Breakfast**
- Sat Feb 4** 9:00 a.m. **Prairie WOW** meets in the Annex
- Sun Feb 5** 8:45 a.m. **Choir Rehearsal** in the Annex
- Sun Feb 5** 10:00 a.m. **Mentor to the Stars**—In commemoration of Black History Month, we will continue reflecting upon the life of Howard Thurman—friend to Martin Luther King Sr., counselor to MLK Jr.; mentor to many leaders of the civil rights movement, including Marian Wright Edelman, Jesse Jackson, and Vernon Jordan; founder of the first interracial, interfaith church in the United States, Fellowship Church for All Peoples in San Francisco. Rev. Thurman left us with many rules to live by. I will share three of those with you, along with some personal experiences that have helped me better understand what he was trying to tell us before inviting you to do so.—Rev. Sandy
- Sun Feb 5** 11:30 a.m. **7th-9th OWL** class in the Annex
- Sun Feb 5** 11:45 a.m. Based on her reading of *Battling the Gods: Atheism in the Ancient World* by Tim Whitmarsh and *Atheism for Dummies* by Dale McGowan, Susan Hagstrom's presentation at this meeting will be on **Interesting Episodes in the History of Atheism**. Potluck lunch at 11:45 a.m., program from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. Since the Annex is in use we will meet in the Meeting House.
- Sun Feb 12** 8:45 a.m. **Choir Rehearsal** in the Annex
- Sun Feb 12** 10:00 a.m. **If Only...** This morning we will consider a different way of looking at Valentine's Day beyond the usual one driven by the makers of greeting cards, jewelry and chocolate. What if we took a communal view of this *holiday* and moved beyond the individual aspect of *Will you be my Valentine?* To a wider concept of who we want to receive our Valentine's Day greetings? What would *Standing on the Side of Love* cards look like? What other definitions of love might be better suited to the world in which we live? What alternative pithy sayings could we put on those little candy hearts?—Rev. Sandy
- Sun Feb 12** 11:30 a.m. **7th-9th OWL** class in the Annex
- Sun Feb 12** 11:45 a.m. **Prairie Board** meets
- Thurs Feb 14** 6:30 p.m. **Humanist Union Movie Night**

Sun Feb 19 8:45 a.m. **Choir Rehearsal** in the Annex

Sun Feb 19 10:00 a.m. **Abuse of Crimeless Prison Revocation** by First Unitarian Society MOSES Ministry Team. Crimeless prison revocation is another example of the “New Jim Crow.” Come and learn what MOSES is doing to change this unfair system.

Sun Feb 26 8:45 a.m. **Choir Rehearsal** in the Annex

Sun Feb 26 10:00 a.m. **International Forgiveness Institute** by Dr. Gayle Reed. Dr. Reed will give us insight on the work of the International Forgiveness Institute and her work and research on forgiveness therapy.

Tues Feb 28 1:30 p.m. **Prairie Elders** will meet in the Annex. The topic will be **The impact of WWII on our lives**. All who are over 65 or retired are invited to join this small Prairie group get-together on the 4th Tuesday each month for lively discussion and sharing. Low sodium snacks are always welcome to accompany the Prairie provided coffee & tea. Contact Al Nettleton (238-6053) or Penny Eiler (395-2423) for more information.

Sun Mar 5 **Prairie Auction**

Message from the President—Gary Gates

Back in the Saddle

I have taken a long break from being your President due to foot surgery. After four months I guess it is time to quit malingering. I have to admit that as I’ve watched the beautiful job Karen Deaton has done as Acting President, I’ve been tempted to prolong my “recovery.” I did hint at this to her but I didn’t get the impression she approved of the idea. THANK YOU KAREN.

MEETING HOUSE REMODELING

In my absence, the Board continued exploring possible enhancements to the meeting house to accommodate some growth in our membership, making the kitchen more adequate, increasing the available space for fellowship, improving the RE space downstairs, chairs, etc. We feel as a Board we have gone about as far as we can and need to involve other members of the congregation to continue exploring the options.

I have, therefore, asked Rachel Long (co-chair), Martin Arnold (co-chair), John Wunderlin, Patty Stockdale, and Jim Lyne to serve as a committee to seek feedback from the congregation about what changes you feel would be desirable.

When they feel ready to do so, we have asked that they then work with our architect from the Annex remodel to get tentative cost estimates and determine the feasibility of separating the project into smaller segments that could be done without disrupting everything for a single major revamp. While some changes may be possible even without waiting for the total plan, we would like to avoid interim changes that would then have to be redone in a final revamp. Any final decisions on remodeling will, of course, be up to a vote of the full congregation.

The committee is not intended to oversee any construction, although some of the members might serve on a subsequent construction supervision committee. Its charge is simply to determine what is wanted and what is feasible.

SPRING RETREAT

This year's Spring Retreat will be May 12-14 at Bethel Horizons.

Questions have been raised about changing arrangements for future retreats, including avoiding Mother's Day weekend. On the other hand, some people apparently feel the Retreat is a good way to celebrate Mother's Day. The reason we keep having it on Mother's Day weekend is because we don't usually ask for reservations for the next year until the summer after the current year's Retreat. Kate Liu has volunteered to check into possibility of making the 2018 reservations now so we might have a wider selection of possible dates. Stay tuned.

More important, in my opinion, is a concern that the cost may be too high for some of our members, especially those who have many children. Let's start exploring possible changes to the location or financing of the Retreat to remove barriers to full participation by all members. Subsidizing the cost from our general budget, asking people to make higher contributions to a scholarship program, having higher charges for adults and lower ones for children are a few ideas to explore. What ideas do you have?

Circle of Friends—Holly Tellander, Director RE

Prairie February Happenings

RE is kicking off a *30 Days of Love* campaign to inspire students to align their values with the actions. We are joining the *Standing on the Side of Love* movement in our efforts.

More information can be found here: <https://www.standingonthesideoflove.org/>.

Keep an eye out for a surprise project that we hope will provide an opportunity to merge our upstairs and downstairs efforts and connections!

Mark your calendars!



Sunday, February 26th—Our February PAD is going mobile! We'll wrap up our *30 Days of Love* with a Wild Wintering activity for EVERYONE! We plan to go bowling for love! All are welcome and encouraged to join us—it will be a great time!

Sunday, March 5th—Prairie's Service Auction is coming up soon! Do you have any special requests that could be fulfilled by RE students? In RE we are brainstorming ways that students can get involved. If you do have any great ideas or special requests—we'd love to try to incorporate that into our planning and projects!

Looking for volunteers!

I feel very fortunate to be a part of congregation that so values its RE program. In all of my dealings with other DREs I am constantly reminded of how much support Prairie provides to RE and how much they enjoy the students. That being said, we are always looking for new volunteers! The strength of an RE program is determined by those who give their time and energy to make great things happen. As we challenge ourselves to stand on the side of love this month, and every day going forward in these new and difficult times, can your contribution include spending more time with our enthusiastic and energetic students? Can your skills contribute to our dynamic and progressive programming?

Whether it is helping prepare lunches or hang out with kids for our PAD workshop programming or OWL class, volunteering to teach or serve as a substitute, or showing up with a great idea for our continued growth, I can't wait to explore the possibilities with you!

 As always, thanks for your support! 

Prairie's Spring Service Auction will be **Sunday Morning March 5, 2017**. Yes, Sunday morning! There will be a short service at 10 a.m. and then we will move into the service auction. Please mark your calendars NOW with the date for **this family-friendly and fun event!** Our hope for the Sunday morning auction is to significantly increase the numbers of members, friends, and families enjoying Prairie's annual fundraising event.

The auction promises to be as much fun as in the past years with **usual and unusual contributions**. This is a time to learn about many **hidden talents** among Prairie UU members and friends. Consider the talents and skills that you have to offer that others might appreciate. How about a delicious ethnic dinner at your home? Group games are always fun. Or hosting a wonderful craft project for young and old alike. Friends and members will love your homemade bread or fudge. Everyone needs pet-sitting, babysitting, and rides to the doctor or airport. The possibilities are endless.

Some helpful hints when considering what to offer are to limit the group size or number of individuals you can easily manage and to set the date AHEAD of time. Also, if you prefer to meet at Prairie, that is totally an option. Contact Administrator Dan Klock to schedule the building.

If there are services you would pay for, let us know and we will develop a wish list. We will try to match you with someone willing to do your requests.

These services and goods will be live auctioned or raffled. All funds raised go to Prairie's general fund. Send your ideas to Patty Stockdale pstockdale828@gmail.com.

Patty Stockdale

LAST CHANCE:

HELP the PRAIRIE HISTORY COMMITTEE with your PRIMARY DOCUMENTS

The Prairie History Committee is making the run down the hope stretch to publishing a history of the 50 years of Prairie.

Undoubtedly, some of you have the most wonderful **PHOTOS** for our Prairie history book hidden away in a scrapbook, drawer or box. **PLEASE**, please, please find a minute to locate your stash and quickly look through it for those special pictures. We are especially looking for pics that show Prairie people at Prairie activities such as service auction dinners or other outings of any kind. Photos of Prairie child dedications or other events involving children would also be nice. Or maybe you have a glorious photo of an adult member of Prairie. **Newer members:** Current as well as historic pictures are equally welcome. (Please ID the people in each photo, and add the date if you can.)

WRITTEN MATERIALS are also an option. Perhaps you have a directory from long ago or Sunday orders of service or other flyers given out at Prairie events. Maybe you clipped an article or obituary about a current or former Prairie member from the paper.

We'd also love to get **YOUR OWN MEMORY**. Give us a typed page or a couple of hand-written pages telling the story of how you came to belong to Prairie or about some other special memory such as a good time at our retreat, at a circle dinner or a service auction event.

DEADLINE? Please, as soon as humanly possible (**within a week or two**) and definitely no later than the end of February. Give your items to one of the History Committee members: Mary Mullen, Ruth Calden, Barbara Park, or Rosemary Dorney. If you write your memory on computer, send to <mmullen4337@charter.net>

Thanks. We know you will love this history book, which will be full of stories, names, lists, charts, and pictures.

(We will return materials if you so request.)

—from Mary Mullen, History Committee Chair.



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.com