

Prairie Fire

March 2017

Editor: Phyllis Long plong373@gmail.com

Pub. Date: 02/27/17



Prairie Calendar

(See descriptions of programs below)

Fri Mar 3 6:00 p.m.—**Game Night**—in the Annex

Sat Mar 4 5:00 a.m.—**Men's Shelter Breakfast**

9:00 a.m.—**Prairie WOW**—in the Annex

Sun Mar 5 8:45 a.m.—**Choir Rehearsal**—in the Annex

10:00 a.m.—**Short and Sweet**—A reprise of last year's short and sweet service, but with different jokes, of course! We will have possibly one of the shortest Sunday services you have ever attended; the goal is for me to finish it by 10:30. At that point, we move into the Annual Auction portion of the morning. We will have laughter and joy, as we deepen our commitment to Prairie through this unique form of stewardship.

Bring your checkbooks and/or your cash. Get ready to have fun, enjoy yourself, spend money painlessly and help keep alive and well our Unitarian Universalist tradition of being *A refuge for rebels; a haven for heretics; a shelter for skeptics.* **We CAN meet our goal (\$10,000)!! Rev. Sandy**

11:30 a.m.—**7th-9th OWL**—in the Annex

Mon Mar 6 6:30 p.m.—**Program Committee**—meets

Wed Mar 8 6:30 p.m.—**Finance Committee**—meets

Fri Mar 10 4:30 p.m.—**7th-9th OWL**—intensive weekend begins

Sat Mar 11 10:00 a.m.—**7th-9th OWL**—intensive weekend continues in the Annex

10:00 a.m.—**Heart-Centered Living**—by Jody Wheldon

Sun Mar 12 12:00 a.m.—**Daylight Saving Time** begins. Don't forget to set your clocks ahead one hour! This is also a good time to check the batteries in your smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.

8:45 a.m.—**Choir Rehearsal**—in the Annex

10:00 a.m.—**Louisa Adams**—by Robin Proud. The little-known wife of John Quincy Adams is suddenly in the news as *the other foreign-born first lady*. And that's not the only parallel to today. She supported her husband's work in Berlin, St. Petersburg, and, most challenging of all, Washington D.C. while dealing with multiple personal and political dramas.

11:30—**7th-9th OWL**—continues in the Annex

11:45 a.m.—**Board Meeting**—in the Annex

11:45 a.m.—**Humanist Union**—meets

Mon Mar 13 6:30 p.m.—**Spanish Speakers Potluck**—will meet at the Prairie Annex. All levels of Spanish welcome. Bring a dish to pass if you can. If you can't, come anyway! Call Rosemary Dorney at 238-4382 for more information or to arrange a ride.

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

10:00 a.m.—**Helen Avakian**

11:30 a.m.—**Soup Sunday**

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

10:00 a.m.—**You've Come a Long Way, Baby!**—Oh, really?! How much progress have women made since that 1920 amendment to the constitution of the United States, allowing them to vote? We honor Women's History Month this morning by considering that question, along with feminism and misogyny. I maintain that misogyny runs rampant in this country, every bit as much as racism while usually better hidden than racism and too often unchallenged. Misogyny is an accepted part of the culture in the United States and it is getting worse. *New York Times* editor Susan Chira says *A man whose behavior toward women is a throwback to pre-feminist days is now setting the tone for the country.* What is a feminist UU to do? Come and find out! Rev. Sandy

11:30 a.m.—**All the Light We Cannot See** by Anthony Doerr is the March bookclub choice. We will have a potluck followed by a discussion of the book. 530 pages.

Tues Mar 28 1:30 p.m.—**Prairie Elders**—will meet in the Annex. The topic will be **Should we have a topic each month?** Come and enjoy shared snacks and great conversation. Prairie will provide coffee & tea. Contact Al Nettleton (238-6053) or Penny Eiler (395-2423) for more information.

Musings from the Minister—Sandra Ingham

Stories. I am living in several stories this winter. There is my own personal story which obviously intersects with other people's stories. There are the stories I become a part of in the books that I read. Currently, I am reading memoirs by Richard Russo and Tony Hillerman. Their stories place me squarely in two geographical environments that intersect with my life story: upstate New York and the southwestern United States. In addition to those stories, I am deep into the story about desegregating the schools in Boston by busing in the early 1970s.

And then there is my mother's story. In a few days, I will join family members in Florida for a celebration of my mother's 100th birthday. (She won't be there physically; she died in 2001.) We plan to celebrate her life with tap dancing, pictures, letters, stories, memories. I just found a scrapbook from when she worked on the Alaskan Highway during WWII. I have gotten so immersed in this fascinating story that I sometimes have trouble returning to so-called reality.

This immersion in the lives of others does give me a nice, needed break from that supposed real world, the one that distresses me these days. Whether I like it or not, though, what is happening in this country right now is yet another story that intersects with my story, even though I don't want to be in that particular story. It is too terrifying, too depressing to contemplate the gigantic backward steps being taken.

I can't overemphasize the importance of story. You might think that you don't like history, but history is all about stories. You may find yourself puzzled by your own stories, let alone trying to make sense of the stories of others, but some understanding of our stories

can only lead to more compassion, more love, more *aha moments* for humanity. Stories often have something to tell us about beliefs, values, explanations of why things are the way they are (think origin stories). I often say that we don't take enough time to listen to each other's stories. Despite all of our labor-saving devices and electronic gadgets, we seem to have less time than ever to talk and listen to each other. Everyone is so busy. Try scheduling a meeting with only one or two people—never mind a larger group or whether people are retired or not. This is not easy. There is never enough time for sharing our stories.

So, I am going to try to create some time to do that. Beginning in March, I invite you to stay after the service on the last Sunday of each month, for an after-church forum or an after-fellowship discussion, of getting to know each other better through the sharing of our stories. If and as this evolves, maybe we will pick a specific topic for discussion on these Sundays. If we are really successful, perhaps sometimes we will do this two Sundays a month. Who knows? Or maybe the idea will be a complete flop. I think it's worth a try, though.

In the meantime, be mindful of stories—your own and others...Rev. Sandy

Message from the President—Gary Gates

It is amazing that so many people do so much to keep Prairie the wonderful place it is. The History Committee is getting us ready to celebrate our 50th Anniversary. Patty Stockdale, Orange Schroeder, and so many other people I can't name them all are organizing for our Annual Auction, not to mention all the things people are willing to offer at the auction. Patty and Kathy Converse put many hours in keeping Prairie's finances in order. Multiple volunteers staff our RE program. Phyllis Long gets the Prairie Fire out every month. We never lack for musicians to provide beautiful music for our services and other events.

I've barely scratched the surface of all the people who make Prairie special. Thank you all for your contributions to making Prairie special whether I've named what you are doing or not.

I stand in awe.

Madison UU Read

The three Madison UU congregations, First Unitarian, James Reeb, and Prairie have decided to all read William Barber's book: *The Third Reconstruction* and then have a combined discussion June 4 at First Society. The book is told by Rev. Barber who is a modern day civil rights champion and tells the story of how he started a movement to bridge America's racial divide. It is the 2016/2017 UUA read.

Millie Moffat is looking to see if we can reserve some copies of the book at the library.

Please put this in your reading hopper.

Molly Plunkett—Social Action Committee

Are you kind of a snoop? Do you love to read?

from Mary Mullen, Prairie History Committee Chair,
mmullen4337@charter.net

If you fit this description or have even a modicum of curiosity about what Prairie was like some years back, the Prairie History Committee WANTS and NEEDS you!

Since 2013, our four-member committee has been diligently researching and writing about specific topics for a Prairie history book, but we are afraid we could have missed something of importance - or humor - because we have not systematically gone through each and every *Prairie Fire* and each and every set of Prairie Board and Parish meeting minutes. That's where you come in.

We are asking for volunteers who would be willing to read through a year (or more) of *Prairie Fires* and/or minutes and take notes on them. Here's a sample of notes from 4 issues of the *Prairie Fire* in 1972.

4/26/72

Board nominations listed

Rotating lay ministry endorsed by Board. Comes before Parish in May.

Social Action auction to raise \$ for \$50/month to St. Andrews Community Emergency Fund

Bylaw changes suggested

5/12/72

Rev. Dave Meyer's farewell letter & advice

Social Action subgroup will have truck at Davidsons to take aluminum to "reclaiming works" since loss of Coca Cola recycling

5/24/72 at Parish mtg

Contested elections for President (Al Nettleton 35, Dan Willard 30), VP (Hermine Davidson 33, Steve Friedman 29), Long Range Planning Committee (Steve Friedman over Charlie Davidson).

BIG controversy over reaffirming "commitment to hire, by the fall of 1972, and subject to financial realities, a fulltime minister for the Society." Over an hour of discussion, then passed 42-22 (1 absention). Vote challenged by Rosemary Dorney since the subject (motion) had not been on the agenda. Challenge rejected.

Bylaw revisions accepted.

Lease with Portal-Foster Center for \$100/month endorsed for renewal.

Please contact Mary Mullen, Barbara Park, or Ruth Calden if you might be willing to help us out in this way. mmullen4337@charter.net

MARK YOUR CALENDARS..for the last Sunday of each month when we will begin a new tradition at Prairie—well maybe not new throughout Prairie's 50-year history, but new to Rev. Sandy's time at Prairie. I invite you to join me for After-Church Forums—aka After-Fellowship Discussions—on the last Sunday of each month, following the service (obviously). **The first one will be Sunday, March 26.** (For more information see the Minister's Column.) I hope you will share your stories with me on these Sundays, at least initially. We may occasionally pick specific topics to discuss, but for the first few get-

together, we will tell stories and talk about whatever is on our minds. We will try to start about 11:45. We will decide which building we will use after we know how many people will be joining us each Sunday.

Note: Rev. Sandy will be out of town from March 7-13. She will check voicemail and email messages during that time period, as usual.

Our Unitarian Universalist Association's **General Assembly** (GA) will be **June 21-25** in New Orleans. This year's theme is *Resist and Rejoice*. Beginning March 1, both registration for General Assembly and housing reservations open. Please note that registration rates for GA increase significantly on May 1st. Prairie's Denominational Affairs Committee has some available funding to help defray the costs of General Assembly. Contact Phyllis Long if you want to know more about scholarship money. This year's Ware Lecture will be given by Bryan Stevenson, Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) in Montgomery, Alabama, and author of *Just Mercy*. For more information about GA, go to uua.org and click on General Assembly in the header.

Prairie's Spring Retreat—May 12-14

Prairie's Spring Retreat will be at Bethel Horizons Camp near Dodgeville. Many Prairie members believe that our annual retreat is the best thing that Prairie does in any given year. From sitting down to meals, enjoying beautiful natural settings with others, yoga in the early morning or spirited discussions, we spend quality time talking and interacting in ways we usually can't during the year. Like everything Prairie, it requires leadership and participation from many people to plan programs and direct activities that they think may interest others. We are interested in YOU. We urge you to attend and to help with the programming. If programming interests you, contact Phyllis Long, Retreat Program Chair, at plong373@gmail.com. The retreat is the best way to fully integrate your family into our society. Just as Religious Education is a priority for Prairie, so is having everyone at the retreat. Scholarships are available and should be requested if needed. Comments I have heard: "My family joined shortly after attending our first retreat." "I haven't missed a retreat in over 25 years." "Our children loved going to the retreat." "The retreat is a priority for me." We hope everyone can join us at this year's Spring Retreat. May 12-14—put it on your calendar now!

Circle of Friends—Holly Tellander, Director RE

What's been happening?

I've recently returned from two truly inspiring workshops for Religious Educators and I thought I'd share some highlights of those experiences here with you all.

The first was held in Palatine, Illinois at Countryside UU. It was a beautiful church and at less than an hour and forty-five minutes away, it was well worth the trip. The topic was *Reaching Beyond: Religious Education and Social Justice in our (dis)connected World*.

The highlight of this conference for me was hearing Karen Bellavance-Grace speak about her work with *Full Week Faith*. She has some really inspiring ideas about how to take the great things about church out into the rest of the week. She gave us some statistics on the new trends in church attendance, the changes in ways which folks are willing and able to connect with a faith community and lots and lots of ideas about how to think outside the box in this regard.

For example, she shared that some churches have successfully launched *tutoring nights*. Members will volunteer on an evening to come for a potluck dinner and families can stop in to take advantage of homework help, tutoring or just letting off steam.

Another great idea she shared was that some congregations have started to keep a master calendar on which people can write events that they will be a part of such as plays, sports matches or music concerts. This calendar is a living, changing document that allows those who are looking to connect to find opportunities to attend events in support of other people in the community. Definitely a promising idea!

The changing landscape of social media was also a topic of conversation. One church shared that they keep a *tweet seat*, available at the front of the sanctuary so that whoever sits there will feel free to *tweet* out readings or quotes that move them to take the inspiration out onto the web.

And of course there was a lot of talk about thematic worship and discussions. Lots of great ideas floating around out there. If any of these ideas interest you, and you'd like to discuss them in more detail, feel free to contact me. I'd love to chat!

The second workshop I attended was hosted by the Liberal Religious Educators Association. Their annual Winter Symposium was held in Dubuque, Iowa at a lovely retreat center. The topic of the symposium was Technology in RE. I came away from that experience with so many new resources for organizing information, planning programming, choosing and managing curriculum and teachers, and monitoring and promoting growth. I also met many new DREs who are now a part of a growing network which allows me to continue developing progressive, dynamic, and exciting programming at Prairie.

I wanted to say thanks to all of you for a strong commitment to a budget that prioritizes continuing education for your own liberal religious educator ☺.

What is PAD?

It has come to my attention that there is still some confusion about what I mean when I say PAD Sunday is coming up, so I thought I'd give a rationale/explanation here.

PAD stands for Principal Action Day. They always take place on the last Sunday of the month. There are two main objectives served by setting aside one Sunday a month as a workshop rather than regular classroom model.

First, by eliminating one Sunday a month as a class day, I can ensure that those who volunteer to teach never have to teach more than twice a month if they don't wish to. Teams of three teachers rotate the three weeks of the month.

The second objective is to facilitate multi-age learning and engagement. During PAD the students spend some time in whole group learning Whether it is a special speaker, a service project, or a series of workshop centers to rotate through, the age grouping is flexible and mixed. This gives our students a chance to get to know other students outside their

grade, to serve as mentors to those who are younger and to learn from those who are older. It's always a good time for everyone. Check out our RE Facebook page for a great video of kids of all ages climbing on the stump circle or tire dragon in the backyard.

I feel strongly that this type of learning is a huge part of why I sought out a church for my own children. There is no doubt in my mind (and plenty of research to back it up, too!) that multi-age learning groups offer many, many benefits.

Why do we call them Principal Action Days? That's the best part. All of these kids together in both structured and unstructured activities creates a lot of genuine opportunities for kids to put their principles into action. Conflict can be a great teacher and one thing that will always happen when you put a whole lot of kids together is that, at some point, there will be a conflict of interest. When that happens myself and the volunteers who give their time to stay with us on these days do our best to help facilitate communication, compromise and cooperation through the lens of our UU principles, and we are generally pretty successful. It's a great learning experience for everyone!

If this sounds interesting to you, give me a call or shoot me an email. We have two more PAD Workshops scheduled this year on April 30th and May 21st (that last one will be the unofficial RE farewell session of this academic year!)

Coming UP~Mark Your Calendars!

Mystery Friends—with a new twist! This year Mystery Friends will be held the last four Sundays in April. The BIG REVEAL party will be held at our April PAD with those who participate getting a special treat and plenty of time to play and have fun! If you are interested in participating in this long-standing Prairie tradition and building a new relationship in the process, please contact me to get on the list! Look for a last call right before Spring Break!

Plastic Bag Mat Workshop! Our middle schoolers have been working hard at collecting, sorting, prepping and crocheting plastic bag mats to be distributed to people who spend time on the streets. They have received more bags than they can hook! If you'd like to be involved in this project at home or on Sunday mornings, please contact me so I can get you started..

Big thanks! Thanks so much for your continued support in terms of volunteering, sharing supplies and bringing your children to church on Sundays. You all make this a great place to work and learn ☺.

And, as always, I'm happy to hear your ideas, comments and suggestions at any time.

Be well.

PRAIRIE UU SOCIETY SPRING FAMILY RETREAT

Bethel Horizons Center, May 12-14, 2017

Names: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Registrations are due by Sunday, April 22 !

Please complete both sides!

ACCOMMODATIONS: Please read carefully to see what is included in each type of lodging, and note that ***Children 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 ____ @ \$42 one night or \$72 both nights - sub-total: \$ _____

children ____ @ \$21 or \$42 both nights = _____

sheet/towel rentals ____ @ \$10 per person = _____

Barn Center: 12 rooms *(2 single beds per room, shared bathrooms.)*

Bring your own bedding (sheets, pillow, blankets,) toiletries, & towels.

adults ____ @ \$34 one night or \$58 both nights - sub-total: \$ _____

children ____ @ \$15 one night or \$30 both nights _____

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

adults ____ @ \$27 one night or \$42 two nights - sub-total: \$ _____

youths ____ @ \$15 one night or \$30 two nights _____

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

sites _____ @ \$20 first night or \$38 two nights sub-total \$ _____ (one family per site)

Subtotal Accommodations: \$ _____

Please note: Everyone, from single adults to couples to families may 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 need.

Adults:

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

OR

by meal:

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

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

Sat. dinner: # ___ x \$13.00 = \$ _____

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

Sat. all-day-coffee/tea # ___ x \$2.50 = \$ _____

Children:

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 _____ are vegetarians or have other special diet concerns. Please contact Rick (or he will contact you) to discuss.

SCHOLARSHIPS

We could use a partial scholarship of: \$ _____ (subtract)

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

Final Tally:

+ _____ **Accommodations**

+ _____ **Programming**

+ _____ **Meals**

+/- _____ **Scholarship or Donation**

TOTAL \$ _____ (Make checks payable to “Prairie UU Society”)

Send form and payment to Rick Ruecking, 6002 Lake St, McFarland, WI 53558 (608) 838-8540 or bring to Prairie by **Sunday, April 22.**

OTHER INFORMATION

*Accessibility concerns: some of the people in my family are in need of the most accessible lodging available: ___yes ___no

*I would like to carpool – day & time leaving Madison _____
returning _____

*I will be rooming with _____

*I need a roommate (list any preferences) _____

