

Prairie Fire

April 2017

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Prairie Calendar

(See descriptions of programs below)

Sat Apr 1 9:00 a.m.—*Prairie WOW*—meets in the Annex

Sun Apr 2 8:45 a.m.—*Choir rehearsal*—in the Annex

10:00 a.m.—*Pop-Up Theology*—From time to time, Prairie’s remarkable Program Committee may bring you a pop-up theology program. What does that mean? It means that the service will be a sort of mystery event because the subject of the day’s reflections may not be revealed until the last minute. There will always be a theological dimension because your minister believes that everything boils down to theology, aka that which ultimately concerns us. Most likely the mysterious service presented to you this morning will feature one of our six sources—or not! Come and find out!—Rev. Sandy

11:45 a.m.—*Empowering Women, Fair Trade Coffee and More*—The Humanist Union’s April 2nd speaker will be William Harris, Director of Operations-North American for Working Capital for Community Needs (<http://www.wccn.org/>). He’ll talk about the group’s work creating opportunities for access to microfinance, services, and markets to improve the lives of the working poor in Latin America. We’ll meet in the Annex for potluck lunch at 11:45 a.m., program 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.

5:30-7:00 p.m.—*Men’s Group*—Potluck followed by discussion

Mon Apr 3 6:30 p.m.—*Program Committee*—meets in the Annex

Wed Apr 5 6:15 p.m.—*Finance Committee*—meets in the Annex

Fri Apr 7 6:00 p.m.—*Board Game Night*

Sat Apr 8 5:00 a.m.—*Men’s Shelter Breakfast*

Sun Apr 9 8:45 a.m.—*Choir rehearsal*—in the Annex

10:00 a.m.—*Service*

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

Mon Apr 10 6:30 p.m.—*Spanish Speakers Potluck*—in the Annex

Sun Apr 16 8:45 a.m.—*Choir rehearsal*—in the Annex

10:00 a.m.—*Exuberance Unbounded*—On a typical cold and windy March day, I was astonished to see robins, snowdrops and the tiniest beginnings of crocuses...YIPPEE!! SOS!! (Signs of Spring). For just a few brief moments, I experienced unbounded exuberance. Do you remember the last time you felt exuberant—as an adult, that is? Very young children have exuberant moments all the time. Unfortunately, our inner exuberance gets buried the older we get. It is still there; we just usually are not very good at accessing it. Public displays of exuberance may even embarrass us. What

better time to be exuberant than at Easter, in the springtime of the year?—Rev. Sandy

11:45 a.m.—**Soup Sunday**

Sun Apr 23 8:45 a.m.—**Choir rehearsal**—in the Annex

10:00 a.m.—**Service**

Tues Apr 25 1:30 p.m.—**Prairie Elders**—will meet in the Annex. The fourth Tuesday, as usual. We have great shared snacks and conversation while learning about and supporting each other. All Prairie retired or older persons are welcome. We will provide coffee and tea. Contact Al Nettleton (238-6053) or Penny Eiler (395-2423) for more information.

Sun Apr 30 8:45 a.m.—**Choir rehearsal**—in the Annex

10:00 a.m.—**I've Got Those Backlash Blues**—Last month, in honor of Women's History Month, I talked about how far women have come and the gains they have made since the 1960s—but at what cost? This morning, we will look at the ripple effects, the unexpected consequences, the continuing harassment and belittling of women. We can sum up all of this with one word: backlash. What does it mean to be on the receiving end of backlash? What does backlash look like? Is it always obvious or apparent when it happens? Is it possible to move beyond it? How can we push back at backlash?—Rev. Sandy

11:30 a.m.—**RE PAD**

11:30 a.m.—**After Church Forum**

Fri May 12 8:00 p.m.—**Retreat begins at Bethel Horizons**—The retreat will end on Sunday, May 14 at about 10:30 a.m.

Sun May 14 2:00 p.m.—**Memorial Service for Hugh Iltis**—This will take place at First Unitarian

Musings from the Minister—Sandra Ingham

When elegy and eulogy collide...An elegy in commemoration of Earth Day—a eulogy for the Environmental Protection Agency?

My life has been enriched beyond measure, beyond my ability to adequately describe it, because my life has been intertwined with the lives of the non-human creatures with whom I share my time on earth.

I was swimming with manatees in Florida a few weeks ago, even able to pet one of them, a joyous moment. I have gone hiking with Bighorn sheep in southern Utah. I have strolled with all kinds of snakes, inadvertently almost decapitating a large rattler with my hiking pole in the desert at the edge of Las Vegas. I have gone bicycling with red-winged blackbirds in Wisconsin in the early spring who got into my hair and knocked me off my bike, protecting their babies in the tree along a just-opened part of the old railway bed, converted to bike trail. I have watched otters frolic on ice and snow on a frozen Minnesota lake in the winter. I once was swimming in that same lake in the summertime and suddenly there was a loon swimming just a few feet away from me. Another time, during my running days, again in Minnesota, a young deer ran beside me for a little while early one autumn morning.

One time in northern Arizona, I found myself in the middle of a herd of elk—I don't know which of us was more startled. Camping at Stinson Beach near San Francisco, I awak-

ened in my sleeping bag surrounded by raccoons peering at me curiously. I have seen whales and dolphins off the coasts of California and Alaska. I know that I am a very fortunate person to have had these experiences with so many other living beings.

I feel a kinship with each and every one of these creatures. I weep for their future.

Each human being is really only knowledgeable about whatever creatures are living in her or his generation's time on earth. We can't fully grasp the enormity of the loss of plants and animals that are now extinct because of our folly and hubris. And in every generation, there are fewer and fewer other living beings on this planet that was not designed for humans only. My sorrow deepens.

In words attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, "All creatures of the earth and sky, come, kindred, lift your voices high, Alleluia, Alleluia!" May it be so.—Rev. Sandy

Circle of Friends—Holly Tellander, Director RE

Mystery Friends—The objective of Prairie's Mystery Friends program is to foster new relationships between upstairs and downstairs folks. Why do we commit to this objective? The answer will differ from person to person. As program director, I must ask myself, is the objective being met? And if not, how can I change the delivery of the experience to better meet the objective while at the same time making the program accessible and enticing for potential participants?

This year OWL programming in January through March pushed Mystery Friends into April. April is a tricky month with Spring Break, Easter and Parish meeting to consider. This year proved especially challenging in terms of rousing up enthusiastic and available participants. As a result, the decision has been made between myself and the RE committee to condense the four weeks of Mystery Friends into one Sunday—April 30th. On this day we'll participate in a scavenger hunt, share food and fun and spend time fostering those relationships that are so important to the health of our community.

If you've previously agreed to be involved—look for an email explaining everything in early April. And if you are interested anew, now that the program has been condensed into one Sunday rather than four, please do email me and I'll get you on the info list.

Looking Ahead~

It's the time of year to begin the process of reflection and planning in RE. What worked this year? What didn't? Where is the room for growth as we continue to redefine our objectives and restructure our methods?

One of the most exciting aspects of my job is the attention to the form and function of the programming we offer. This year, and for many of Prairie's past years, RE has run on a grade-level classroom model. Separate classrooms consisting of between one to three different grades where students study a set curriculum chosen by the DRE and RE committee with input from parents, and other involved parties. This year, as we wrap up our first 50 years with a celebration this summer, seems like a great time to consider a new way forward. A new format that might better serve our changing demographics, our evolving needs and our developing student interests and capabilities.

To that end, I have begun framing out a plan to run a multi-age workshop RE model next year.

In the coming months I will continue to share my insight and findings as I continue to research this exciting new possibility. For now, I'll leave you with a brief overview of how a workshop model is both different and similar to the classroom model we currently run. And I will invite you to join this conversation in whatever capacity you feel compelled, if indeed you find yourself so moved.

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.

IHN Shelter Program Needs You

One of Prairie's social action commitments is being a buddy church for Midvale Lutheran as they house homeless families as part of the Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) which is part of *The Road Home*. Please consider volunteering to serve dinner or various other jobs to help Prairie honor its commitment to this wonderful organization. The upcoming host week is **April 30 to May 7**. You can call Erin Bosch for more information about IHN (238-6285), or you can go to this website for an explanation of the volunteer jobs: [The Road Home | Midvale Community Lutheran Church | Madison, WI](#). There is a new way to sign up: [Midvale Road Home Signup 4/30-5/7](#). If you need help with the new sign up email toni.swandby@gmail.com, or call Erin.

What is it like at a Prairie Retreat?

It all begins Friday night. There is a *finger-food potluck*. Since folks usually arrive after the dinner hour, we ask folks to bring munchies to share—nothing requiring silverware, since the Retreat kitchen will not be open. After checking in, there will be games of various sorts, lots of conversation, and a little discussion about the rules and the schedule for the weekend.

Saturday morning usually begins with some sort of exercise, such as yoga, Pilates, or any other type of exercise to get your day started. Of course, all the scheduled programs are optional—some folks just want to relax and enjoy the beautiful outdoors! There will be some programs for children as well as adults. Breakfast is scheduled for 8 a.m. All meals are served buffet style, and there is always a variety of foods to choose from—plus you can go back for seconds!

There will be a choice of programs, but you can just hang out if you prefer. A description of programs for this retreat will be sent out very soon. There is always time for hiking and other outdoor activities. Saturday evening there is a Talent Show. The show is made up of skits, songs, playing music—whatever people want to do for entertainment. We will have an MC who will put together a list of all those who offer to entertain. All the acts should be no more than 4 or 5 minutes. And of course there is time for applause! The day finishes with a round of folk dancing. There is no set bedtime, that is up to you!

Sunday morning we have the Key Log ceremony. It is usually scheduled for right after breakfast and, weather permitting, takes place at an outdoor fire ring. If it is inclement,

the ceremony will take place indoors. There will be seating for everyone, whether inside or out. After the ceremony it's clean-up time and then home to wait for another retreat next year...

Memorial service has been planned for former Prairie member Hugh Iltis

Frank was a member of Prairie for many years and several people will remember him and undoubtedly want to attend. It is the Sunday of the retreat, but people should be able to get back to Madison in plenty of time for the service.

Location: Atrium of First Unitarian Society, 900 University Bay Drive in Madison, Wisconsin

Date of Memorial Service: Sunday, May 14, 2017 (Mothers' Day)

Arrival time: 2:00 p.m.

Service start time (in Auditorium): 2:30 p.m.

Estimated end time of service: 3:30 p.m.

Start time for catered reception: 3:30 p.m.

Please notify Frank Iltis by email at madisfrank@aol.com if you plan on attending, including the number of people in your party, in order to facilitate planning. Include if you are planning on staying for the reception.

Also, if you are interested in speaking at the service, please let Frank know.

Paws to Recycle

Roc House of the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry is asking Prairie folks to donate empty aluminum cans. You can put them in the labeled box in the Meeting House foyer. We will get paid by the pound when we turn them in for recycling. Part of the proceeds will go to the Humane Society and part will go to support an environmental cause, as yet undetermined.

This is an easy way for you to support our efforts—You don't have to dig into your pockets to donate and you likely already have the cans in your hands if you drink soft drinks or have a cat.

We asked Gary Gates, Prairie's expert on can recycling, how clean the cans should be. The answer is to not waste water washing them. If the can is empty of food and not covered with mud or other stuff, it is acceptable. So when you scrape the last portion of cat food out of the can, put it and the lid in a bag to bring to prairie. A little food residue is OK. You will be helping the environment in two ways—helping to recycle cans and saving water.

We'll be collecting cans through May, the end of the RE year.

Thank you for your help.

Professors Paula and Maya

Introduction to Prairie on April 22

We try to do an informational meeting for new members and recent visitors twice a year, spring and fall. Our spring session will be Saturday morning **April 22** from **9 a.m. until 12 noon** in the Annex. Child care can be provided if requested.

This is what typically happens at these gatherings—The meeting will be attended by newcomers plus a few veteran Prairie members. First, the veterans will share their personal religious backgrounds and journeys, but it's okay to pass if you would rather just listen. Next, Rev. Sandy and Erin Bosch will briefly share some UU history, some Prairie history, and how Prairie is currently organized and operates. There will be a continental breakfast. Please contact Erin Bosch to RSVP (hillfarms2002 at [yahoo.com](mailto:hillfarms2002@yahoo.com)).

Remodeling Plans — Preview of Coming Attractions

At the request of the Board, a small group of members has been meeting to consider the feasibility of remodeling our building. Our group has representatives from multiple viewpoints to help us best understand Prairie's needs both now and in the future. We made our first presentation to the Board in early March, and they have given us further instructions on how to proceed. Though we have big dreams, we are focusing first on relatively small changes that could improve our meeting, RE, and fellowship spaces, and make our main building safer and more handicap accessible. We have a few more steps yet before we have a plan to present to you, but it's coming! Here is our timeline:

4/9/17—Board to discuss and approve a remodeling plan

Late April—Detailed information on the remodeling proposal to go out to the congregation

5/13/17—Discussion of proposal at the retreat

5/21/17—Further discussion at Parish Meeting, with vote on whether to move ahead with remodeling (contingent on fund raising)

The remodeling planning group is co-led by Martin Arnold and Rachel Long, and includes Heidi Hughes, Jim Lyne, Tom Robinson and John Wunderlin

Mark Your Calendars...

For the last Sunday of each month when you are invited to join Rev. Sandy for After-Church Forums—aka After-Fellowship Discussions—I hope you will share your stories with me on these Sundays, at least initially. We may occasionally pick specific topics to discuss, but on the first few get-togethers, 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.

General Assembly

Our Unitarian Universalist Association's annual **General Assembly** (GA) will be **June 21-25** in New Orleans. This year's theme is "Resist and Rejoice". Both registration for General Assembly and for housing reservations are now 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.



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