

Prairie Fire

September 2017

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Prairie Calendar

(See descriptions of programs below)

Tues Aug 29 2:00 p.m.—*History Committee*—in the Annex

Fri Sep 1 6:00 p.m.—*Board Game Night*

Sat Sep 2 5:00 a.m.—*Men's Shelter Breakfast*

11:00 a.m.—*Memorial Service for Warren Hagstrom*

Sun Sep 3 8:45 a.m.—*Choir Rehearsal*—in the Annex

10:00 a.m.—*Water Ceremony* by Karen Deaton

11:45 a.m.—*Soup Sunday*

Sat Sep 9 8:30 a.m.—*RE: Pontoon Porch*

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

Sun Sep 10 8:45 a.m.—*Choir Rehearsal*—in the Annex

they 10:00 a.m.—*When Lizards Do Pushups*—The lizards are responding to fear when do pushups—or so I've been told. It is quite fascinating—and amusing—to watch them until you finally realize that you are the cause of their being afraid and quickly move away to relieve their anxiety. What does it mean when Unitarian Universalists do pushups? Come on this Sunday and find out! We progressives, we freethinkers, have been under siege for months. We need a break. We need some party time! To day we continue celebrating the beginning of the church year, part of our month of celebrations. We will delight in who we are and revel in our Unitarian Universalism.—Rev. Sandy

11:45 a.m.—*Humanist Union*—We will meet to hear former Prairie RE Director Mary Beth O'Halloran on *Humanism is Alive and Well*. To accommodate her schedule we will move our program time up half an hour. The potluck lunch will start at 11:45 (or a bit earlier) with our program from noon to 1 p.m. Hope you can join us.

11:45 a.m.—*Book Club*—There will be a potluck lunch in the Annex followed by a discussion of *Life and Death in Shanghai* by Cheng Nien. A woman who spent more than six years in solitary confinement during Communist China's Cultural Revolution discusses her time in prison. Recommended by Helen, a speaker at Prairie. 560 pages

Mon Sep 11 6:30 p.m.—**Program Committee**

Sat Sep 16 7:00 p.m.—**50th Anniversary Wine and Cheese Party***

Sun Sep 17 8:45 a.m.—**Choir Rehearsal**—in the Annex

10:00 a.m.—**Service**

11:45 a.m.—**50th Anniversary Potluck***

Sun Sep 24 10:00 a.m.—**The History of LGBTQ** by Anne Urbanski, Prairie’s resident PFLAG mom, who will inform us about Milestones in LGBTQ History, or “Everything you never knew you wanted to know about LGBTQ people and/or were afraid to ask.” This service is part of Prairie’s effort to update our Welcoming Congregation status within the UUA. Despite what some people may wish to believe, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and other queer people have existed throughout recorded history. This will be Anne’s swan song presentation before she moves.

Sat Sep 26 **Prairie Elders**—meets in the Annex. Contact Al Nettleton (238-6053) or Penny Eiler (852-8750) for program.

Sun Oct 1 10:00 a.m.—**Would Have, Could Have, Should Have**—Today we mark the most important time on the Jewish calendar, the High Holidays that begin with Rosh Hashanah and end with Yom Kippur. The Jewish religion is important to our faith tradition because it is one of the sources we draw from to make our Unitarian Universalist beliefs richer. Jewish New Year is more meaningful to me than January 1st. It is a time of reflection and introspection and review of what I would have, could have, should have done better or differently during the past year. What is the place of shame in this exercise? There is a word that you don’t often hear used by UUs, but you will on this Sunday. Hope to see you then!—Rev. Sandy

***Prairie’s Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration is for EVERYONE! (September 16 and 17)**

You don’t have to be a history buff or a long-time member to attend and ENJOY one or both of Prairie’s 50th Anniversary celebrations. They are scheduled for Saturday night, September 16, and Sunday, September 17.

The highlight of the wine and cheese get-together on Saturday, September 16, will be the opening of the “time capsule” from 1985. Don’t you wonder what Prairie people wrote back then in those 56 different sealed letters? Some 32 were written to Prairie people in general, and another 24 were written to specific individuals. This mostly informal event will also be a chance to peruse the history items on display. Each will be accompanied at least by a small card of information, or possibly the entire article slated for the history book. Non-alcoholic beverages will be available.

The Wine and Cheese evening starts at 7:00 p.m. Although it’s not required, if you want to bring a bottle of wine or other beverage to share, or a plate of cheese, those items will be welcome.

Sunday will be the big day—the 10:00 a.m. service, a potluck, more time to view history displays, both in the meeting house and at the Annex (including video footage from LONG ago), and actual guided tours of the buildings and grounds.

At the Sunday service, we will be honoring everyone who attends, starting with those in R.E., who are the hope of the church, and then continuing decade by decade with some history highlights from each ten years. A different spokesperson from each decade will give us a 4-minute talk about that time period. We’ll also see who joined in each decade—since we will ask those who joined in each particular decade to stand at various times in the service. Long-time member or newbie, every one of us is important. Don’t worry if you can’t remember when you joined. Special nametags just for the anniversary events will “tell you” (and everyone else) which decade you signed the membership book.

For the noon meal, bring a potluck item if you can. While the potluck is being set up, again there will be time to look at the history displays in the meeting room and lobby. Then, after eating, peruse history displays you didn't have a chance to take in, join a guided tour of the meeting house, the grounds, or the Annex. Guides will be stationed on each floor of the buildings. The Annex will have additional history displays. Even if you've been here "forever," we are guessing you will learn something new if you take a tour.

Finally, the book. While the History Committee is sad to say that we won't have printed copies available just yet, we can guarantee that *Prairie UU Society: Fifty Years in the Life of a Congregation, 1967-2017* will get done, AND we will schedule still another celebration when we have the book in hand. Meanwhile, return your RSVP with the "want a copy" box checked, or sign on the clipboard that will be at the September 16 and 17 events. For the curious ones, one of the history displays will be our binders that contain the articles and photos that will be in the book. People at our retreat in May were pretty impressed, and we've added more articles since then.

So...are you convinced? Hope to see you in mid-September at our Fiftieth Anniversary celebration.

Musings from the Minister—Sandra Ingham

Charlottesville, Virginia...Words seem meaningless and even more inadequate than usual following this incomprehensible tragedy that belongs in some other century, surely not ours. For a few days after Saturday, August 12, I struggled mightily just to get out of bed in the morning. I kept thinking, they didn't even bother to wear hoods. My next recurring thought was, the so-called leader of this country couldn't even be bothered to make it clear that in the United States of America, we will not tolerate hate speech or parades of people carrying torches and chanting Nazi Germany-era slogans.

On Sunday, August 13, I talked about the challenge that institutions such as Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society face in the current political climate. How do we react after stunning setbacks such as what happened in Charlottesville? How do we find the energy and motivation needed to continue to work tirelessly against all oppression, to bring more and more people out of the margins and into an ever-expanding center? I quoted William James who wrote: There is a "power or directional urge pushing the universe toward greater wholeness and completion," requiring a "firm belief in the melioristic character of our universe." Say what?

Meliorism is "the principle that the world is capable of improvement, progress..it is the belief in the *possibility—but not inevitability* of improvement." I am intrigued by this for two reasons: (1) the principle of meliorism neatly sums up world views that I have long agreed with and (2) currently, though, given the scary state of affairs in our country, I am not so sure that I do believe even in the possibility, let alone the inevitability, of a world capable of improvement and progress.

But I can't live in that space for long. I have to continue to find reasons to believe that we humans are capable of changing the world. After all, we created it—we can un-create it, improve it, right the wrongs we have developed. There is a Navaho word—hozho, I believe—that means, among other things, "contentment with the inevitable—a central tenet

of the Navaho way.” I take comfort in that even though I am uncertain about what the Navahos mean by “the inevitable.”

I take comfort in the songs in our hymnal, also. Since the Charlottesville tragedy, two have been running through my mind: “Find a Stillness” and “Break Not the Circle.” “Find a stillness,...let the stillness carry me. In the spirit, by the spirit, with the spirit giving power, I will find true harmony.” “Break not the circle of enabling love where people grow forgiven and forgiving, break not that circle, make it wider still, ‘till it includes, embraces all the living.”

And I take comfort in communities of people who are as shocked and saddened as I am by the torches and the anti-Semitic, anti-Black chants. I take comfort and hope in communities that know there is no room for this kind of hatred in the 21st century; there is no room if the human race is going to survive. So, of course, I take great comfort in this Prairie Unitarian Universalist community. How wonderful it is for me to be here to take part in the celebration of Prairie’s 50th Anniversary.

Let us be joyful and hopeful and give comfort to each other as the summer turns into autumn and we proceed with our celebrations! May we achieve, however briefly, true harmony and be, at least temporarily, content with the inevitable. Rev. Sandy

Message from the President—Gary Gates

The Prairie Board has scheduled a Parish Meeting for Sunday, October 1, after the service. The following three items will be on the agenda:

1. Board recommendation to the congregation that we approve having Lockers for the Homeless installed on our property. Location and any other issues to be worked out by the Housing and Property Committee working with the Social Action Committee and with the sponsoring organization, Friends of the State Street Family.
2. Board recommendation to the congregation, that we become a sanctuary-supporting church. This does not mean we would house people seeking sanctuary; rather, we would commit to providing personnel and other needed support to the churches (such as First Unitarian) that would provide the actual housing.

NOTE: This is the same as our commitment to support Midvale Lutheran Church during the four weeks a year it houses homeless families for The Road Home, and our commitment to support Grace Episcopal’s breakfasts for the homeless, which we help staff once a month.

NOTE: Volunteers to meet our commitments to The Road Home and to the homeless breakfasts have been rather scarce of late.

3. Further discussion and confirmation on going ahead with planning for remodeling of the Meeting House.

We have also scheduled, for Sunday, September 24, another presentation by Rachel and Martin on the remodeling plans as developed to date. This will be essentially the same presentation they gave at the Spring Retreat and is intended to give those who couldn't attend the Retreat a chance to become acquainted with the proposal. It will also give those who were at the original presentation a refresher.

Circle of Friends—Holly Tellander, Director RE

Welcome Back!

It's been a long and sun-drenched summer—I hope you have all wrung every last drop of goodness out of the longer days.

Soon we'll all be starting our fall routines again and that means coming back to RE!

Over the summer we've been working hard to redesign our space. In the interest of keeping abreast of current progressive trends in the UU RE world and the larger educational sphere we are transitioning to a multi-age workshop model for grades 1-6 for Sunday mornings—though all ages are welcome.

We've created learning zones downstairs. Descriptions of each follow. They are fully stocked and will continue to evolve as our students participate in them. We'd love for you to come down and see how you can be a part of these exciting changes.

The MakerSpace: In the makerspace many different materials are available to the students; Glue, scissors, paper, paint, rubber bands, popsicle sticks, old buttons, scratched CDs. In this space students solve problems, develop inventions, create, design and build according to theme-based or student-created challenges. STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Math) activities will give students ample time to collaborate, discover and share.

The Theater: In the theater Students will find a large open space for large motor activities. We have musical instruments, scarves and balls for juggling, yoga mats, hula hoops, costumes, puppets and stage. Possible activities that might take place in the theater would be drama, yoga, tai chi, group games, puppet shows, poetry slams, just to name a few. The sky is really the limit. How are you inspired by the theater?

The Kitchen: A working kitchen is a big draw for many of our students. We are still looking for donations of aprons, oven mitts, cookie sheets and other baking and cooking paraphernalia to round out our current supplies. Several people have offered to work with the kids on our workshop series 'Cooking and Eating the Six Sources'—Kim and Sophie Tedesco will join us on the Sunday closest to Yom Kippur to help the kids cook Jewish potato pancakes. Are you a good hand in the kitchen? Let's chat about how you can get involved!

The Studio: In the studio discussions will be the order of the day. We've got plans to work with Bob Park on recording interviews with congregation members for the radio

station, podcasts and meditative coloring, watching videos, trivia quizzes and other technology related activities. Matt Tedesco has offered to work with our students on beginning philosophy principles and ethics conversations. Karen Deaton has expressed interest in using stories as a means to teach kids problem solving techniques. There is such a wealth of experience, passion and purpose in our congregation and it is truly a gift when folks choose to share with our youngest members.

The Outdoor Classroom: The Hobbit House, the sandbox, the stump circle, the working sink and the weaving wall...there are so many wonderful projects and experiences to be had in our outdoor classroom. Youth want to learn real skills, they want to solve real problems and they want to interact with the world around them. I've spoken with Gary Gates, Al Nettleton, Carl Wacker and Randy Converse about interacting with our students to teach basic skills—there are so many possibilities! Bat houses, bird feeders, what else can we build to honor our 7th principle? What projects can we undertake that will give our students a chance to practice the principles together? We've also begun plans to register our backyard as a wildlife sanctuary, so our kids can have a part in accomplishing something great for our animal neighbors.

The Library—In the library students will have access to quiet meditative activities. Books, puzzles, games and extra activities will be stored here. Fidget activities will be available to students who need to retreat for a time from the bustling activities of the other areas.

Come for a tour! On Sunday, September 17th after the service stop down for a tour! Perhaps there will be some RE kids to show you around or answer your questions. We'd love to incorporate your interests and skills in whatever way works for your schedule and preferences.

Pontoon Porch

It's our second annual Pontoon Porch Trip! We had so much fun last year we just had to do it again. RSVP ASAP for Saturday, September 9th at 8:30 a.m. for a cruise and a swim. Summer's not over 'till you've dived off the Pontoon Porch! Space still available!

OWL 4th-6th Grade

OWL starts soon. Thanks to Karen Deaton, Rick Reucking, Randy Converse and Paula Pachciarz for agreeing to help facilitate. Class dates are listed on the Prairie main calendar and the RE calendar. Classes will take place during service from 10:30—11:30. If you know of anyone who is interested in this opportunity, please share my contact information with them. All who want to register should plan to attend a brief parent informational meeting on Sunday, September 10th immediately after service.

Anniversary Celebration RE Activities

On Saturday, September 16th there will be a wine and cheese party to celebrate our 50th anniversary. After service on the 17th there will be a potluck and facility tours. Please RSVP to me if you require childcare for either of these events.

Still Needed

We are still looking for yoga mats, kitchen utensils (especially fancy or specialized items), aprons, oven mitts, bookshelves, as well as random items that kids could use as inspiration for creation. Please contact me if you have any such items.

Lastly—we are still looking for **volunteers!** Start small—come as a support person and see how things work. One of my strengths as your DRE is helping folks fit in where they feel most comfortable. I'd love the opportunity to do so with you!

“Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in.”~ Marjorie Moore

From Linda Sheehy

Prairie friends, I would like to bring together a group of those of us who are ageing and who are open to exploring the process. We would meet regularly—perhaps every two or three weeks—for discussion. We would likely read some of the good books on the ageing process. Two of these are *From Ageing to Sageing* by Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, and *The Gift of Years* by Joan Chittister. If you think that you might be interested, please email me at lindasheehy3@gmail.com.

August 20, 2017—Madison Gay Pride Parade

In the foreground are Patty Stockdale, Rev. Sandy Ingham and Mary Mullen



MARK YOUR CALENDARS: Special Parish Meeting on Sunday, October 1, after the service.

Tis The Season...!! The time of year, that is, when reviews of staff are being completed and the budget process for 2018 is beginning. The Committee on Ministry would like your feedback on how our minister is doing. Please contact anyone on that committee and give us your comments, constructive criticisms, critiques (kindly and gently, of course), suggestions, etc. about Rev. Sandy, in particular, and ministry, in general, if you are so inclined. *We need your feedback by the end of September* so that it can be figured into the budgeting and planning for next year, as needed. Committee on Ministry members are: Heidi Hughes (hughesha@yahoo.com); Dawn Hayslett (larydawnhay@msn.com); Cheryl Robinson (cherrobl@msn.com). Please, no anonymous comments.

Prairie Choir starting up again

If you have been thinking about joining the Prairie Choir, this would be an excellent time. No audition necessary! Just be able to carry a tune.

We rehearse on Sunday mornings at 8:45 in the Annex and stop in time to get everyone over for the morning program or to teach RE.

The choir will be singing for the 50th anniversary celebration on September 17th. Then we will take a couple of weeks off while I'm in Alaska and resume regular rehearsals on October 8th. If you are not joining us for the program on the 17th, then October 8th would be a great day to start. We always need new singers. We will be especially in need of tenors since Anne Urbanski will be leaving us when she and Lee sell their house and move, but all voices are needed and welcome.

See you in the Annex! Barbara Park, Director

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 Andy Garst for more information at:

garst.andrew@gmail.com

