

# Prairie Fire

July 2018

Editor: Phyllis Long—[phyllis.long.9436@gmail.com](mailto:phyllis.long.9436@gmail.com)

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Rev. Sandra Ingham, minister—[minister@uuprairie.org](mailto:minister@uuprairie.org)

Dan Klock, administrator—[admin@uuprairie.org](mailto:admin@uuprairie.org)

Holly Tellander, DRE—[prairie\\_uu\\_dre@outlook.com](mailto:prairie_uu_dre@outlook.com)

Rachel Long, president—[raarlong@gmail.com](mailto:raarlong@gmail.com)

Chris Porter, vice-president—[richersport@gmail.com](mailto:richersport@gmail.com)

Kathy Converse, treasurer—[conversekrtn@gmail.com](mailto:conversekrtn@gmail.com)

Phyllis Long, board secretary—[phyllis.long.9436@gmail.com](mailto:phyllis.long.9436@gmail.com)



## Prairie Calendar

(See descriptions of programs below)

- Sun Jul 1** 10:00 am—***Flirting with Freedom***—What exactly do we mean when we use the word ***freedom***? To whose freedom are we referring? What kind of freedom—personal, political, cultural, religious—are we pondering? Where does my freedom end and yours begin? And can we both (or all) experience freedom at those intersections? As we begin this Fourth of July week, these are just some of the questions we will consider in this interactive service. Rev. Sandy
- 11:30—***See July 29 notice about the Humanist Union***
- Fri Jul 6** 6:00 pm—***Board Game Night***
- Sat Jul 7** 5:00 am—***Men’s Shelter Breakfast***
- 9:00 am—***Prairie WOW***—meets in the Annex
- Sun Jul 8** 10:00 am—***Service***
- 11:45 am—***Board Meeting***—in the Annex
- Sun Jul 15** 10:00 am—***Points of Progress***—Learn about ways people around the world are making a difference. We will share readings from selected news items about “points of progress” in social justice, the environment and other areas from around the world. It can be important in times of discouragement to learn we are part of a worldwide community of people who care and act. If you are interested in helping be a “reader”, please contact Aileen Nettleton, who is coordinating this service. As time allows, members will also have a chance to share local “points of progress” they know about or are involved in.
- 11:30 am—***Soup Sunday***
- Sun Jul 22** 10:00 am—***Elevated Elevator Exchanges***—A Unitarian Universalist and a non-Unitarian Universalist walk into an elevator at the same time... No, that is not (necessarily) the beginning of a joke. It is the basis of today’s service—*our annual joint service* with the Free Congregation of Sauk Couty (FCSC) ([307 Polk Street, Sauk City](#)). **You** are the UU and this morning is your opportunity to do a little role playing and see how good you are at explaining this complex faith tradition of ours. You enter the elevator with a name tag which has the words Unitarian Universalist on it—

in BIG TYPE. Your elevator companion(s) read your badge and ask you: “What is a Unitarian Universalist?” We need volunteers to act out this scenario—pairs of volunteers would be even better—one to be the UU and the other the non-UU who peppers you with questions. You pick the floor on which you enter the elevator—thus determining the length of time you have to explain yourself. Three-to-four-minutes max, though elevators do sometimes get stuck! Please let Rev. Sandy or Robin Proud know if you want to be an “elevated elevator speaker”.

***Our Annual Joint Service with FCSC also means it is our ANNUAL POTLUCK PICNIC WITH FCSC. Please bring something to share for this part of our yearly get together. THANKS!***

**PLEASE NOTE:** As is our custom, there will be a program at Prairie for those who cannot go to Sauk City (and to ensure that any visitors or new people who arrive at 2010 Whenona will not find a closed and locked building!).

**Sun Jul 29** 10:00 am—**Service**

11:30 am—***Instead of meeting on the first Sundays in July and August, the Humanist Union will have one meeting (for both months)***

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## **Musings From The Minister**

“Goin’ to Kansas City. Kansas City here I come. I might take a plane. I might take a bus.” I took a car and the lyrics to the song need to be changed for the purposes of this column because I *went* to Kansas City the week of June 18th for General Assembly (GA), the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). I can’t report on whether or not “everything is up-to-date in Kansas City”. I can say, though, that everything seems to be up-to-date in the UUA—more than up-to-date.

I have lost track of how many General Assemblies I have attended, probably more than twenty. With rare exceptions, almost every General Assembly that I have participated in has amazed me because of how far ahead of the curve we Unitarian Universalists (UUs) tend to be. What curve, you might reasonably ask. Here are some areas in which I believe that we are ahead of much of humanity (or at least, trying to be!): social justice concerns; right relationship issues; how we spend our time on Sunday mornings; what we think is ultimately important in the world; how far we have expanded our circle of inclusiveness since the last GA.

A specific example is the panel discussion I went to about climate change. One of the speakers stated that she believes the balance has already tipped, that it is probably too late to save the human race. WHEW! That is an intense, complex statement, challenging us with difficult material to wrap our minds around. Nevertheless, I did not leave the workshop with an overwhelming sense of despair because that speaker went on to say that she doesn’t really want to believe her own harsh rhetoric. What this means for her is two-fold: (1) she will continue to work towards climate justice for the earth and (2) she will continue to struggle for an answer to how we should live our lives if this experiment in human creation is going to fail. This is what I mean when I say that everything seems to be more than up-to-date within the UUA.

I continue to be impressed by our association’s recognition of the reality of white supremacy. Particularly gratifying to me at this GA was the universal use of the term white supremacy and the acknowledgement of the inadequacy of the phrase white privilege. I am so proud of who we are and of our continuing efforts to change *our* systems, our UUA sys-

tems, as we begin the hard work of dismantling white supremacy within our ranks, in our little corner of the world. This work is difficult; progress is slow. Yet once again, just as at GA in New Orleans last year, I was thrilled to see so many young people of color in key roles.

What I get from General Assembly can be summed up in three categories: past, present, future or reclaiming reporting, resolving. I *reclaim* the past which includes not only revisiting and remembering our incredibly rich Unitarian and Universalist history. I also reclaim long-standing friendships with folks whom I only see once a year at these general assemblies. GA is a reunion time for me.

The *reporting* of what has been happening the past year in the congregation that I serve places me firmly in the present. The reporting of so many others, lay leaders and ministers, gives me a perspective about who we really are and what is ultimately most important to us as UUs, a perspective that I sometimes lose track of within the confines of Prairie and the other UU congregations in the area and by virtue of living in the Midwest.

And, I move into the future by *resolving* to keep on keeping on, despite difficulties, despite the dark time in which we find ourselves in this country, especially as people who believe, ultimately, in love and forgiveness, compassion and action as we do all that we can to build the beloved community.

This year's GA was no exception. I reclaimed. I reported. I resolved. You will hear more about General Assembly on August 19th when Barb Park, Nancy Schraufnagel, and I will tell you about some of our GA experiences. In the meantime, rest assured, a wonderful phrase and blessing that I hadn't heard or used in years and then—there it was reclaimed at General Assembly.

Rest assured until we meet again... Rev. Sandy

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## **From The President—Rachel Long**

Some say all politics is local. In that way of thinking, it's not Mike and Donald that are your lead executives, but Chris Porter and me! There are quite a few differences in our approaches to leadership when contrasted with that other pair, one of which is that Chris and I are ready to listen to you. Talk to us!

As your new Prairie Board considers goals and priorities for our Board and our Society, we want your input. Feel free to approach us in person or write to tell us about your hopes and vision for Prairie, and how we can help. We love our Prairie family, and want it to grow and prosper. I look forward to hearing from you!

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***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 Chris Porter for more information at:***

***richersport@gmail.com***