

Prairie Fire

September 2018

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Prairie Calendar

(See descriptions of programs below)

Sat Sep 1 9:00 am—**Prairie WOW**—meets in the Annex

Sun Sep 2 10:00 am—**Service: Water Ceremony**—Karen Deaton will lead our annual Water Ceremony. We hope that you will, as usual, bring your stories and memories about your summer trips or stay-at-home adventures (which might include water woes from the recent rain!), but...Please do not bring water from your travels or even your homes; we will provide water from our local watershed for this year's celebration.

11:45 am—**Humanist Union program on prison reform**—Our topic will be *Connecting Prison Reform to Elections in Wisconsin*, presented by Pam and Gary Gates and Eric Howland. Eric is the president of **Moses**, Madison's section in Wisconsin's inter-denominational prison reform and social justice organization WISDOM. We'll meet in the Annex for potluck lunch at 11:45, program 12:30 to 1:30. All are welcome.

Thur Sep 6 7:00 pm—**Program Committee**—meets in the Annex

Fri Sep 7 6:00 pm—**Prairie Board Game Night**—meets in the Meeting House

Sat Sep 8 5:00 am—**Men's Shelter Breakfast**—at Grace Episcopal

Sun Sep 9 8:45 am—**Choir Rehearsal**—in the Annex

10:00 am—**Why Are We Here?** No, I don't mean here in the cosmic sense. I mean why are we here in a Unitarian Universalist setting? What better way to kick off the new Prairie year than by asking why we come here and sharing our answers. At a time when fewer and fewer people attend church, why do we bother? What keeps us coming back? Part of my answer to that question lies in this quote from UU minister Jack Mendelsohn. "The Unitarian Universalist religion's gift to me has been the opportunity to unfold: the special joy of breaking out of the cocoon, of finding a greater freedom in the exercise of my intelligence and in the growth of my experience of love, beauty and justice." Why are *you* here? — Rev. Sandy

10:15 am—**RE begins**

Sun Sep 16 8:45 am—**Choir Rehearsal**—in the Annex

10:00 am—**Usona Institute**—by Charles Raison, MD, Director of Clinical and Translational Research. The Usona Institute, here in Madison, is doing research on psilocybin, the active ingredient in *shrooms* or *magic mushrooms* as a treatment for depression. This is a hot topic since the release of Michael Pollan's book, *How to Change Your Mind: What the New Science of Psychedelics Teaches Us*.

11:30 am—**Soup Sunday**

12:00 noon—**Board Meeting**—in the Annex

12:00 noon—**Lonesome Dove**—by Larry McMurtry is the September book club selection. This is an adventurous story of a cattle drive from Texas to Montana set in the late 19th century. We will meet in the Annex. Everyone is welcome. You do not need to have read the book to attend.

Sun Sep 23 8:45 am—**Choir Rehearsal**—in the Annex

10:00 am—**Eating to Live...Living to Eat!** Into which category would you put yourself? Do you eat to live or live to eat? Is it true that “we are what we eat”? On this morning, with help from Anna Lappe, Bill McKibben and others, we will consider how our food choices affect climate change. We will examine the seven principles, but not the ones that probably come to mind as you read these words! And we will have to examine the concept of mindfulness, too, because it is impossible to consider the subject of food with honesty, integrity and courage without tapping into our inner Buddhist—Rev. Sandy

11:10 am—**Parish Meeting**

Sun Sep 30 8:45 am—**Choir Rehearsal**—in the Annex

10:00 am—**Religious Education Goes Green**—by Holly Tellander. RE families were challenged to consider their interactions with the environment in regards to food, plastic and water this summer. Join us to hear about some of the changes the kids made and hear their ideas.

Musings From The Minister

WOW! We are off and running already and we still have plenty of summer time left—at least, I hope that we do. What am I talking about? I am talking about all the activity that surrounds the beginning of a new church or fellowship or society year. Whatever your preferred word is for our organization, Prairie will be a busy, exciting place this fall and into the winter.

One coming event is the annual fundraising drive to support our operating budget. (This is not to be confused with the recent capital campaign for renovating the main building.) Part of planning our budget for the coming fiscal year (January 1—December 31, 2019) involves the review of Prairie's staff. Without your feedback, evaluating shared ministry at Prairie would be difficult, so please try to take the time to respond to requests for feedback from the Board and committees.

An important event in the world of Prairie occurs on Sunday, September 9, with the official beginning of the new year's Religious Education Program. For adults, I am hoping to offer not one, but two religious education opportunities during the 2018-2019 season. One will be based on the book *Justice on Earth, People of Faith Working at the Intersections of Race, Class, and the Environment*, edited by Manish Mishra-Marzetti and Jennifer Nordstrom and published by Skinner House Books. I am very excited about this book and its thoughtful, challenging essays on climate change and how working for environmental jus-

tice goes hand-in-hand with the pursuit of justice in many other areas: white supremacy, patriarchy, immigration, poverty, health care, education. Here is an opportunity for us to better understand the concept of intersectionality.

I am equally excited about another Unitarian Universalist education opportunity for grownups, one in which I hope Prairie will support my efforts to make it happen—a curriculum called *Beloved Conversations—Meditations on Race and Ethnicity*. Investing in this opportunity will not be cheap or easy. A significant commitment of time and some money will be required. If Prairie decides that it wants to participate in this program, we will do so together with the other two UU congregations in Madison: James Reeb and First Unitarian Society. More information coming soon...

What can you do right now? Give feedback about staff to: the Committee on Ministry or the Board (for the minister); the RE Committee or Rev. Sandy (for Holly Tellander, or Director of Religious Education); Rev. Sandy (for Dan Klock, our Administrator); the Housing & Property Committee (for John Eliganti, our Custodian). Remember that ours is a shared ministry here at Prairie, so let's also evaluate the congregation as a whole. Giving thoughtfully and generously to the annual operating budget fund drive is a form of evaluation.

Get the book, *Justice on Earth*, read it, let me know if you are interested in participating in a discussion group using this book of essays. Talk to me about this book. Talk to me about the Beloved Conversations curriculum, especially about the time commitment required and the cost of doing this program.

And, finally—**DRUM UP BUSINESS!!!!** Tell your friends about Prairie. Tell your coffee shop buddies. Tell your family members. Tell your co-workers. Tell everyone you can think of about how great Prairie is and what exciting things are happening here! Bring people to our services. Let's get busy growing!

Happy New Year! Rev. Sandy

Circle of Friends—Holly Tellander, RE Director

A New RE Year Around the Corner!

We hope everyone has had a great summer and are looking forward to seeing **many familiar and new faces of all ages** downstairs this fall!

We've got another great year of progressive, inclusive & responsive programming planned based on our four program pillars; **UU Identity & Heritage, Social Justice Work, World Faith Traditions, & Social Emotional Learning.**

Some of you have already responded to our newest **RE Survey** – and the results indicate that the four program pillars mentioned above have **great support** from parents & families. We **welcome all feedback** – whatever your role or connection to RE – so, if you have-

n't had a chance to fill out the survey and would like to do so, please contact Karen Deaton, RE Committee Chair.

This newsletter should answer many of **your most pressing questions** about the upcoming RE year, but if not, please reach out anytime!

Program Changes 2018/2019

During the 2017/2018 year we launched our **multi-age workshop model**, each week offering choices in one of our **five engaging learning zones**; The Kitchen, The Maker Space, The Studio/Library, The Theater & the Outdoor Classroom. This program was very popular with families & kids, and – most importantly – made volunteering in RE much less time-consuming and much more accessible!

In addition to our family survey, we also administered a **volunteer survey** to assess volunteer satisfaction and the results of that survey told us that the volunteers really valued these changes and noticed that they made the **experience of volunteering easier and more enjoyable**.

Last year we ran the workshop model for grades 1-7. This year we are making a change to **separate our middle school learners from the elementary learners**. We feel these students will benefit from a more age-segregated learning model in the coming year. We've also graduated quite a few of our high school students and this is a busy time of life for the remaining students. We will be starting the year with our middle & high schoolers working on various **project-based learning experiences together**. This age group values 'real learning' in **a mentor-style relationship** from different adults. This is all information we've gathered from our recent survey. If you're interested in learning more about what projects this age-group is interested in, or would like more information about how you can fit volunteering with this, or any, age group into your schedule let Holly know. We have lots of different options and our utmost goal is to make **volunteering in RE easy and accessible** for anyone who wants to work with us!

Our K-5 students will be continuing the workshop model as they did last year. We know, also from our survey, that these kids and their families value **choice-based learning** and plenty of opportunities to engage with **social emotional learning** as the main lens through which they engage with the other three program pillars. If you would like more information about social emotional learning, and it's impact on education – you can check out www.casel.org (The Center for Academic & Social Emotional Learning)

Coming Up!

CANCELED – Our previously scheduled Park & Boat day on Lake Wingra on **September 8th**, has been canceled due to the flooding. We are working on rescheduling a different Fall Frolic activity. Keep an eye on the calendars!

Sunday, September 9th 11:30 – 1:00

All Prairie people are invited join us for a **lunch & fun** immediately after service on Sunday, September 9th – the first day of regular RE.

This is a great opportunity to come down and see what a typical RE Sunday looks like. We've flipped the script a bit though, and today, **the kids will be the teachers guiding the** adults through fun activities in each learning space. Regular RE volunteers will be on hand to answer questions and keep everything flowing smoothly.

We'll be learning about **Rosh Hashanah in the kitchen**, playing with our **pride parachute outside**, UU **charades** will be rolling in the theater, **Quiz Box** in the library and **catapults** in the Maker Space! The kids will be running the show – so it's bound to be a lot of fun! Plus, it's a great time to get all your questions answered about volunteering or how the programming has been developing over time!

Even if you can only pop down for part of the time, please do come! The **kids will love to switch roles** for the day **Also, lunch! Please RSVP** if you know you can make it so we can plan accordingly with food – but also, feel free to **pop down** that day if it turns out you can make it!

October – TBA

Calling all crafters! This year we will be hosting a fun get together for adults to come down and get a chance to **work in our maker space!** Come and get an idea of the materials available and get your imaginations flowing. We'll use the time to **plan Nifty Gifty projects** for one of the most popular RE events!

January/February OWL

This winter we will be running a **K-1 OWL program at Prairie**. This program consists of 8 30-minute sessions teaching our youngest learners all about families and the miracle of babies. All sessions will take place on Sunday mornings during regularly scheduled programming. **Please share this information with anyone in your life who has a child in Kindergarten or First Grade who is interested in developmentally appropriate and responsible lifespan sexuality education.**

Creative Volunteering Opportunities

We understand that not everyone can volunteer their time on a Sunday morning downstairs. We also know how important RE is to the entire Prairie congregation. And that is why we are excited to offer flexible & creative volunteer opportunities. If any of these appeal to you, please contact Holly Tellander. Many hands make light work, as they say!

Little Free Library Coordinator – This person would be responsible for coming downstairs immediately after service 2-3 Sundays a month and taking a small group of kids outside to cull & restock Prairie's Little Free Library. Our library sees a lot of turnover and we've found some strange books in there over time. The kids love to help sort and select books! This is a **10-15 minute commitment 2-3 times per month**. Benefits include smiling children & books!

Bulletin Board Wizard – This person would be responsible for revamping RE’s bulletin boards **once a month** or so. We always have pictures we can add to show what we’ve been up to, but there will be a lot of creative agency with this position! Want to do a board of inspiring quotes? Riddles about famous UUs? A map showing where people are doing good work in the world? The board is your palette!

Photo Fetcher – This person would be responsible for taking home the RE camera **1-2 times per month**, eliminating the blurry and unusable photos and sending the great ones off to be printed at your favorite photo print shop. All that’s left is to bring them back to the DRE. That’s it! Everyone loves to keep an eye on what’s going on downstairs!

Story Corp Interviewee – On the **last Sunday of each month**, we invite an upstairs Prairie-goer to come next door (sometimes outside!) during Joys & Concerns to participate in a brief Q&A with our oldest students. This is a great time to get to know the older students a bit better, but also to share your wisdom and experiences with the next generation. The interviews are recorded and shared on the radio station, thanks to Bob Park, and uploaded to the Library of Congress Story Corp database for posterity! You’ll always be **back upstairs in time for the service to start!**

Calendar Reminder

Just a friendly reminder that RE maintains **two online calendars** – easy to sync your phone to or check whenever you have a question! The calendar on Prairie’s website is a great place to check on RE activities & themes, but we also have a Google & Outlook calendar to help you stay on top of RE fun whenever you like. If you do not have access to any of the calendars, or **need help getting access**, please let Holly Tellander know and she can get you set up!

Donations Needed & Donations NOT Needed

Thank you for always responding to requests for donations so heartily!

Presently RE does **NOT need** any of the following items – we’ll alert you if the situation changes:

- Egg cartons
- Plastic bags of any kind
- Magazines/old calendars
- Popsicle sticks
- Plastic bottles & jugs

Volunteers Make the World Go Round

Lastly, consider this another call for volunteers! We have so many different volunteering opportunities and our students are enriched by having the chance to learn from a varied and diverse mentor pool. Please, if you have any interest at all, know that asking questions does not constitute a binding contract! Happy to answer any and all questions at any time .

Thanks for being such an RE supportive congregation – here's to another amazing year filled with new friendships & learning!

Proof Copies of History Book Are Being Proof-Read

By Mary Mullen

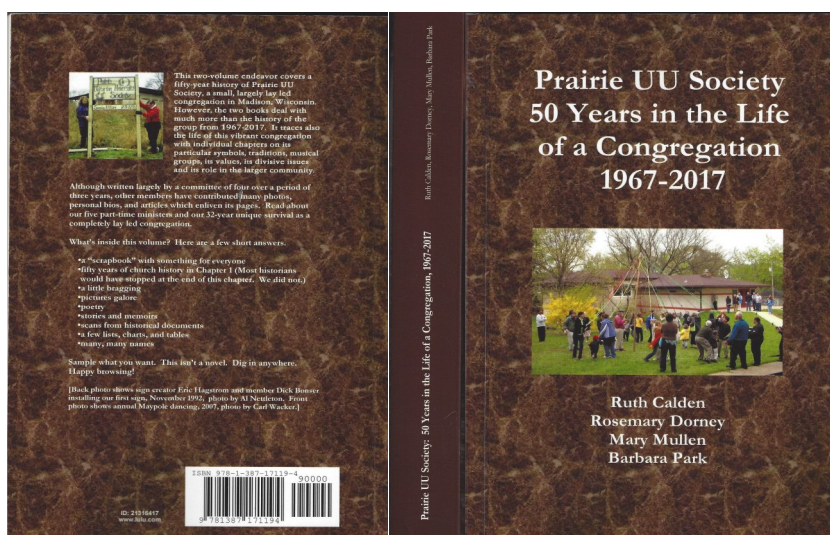
The Prairie History Committee is happy to announce that the two proof copies of Volume 1 of the Prairie History book are in the hands of proof-readers.

The books arrived on May 25 and have been shown around—to the History Committee members, to those attending the May 27 Sunday service, to Ruth Calden's Circle Dinner group, and by a special visit to Rose Smith, who very seldom gets to a Sunday service anymore. Everyone who has seen a copy of the book is impressed with its heft—492 pages—and its looks. We are especially happy that the photos generally look OK.

These copies are printed in black on cream-colored paper. Once we get the corrections in, we'll also be ordering a copy in color (much more expensive).

Mary Mullen is in the process of putting Volume 2 into the template that will be sent off to Lulu, the online publisher, as soon as possible.

Among other things, the appendices will include a 50-year chronology and a list of Prairie leaders (Board members, committee chairs, and lay ministers) and their positions and dates of service. The chronology is based on work by Warren Hagstrom and Bob Park, with later years covered by the History Committee. Mary Mullen and Anne Pryor have worked on the Prairie leaders document. Chris Porter is taking care of the index with help from the committee, which is making a list of people who are mentioned in scans and captions in the book.



Above is the cover of Volume 1 of the Prairie history. Contact Mary Mullen if you want a full-size scan of this or just want the text from the back cover.

Message from the President—Rachel Long

What's the Board up to?

As your new Board President, I will be writing articles periodically to let you know what your Board is doing. Here are some current highlights.

- We are reviewing our Bylaws and our Policies and Procedures, and assuring they are aligned. This work will undoubtedly require some changes to either one or the other of these documents. The proposed bylaws change discussed elsewhere in this newsletter is part of this process.
- We have identified Board members to act as liaisons to each of our committees, so we can improve the flow of information between committees and the Board. If you are serving on one of Prairie's committees and you don't know who your liaison is, ask! If you have issues that you want the Board to address, or things you want us to know, your Board liaison is the person to talk with.
- Take a look at the Mission Statement on our website in the "About Us" section, <http://uuprairie.org/aboutus/#ms>. We have not revised this statement since 1999, and it no longer accurately reflects who we are. What purpose does our society serve? We are undertaking a major remodeling project, which is a big investment in money and energy. What is it all for? Within the next year, your Board intends to lead a process of discernment for our congregation to better understand who we are and who we want to be, and write a new mission statement to reflect that understanding.

Please feel free to talk with me or any of the Board members about our work.

Rachel Long

Board President

Parish Meeting 9/23/18 at 11:10 am

We will have a brief Parish Meeting immediately after the service on September 23rd to address two issues. First, one of our newly elected board members, Rachel Hughes, is unable to serve. The congregation needs to approve a candidate to complete her term. The Nominating Committee is recommending Jesse Garst, who has graciously agreed to be a Board member.

Second, there has been a conflict between our Bylaws, our Policy and Procedure Manual, and our Minister's contract about how the members of the Committee on Ministry are chosen. The Board is asking the congregation to change Bylaws "Section 10.2 Standing and Other Committees" as follows:

Current—"The Committee on Ministry shall consist of three Members selected by the Board President in consultation with the Minister and the Board. Members of the Com-

mittee on Ministry may not concurrently be members of the Board.”

Proposed—”The Committee on Ministry shall consist of three Members selected by the Minister, subject to approval by the Board. Members of the Committee on Ministry may not concurrently be members of the Board.”

The proposed change is very important to our Minister, Sandy Ingham, and would bring us in line with how Committee on Ministry members are chosen at other UU congregations.

Please plan to stay just a few minutes after service 9/23. Your vote is needed.

Rachel Long

Prairie Board President

Fall Retreat

Prairie's Fall Retreat is scheduled from Friday evening October 19 through noon on Sunday the 21st at Bethel Horizons Camp -- bordering Governor Dodge State Park, 41 miles west of Madison. Put it on your calendar!

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 and hikes 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 in the programming. Practice your skills and skits for the talent show.

Friday, Oct 19 - 5 pm - begin check-in at Bethel Horizons, potluck snacks/games

Saturday, Oct 20 - full day of programming, 3 meals, and a "talent" show!

Sunday, Oct 21 - brunch, "Key-Log Fire and Service".

The retreat is one of the best ways to fully integrate your family into our society. Just as Religious Education is a priority for Prairie, so is having everyone at the retreat. Accommodation options and no programming costs make this weekend affordable. 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 Retreat. October 19-21 -- put it on your calendar now! A detailed registration form will be available soon at Prairie and through Prairie News.

Contact Rick Ruecking 608-838-8540 with any questions you may have.

Prairie Anniversary Noted in *UU World*

It took a long time, but Prairie's 50th Anniversary celebration finally got some space in the *UU World*, the denominational magazine. The Summer 2018 issue features a brief article about our big event on page 58.

Here's the back story.

First, at the beginning of July 2017, Mary Mullen started writing in her to-do notes "Send email to UUA." Having planned a 400-mile bike trip along the Erie Canal, she just couldn't get at it, so at the end of July, she asked Ruth Calden to write a draft, which Ruth did, immediately. At Mary's request, she also started calling the *UU World* number to find out about deadlines. Mostly no one was at the phone, but when she did finally make contact with "Josh," he told her that there was no specific deadline, just what he called "a rolling deadline," and even if she did send something right away, he said it might not even get into the winter issue, let alone the fall issue we were aiming for, to announce our September 16 and 17 celebration. Ruth was not impressed with his people-skills. In an email, she remarked, "He is not a very simpatico person to deal with. Just a robot. Showed no interest in our event."

As a result of this contact, we decided to wait until after the event to submit an article. In late September, ten days after the anniversary, Ruth wrote a one-page news item, sharing it for review with Barb Park and Mary. It was revised, and Mary submitted it to the magazine on 10/13/17 along with two photos.

This time, Kenny Wiley, a western-based senior editor for *UU World*, responded promptly with a very personable email. Mary was familiar with Mr. Wiley since he had spoken at the Midwest Regional Conference she had attended in Minneapolis some time back. She had been favorably impressed then. He thanked us for our information and said, "Congratulations!" further adding, "Sounds like a vibrant and wonderful place." He said they'd like to run just a one-paragraph notice to appear in the spring issue of the *World*: "If you had 100 words to tell us the biggest highlights of this milestone, what would you use?"

Ruth then wrote a very much condensed news article, and Mary put some finishing touches on it, submitting it on December 1, 2017, along with two photos from our celebration.

The spring issue of the magazine did not carry our news. But, also, there was no other congregational news in that issue. (We weren't being discriminated against.)

Then on May 8, a very welcome email appeared in Mary's email queue, this time from

Sonja Cohen at the *UU World*. Her email was as cordial as Kenny Wiley’s had been. She said, “Thank you for letting us know about this. The news editors are grateful for the lead, and information about your congregation’s anniversary has been included in the Summer 2018 News Roundup (page 58).”

So there you have it, the odyssey of getting an 80-word news article—and no photos—into our denominational magazine.

By Mary Mullen



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