

# Prairie Fire

November 2018

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## Prairie Calendar

(See descriptions of programs below)

**Thurs Nov 1** 7:00 pm—**Program Committee**—meets in the Annex

**Fri Nov 2** 6:00 pm—**Board Game Night**—meets in the Meeting House

**Sat Nov 3** 5:00 am—**Men's Shelter Breakfast**—at Grace Episcopal

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

**Sun Nov 4** 8:45 am—**Choir Rehearsal**—meets in the Annex

10:00 am—**Looking Backward, Looking Forward**—There is something about All Souls Day that has always intrigued me, always since I became a Unitarian Universalist, that is. Taking the time to honor all those souls who came before us, remembering them as best we can, is powerful and sacred to me. As UUs, we stand on the shoulders of so many women and men who paved the way for us to be liberal, progressive, freethinking people of faith during our time on Planet Earth. These souls risked everything to practice freedom of religious thought—many of them lost their possessions, their homelands, even their lives in the process. One way that we can pay it forward for those who will come after us is by participating in the Guest at Your Table program. In addition to honoring all souls on this Sunday morning, we will distribute the GAYT boxes and learn how our 2018 donations to this annual Unitarian Universalist Service Committee event will be used. Rev. Sandy

11:45 am—**Prairie Board**—meets in the Annex

11:45 am—The Humanist Union will have an open discussion titled **They're After My Vote**. Bring election related material you've received in the mail and your comments, positive and negative, on ads you have seen in print media or on TV. What have commentators in print, on TV and on the web been saying? How important are endorsements to you? Have you made use of the candidate answers to League of Women Voters questions? Did you get any election related text messages? What do you think will influence voters the most as they approach election day? We'll meet in the Meeting House for a potluck lunch at 11:45 am, followed by discussion from 12:30 to 1:30 pm

**Sun Nov 11** 8:45 am—**Choir Rehearsal**—meets in the Annex

10:00 am—**Service**

11:30 am—**Fall Parish Meeting**—(See article below)

**Sun Nov 18** 8:45 am—**Choir Rehearsal**—meets in the Annex

10:00 am—**Service**

**Sun Nov 25** 8:45 am—**Choir Rehearsal**—meets in the Annex

10:00 am—**THANKS and EVER THANKS**—How do we hold on to an attitude of thanksgiving and gratitude after Thanksgiving Day is over, friends and family have gone home, the leftovers from the feasting are all consumed? The deeper question for those of us who live in northern climates is how do we remain grateful for our lives when the days get shorter, the nights longer, the temperatures lower? Join me on this Thanksgiving weekend as we explore these questions and share what works for us as we move deeper and deeper into the dark, cold days of the winter season. How do *you* cope? Or are you one of those souls who has no problem with the upcoming days of darkness and chilliness? If so, please come and share your tips for winter survival! Rev. Sandy

**Dec 2** 8:45 am—**Choir Rehearsal**—meets in the Annex

10:00 am—**Old Befana**—Ken Lonquist and Friends will present their highly acclaimed production of *Old Befana* this morning at Prairie. This “nondenominational holiday musical”, according to the *Old Befana* website is “based on an ancient holiday story”. The program is joyous and funny. Don’t miss it!

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### **Hear ye, hear ye!**

Our Fall Parish Meeting will be Sunday, November 11 at 11:30 am.

Our agenda will include:

1. Chalice lighting and welcome
2. Minutes of Spring Parish Meeting—approval
3. 2019 Budget—discussion and approval
4. News on strategic planning and remodeling plans—informational

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### **Musings From The Minister**

November already? How could this be? I am a summer person. I am mentally and psychologically still in the middle of July, having been cheated out of a couple of summer weeks because of my encounter with the deer then and the subsequent busyness related to finding a new car (Thank You, Ruth!) and insurance paperwork, transfer of vehicle ownership, and so on.

And here is November, way too soon. Yet, I am fond of November, despite the increasing darkness, the ridiculous changing of the clocks, the potential snow and ice. November is transition month, full of possibilities. November is a month that on a Unitarian Universalist liturgical calendar begins with a celebration of those who came before us—All Souls Day and Day of the Dead—and then ends with a celebration of gratitude for all those who are with us right now—Thanksgiving.

November is ushered in by another important day close to UU hearts—United Nations Day which is October 24. Because we are people whose sixth principle calls us to affirm and promote “the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all”, United Nations Day is meaningful to us. Here at Prairie we have occasionally devoted a Sunday morning to the subject.

November is often the month when we Unitarian Universalists try to put that sixth principle into action by participating in the annual Unitarian Universalist Service Committee’s “Guest At Your Table” (GAYT) program. You will find a little more information about GAYT in this newsletter in the section that describes what will be happening during November Sunday morning services. And you will learn even more by joining me for the November 4th Sunday service.

November, the month of possibilities, of remembering, of intentionally giving thanks, of mindfully practicing gratitude by giving back to the world, by remembering not just those who came before us, but also those souls with whom we are making our life’s journey who struggle every day to survive and who don’t have the luxury of taking days out of the month to celebrate the lives of the ancestors or to have a feast to celebrate gratefulness.

November...may we go through this month aware and awake. May we attempt to be more mindful than usual, giving thanks for the beauty of memories and the joy of plenitude.

Rev. Sandy

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## **Circle of Friends—Holly Tellander, RE Director**

### A community that Learns Together

Please consider volunteering to run a workshop on something that interests you or reaching out to ask if there have been any student requests that will fall into your wheelhouse!

Volunteering even once a quarter to teach something fun is a wonderful gift to our program and gives our kids a chance to learn from many different folks—something that families are really looking for in a church community.

We are really looking for more support downstairs and with our older group of kids. Our volunteer pool is stretched pretty tight!

Thanks to folks willing to volunteer—here is our monthly lineup (anywhere you see ‘rotating workshop’ that is a space waiting to be filled by your great idea! These once a month commitments can be a lot of fun and we have several great ideas if you’d like some support:

### **K-5th Grade**

1st Sunday workshops: Jedi Ethics Council (Paula P.) & Buckingham the Bear (Linda S.)

2nd Sunday workshops: Social Justice Candy Maps (Randy C.) & Rotating Workshop

3rd Sunday workshops: 6 Sources in the Kitchen (Karen D.) & UU Sing (Barbara & Ron Chatterton) & Rotating workshop

4th Sunday workshops: Maker Space—My Project (Floating volunteer) & Podcasts w/Art (Floating volunteer)

5th Sunday—All ages mixed fun & Games

### **6th-8th Grade**

This age group has planned several service projects this fall—they are currently working on a pair of Leopold Benches for the backyard. We are looking for volunteers to help out with this on a support basis!

As the weather gets colder we will turn to more contemplative rather than physical pursuits. Peggy Small has created a great series of Ethics discussion workshops based on picture books, Jeremy and Harlan Small have created a DIY laser pointers workshop.

This age group will also be utilizing the Popcorn Theology curriculum to use popular films to engage in ethical and theological themes. We could really use a volunteer to help bring this workshop to life once or twice a month!

### **Coming Up!**

#### **Homeless Collection Drive**

This November & December RE students will be collecting the following items:

- GOOD quality socks (the most asked-for item by the homeless)
- Snacks: crackers, granola bar, peanut butter & tuna package
- Bottles of water
- Powder, lotion, deodorant, band aids, toothbrush & toothpaste
- Flushable wipes
- Safety pins
- \$5 bills

**Each Sunday beginning November 3rd** the RE students will have a special announcement and will then walk through the congregation collecting items—so be sure to bring something each Sunday. We'll be holding a special packaging party on a Friday in early December so RE kids can invite their friends from school to be part of the fun.

**December 16th—Nifty Gifty** Currently seeking volunteers with great ideas! We are considering an extended day with lunch option this year to give our families time to shop kid free in Madison. Volunteers get a free lunch! Please let Holly know if you're interested in helping out for Nifty Gifty this year.

#### **December 23rd—Symbol Tree Service**

#### **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**

**Bulletin Board Wizard—PLEASE HELP ☺** 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—Thanks to Aidan Small, this position has been filled!**

**Little Free Library Coordinator—Thanks to Fern Wedekind—this position has been filled!**

**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

**Thanks for being such an RE supportive congregation—Stay warm!**

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**Notes From The President—Rachel Long**

If you missed the retreat, you missed the opportunity to participate in 3 great discussions; on growing our membership, on what we want from our Sunday program, and on our mission. We had excellent participation and lots of good ideas were generated. There are already folks taking action as a result. We agreed it is time for our congregation to do more in depth strategic planning—usually a strategic plan is good for 5 years or so, but our most recent strategic planning was done in 2008. There is a lot of energy and enthusiasm in our congregation, but uncertainty too. What do we want to feel like to a visitor? What is our main mission? How do these goals fit with our plans for remodeling? Your Board will be working on these issues, including developing a process for revisiting Prairie's strategic plan.

Rachel Long, President

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**Progress of WUUSAN**

WUUSAN, the organization with the ungainly name that sounds like a duck call, is actually the Wisconsin Unitarian Universalist Social Action Network, which has been in development for about two years. Members of UU congregations throughout the state have been meeting to organize and create a structure for coordinated social justice work as Unitarian Universalists. Many states in the U.S. already have such a group established. It is a very exciting concept but logistically tricky. But there are about 10 people from UU congregations around the state that have been involved on a regular basis. Molly Plunkett and Rev. Sandy have attended meetings from Prairie.

The group has recently incorporated as a nonprofit, which will allow it to apply for grant

money. There is a temporary governing board and draft bylaws. A trainer is being brought in to look at more organizational issues: does the organization want to be top down? Do they want part time staff? How do you keep the organization active and moving forward?

If you have any interest in being part of this fledgling group, please contact Molly P. at 219-2904.

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## **Mission Evaluation**

Our Bylaws mandate an in-depth evaluation of our minister every 3 years, and this is the year. The Committee on Ministry (COM) members are currently Marty Drapkin, Dawn Hayslett, and Cheryl Robinson. They are currently working on the format and process for the evaluation. Your input is very important! Be on the lookout later this fall for a request from the COM for your thoughts on professional ministry, and on our minister.

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## **Caring Committee Information**

Prairie's Caring Committee's purpose is to provide you with support from other Prairie members when needed. Some examples are: when you are in the hospital; when you are recovering from a surgery or illness; if there is a death in your family; or if you just need someone to talk to about an issue in your life (however, we do not consider the Caring Committee a substitute for professional counseling).

Cheryl Robinson is the Chairperson of this committee. Five other members of this Committee are Erin Bosch, Aileen Nettleton, Dean Schroeder, Rebecca Strome, and Nancy Wunderlin. These six Committee members are Group Leaders. Each is a contact person for a specific group of individual Prairie members. You may call or talk to your Caring Committee Group Leader if you have a need for our services. Your Group Leader will try to contact you if she or he becomes aware (usually through Joys and Concerns, or word of mouth from other members) that you may have a need for our services.

There is always a list of Caring Committee Group Leaders on the bulletin board in the back of the Meeting Room where Prairie has its Sunday services. If you have forgotten who your Group Leader is at any time, ask Cheryl or another Committee member, or refer to the list on that bulletin board. If you think you would like to join us as a Group Leader on the Caring Committee, please let Cheryl Robinson know. When we welcome a new Group Leader, you will start with a very small group and add members gradually.

This Committee also has a small group of volunteers from Prairie who are willing to be available on a "once in a while" basis to be called on (by Caring Committee members) to provide services like preparing a single meal or picking up a few groceries or pharmacy supplies on a one-time basis. This would be especially helpful to the Committee when a



member is going through a longer need for these types of assistance, e.g., immediately following surgery. If you are interested in helping other members in this way, please let Chery Robinson know.

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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/about us/#com](http://uuprairie.org/about%20us/#com)***

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

***[richersport@gmail.com](mailto:richersport@gmail.com)***