Prairie Fire

First service “Picture Book Principles” in Oak Park Nakoma on August 4th 2019

Prairie Contacts

Rachel Long, President—president@uuprairie.org
Dan Klock, Administrator—admin@uuprairie.org
Holly Tellander, DRE—dre@uuprairie.org
Renee Deschard, Prairie Fire Editor — prairiefire@uuprairie.org

Please see www.uuprairie.org for other contacts, including board members and committee chairs.

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September Calendar*
Please see www.uuprairie.org for detailed descriptions
*All events take place at Oak Park Nakoma, unless stated

Sunday 1 September
➢ 10a RE & Service: Labor in the Pulpit
➢ 12p Humanist Union

Thursday 5 September (and 26)
➢ 7p Program Committee Meeting (Annex)

Saturday 7 September
➢ 5a Men’s Shelter (Grace Episcopal)
➢ 9a Prairie WOW (Annex)

Sunday 8 September
➢ 10a RE & Service: Ingathering
➢ 11:45a Board Meeting (Annex)

Sunday 15 September
➢ 8:45a Choir Rehearsal
➢ 10a RE & Service: Fact or Fake News in the Digital Era Part 1

Friday 20 September
➢ 6p D&D/Subversive Threads (Annex)

Sunday 22 September
➢ 8:45a Choir Rehearsal
➢ 10a RE & Service: Fact or Fake News in the Digital Era Part 2
➢ 11:45a Book Club: After the Prophet: The Epic Story of the Shia-Sunni Split in Islam by Lesley Hazleton by Yaa Gyasi. Bring snacks to eat. (Annex)

Sunday 29 September
➢ 8:45a Choir Rehearsal
➢ 10a RE & Service: TBA

Calendar Notes

Sept 1st Humanist Union: Humanitarian Aid is Never a Crime
On Sunday Sept. 1 the Humanist Union and Social Action Committee are jointly sponsoring Mary Somers speaking on "Humanitarian Aid is Never a Crime - The Trial of Scott Warren." Mary and her husband Andy spend their winters in Tucson Arizona. Mary knows Scott Warren from her volunteer work with No More Deaths which has been an official ministry of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tucson since 2008. On Monday Aug. 19 Scott Warren was interviewed by Amy Goodman on Democracy Now! in the Sonoran Desert as water was taken into the desert to save the lives of migrants trying to cross into the U.S. there. For a link to that video and other background information on the federal government’s first and second trials of Scott Warren see the Humanist Union’s Coming Events page at http://humanist.madisonwi.us/events.htm. The head of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee said that the feds "shouldn’t have arrested Scott Warren in the first place." We’ll meet in the Annex for potluck lunch at noon and program from 12:30 to 1:30. All are welcome.
From the President

Rachel Long, President

Lately I’ve been more aware than ever of the generosity of our membership. It’s been quite a summer for Prairie. We started out meeting in the Annex, but it didn’t take long to see it couldn’t quite hold us. On August 4th, we started meeting at Oak Park Place, which will be our temporary home during our remodeling. So many hands contributed to making this possible. There was the team that looked at options and spoke to leaders of different churches and synagogues, schools and business, and later folks who worked on the details with Oak Park. Then members of various committees scouted, spoke with Oak Park staff, packed and figured out what we needed to do to make the transition. Meanwhile the remodeling committee has been hard at work with several subcommittees finalizing details with the builder and architect, and now the reconstruction is underway! And so much money raised! Thanks to the continuing match by an extremely generous anonymous donor, we have only $28,000 left to raise on our $505,000 capital campaign. And the ongoing work of the society to present programs and offer religious education for our youth, and our social action ministries continue. So many volunteers, so much time and dedication. This is such a great community. Take the time to thank each other!

For those of us who have been away for much of the summer, we look forward to seeing you again as the season changes.

With gratitude,

Rachel Long
President, Prairie UU Society

Planning for a Minister

Prairie Board

Your Prairie Board has been planning for our next minister, and we believe the congregation has several issues to consider. We have had 4 ministers in the last 14 years. What have we learned? What do we want from a minister? How will a minister best work with us to further our mission? Is it time for us to call a minister, or should we continue with contract ministry? Do we understand the difference? Should we seek a full time minister, or 1/2 or 3/4 time? You will be getting a letter soon from the Board describing these questions in a little more detail so we can seek answers together.

We will have a couple of congregational meetings to explore your thoughts and make decisions about Prairie’s next stage of professional ministry. The first will be Sunday October 6th after the service, and the second sometime on Saturday November 2 at the Prairie Retreat. We will be voting on how to move forward at our Fall Parish Meeting, Sunday December 8. We hope to see you there!
Back to School!
Holly Tellander, Director of Religious Education

Hard to believe, but summer is winding down! We had a lot of fun on the road this summer getting to know each other, talking about all the things, watching the kids do all the things, and eating all the things! Many families have requested a more regular field trip option for families and other friends - so we will be incorporating that feedback!

Speaking of feedback...keep an eye out for our annual RE survey coming soon! We strive to create programming that is responsive and that means we need to hear your opinions! The survey will come by email but you can request a paper copy if that works best for you.

2019/2020 RE Year Info & Reminders!

Registration is now open for the 2019/2020 RE year. You can get all your questions answered and complete this process online right here! You can also find the link on our website under the KIDS menu at the top, choose REGISTRATION. (On a smartphone this option will be at the bottom of the page.)

The Sunday RE experience...
For our elementary learners we will continue to offer hands-on workshops each Sunday and give kids choices around how they would like to learn. Workshops are built around our four program pillars. You can read more about those at our website here.

For our middle/high school learners this year we are excited to run a curriculum called ‘Neighboring Faiths’. This curriculum is a consistent favorite with students who have had a chance to experience it. In this curriculum participants plan their own program by choosing which religious groups to learn about, visit and relate to their own experience. Sessions explore history and development of different faith traditions as well as etiquette and ways to engage.

OWL - Our Whole Lives lifespan sexuality education - In February 2020 we will be offering 7th-9th grade OWL. You can read more about OWL education here.

Volunteers needed! Please consider filling out this Google Form to indicate your willingness to engage with our youth this year.

Our community is our biggest strength - and it takes a village!
Sunday Morning Coffee At Oak Park - Nakoma

Barbara Chatterton Frye

There are a few changes regarding your morning cup of coffee, which will be initiated while we are using this facility.

I sent out a note on Prairie News to please bring non-spill coffee mugs from home and then bring them back with you when you leave. At the last service I saw two different paper coffee mugs that were overturned on the carpeted floor. The paper mugs that we have to use are lightweight and can topple very easily. So I am proposing two different options.

Option #1 (preferred) Please bring a non spill travel mug from home. I will send out a reminder on Prairie News.

Option #2 Stand at the kitchenette area and drink your coffee while standing right at the countertop. You can write your name on your paper cup with a sharpie so that after the service you can come back to your cup afterwards in the kitchenette area.

Oh yes this is a change! But a temporary one. As good UU’s the Hospitality committee is open to having a discussion about the coffee. (Insert a chuckle here). Thanks for your help and understanding.

Save the Date - Prairie Retreat

Nov 1st-3rd 2019 - Bethel Horizons, Dodgeville, WI
Registrars: Rence Deschard & Nancy Wunderlin
Programming: Karen Deaton

The retreat begins on Friday evening with a potluck. A full day of activities are planned for Saturday including a talent show! We wrap up the weekend on Sunday morning with the Key-Log Fire and service.

If you have an idea for an activity, or are interested in leading an activity, please let Karen know.

More information coming soon!
Member Spotlight

Get to know Gary & Pam Gates

Pam and Gary Gates were married at Devil’s Lake on Oct. 5, 1984; we called our wedding a marriage on the rocks. (It was, literally, about halfway up the Balanced Rock trail.) Our children at that time (Gary’s three and Pam’s two) were young adults or teenagers. We spent a lot of time in ensuing years helping to raise the five local grandchildren and visiting the five who live on the East Coast. We’re less involved with our seven great-grands; delightful as they are, our energy just isn’t as high!

At Prairie, Gary is a past president and was on the Housing and Property committee. Both of us were in the choir and now we both serve on the Social Action committee, which Pam co-chairs with Molly Plunkett. We came to Prairie relatively late in our lives and regret that we didn’t find it in time to raise our children here.

Gary’s major activity outside of Prairie is recycling, which he does solely on his bicycle. He collects aluminum cans and turns them in for cash, but he also sorts recyclables out of trash bins (mostly in Madison parks) and puts them in the recycle bins. This of course also involves the reverse process of removing trash from the recycle bins. He has a regular route that he follows almost daily in the downtown area, cleaning up trash wherever he finds it. His major winter activity is splitting and hauling wood to heat our house, which we do entirely with our wood stove.

Gary was an avid participant in controlled burns for The Nature Conservancy and other organizations for many years, though he’s mostly retired from that at this point. In his working life, he was Secretary of the State Department of Employee Trust Funds until his early retirement in 1993.

Pam is heavily involved with MOSES, the Madison chapter of the statewide group WISDOM, which is working to bring some sense to our current system of over-incarceration, chiefly of brown and black people. She serves as co-chair of the MOSES Communications Team, volunteers at the Ferris Center and The Beacon homeless day shelter, and occasionally writes for the Bay Creek neighborhood newsletter. In her working life, she wrote and copy edited for The Madison Times, was the Madison Literacy Council’s first executive director, and worked in day care when her children were small.

Something Prairie members don’t know about Pam: she has been taking modern dance classes for the past few years, has participated in a number of performances, and is looking forward to another one this fall.
Remembering Ruth

Founding Prairie UU Society member, Ruth Calden, passed away Thursday August 15th at the age of 92. Following are some words about Ruth from fellow Prairie members.

*From Pam & Gary Gates*
Ruth entered our lives long before we even knew Prairie existed. She, George, Doleta, and Lee Burkholder provided the music at our wedding, which took place at Devil’s Lake on Oct. 5, 1984. We were part of a folk dance group at the time, and their folk music group, The Ethnic Connection, provided beautiful music for our performance at the wedding. Ruth often expressed her pleasure at being a part of this event. For the past several years, Gary has offered four hours of yard work as his contribution to Prairie’s annual service auction. Ruth always purchased his time, and after the yard work was done she always invited him in for refreshments and conversation. We remember Ruth as a warm, gracious person, full of the energy of life to the very end.

*From Nancy Schraufnagel*
Thank you, for the decades of your gentle, helpful presence, your understanding, and sharing musical gifts and George with us.

*From Erin Bosch*
We all know what a treasure Ruth has been to Prairie over the previous decades, along with George while he was with us. George liked to regale us with stories, that was obvious, but Ruth was also a great storyteller. Ruth enjoyed movies and plays and would occasionally accept the invitations I put out to those kinds of events. I remember that just a few years ago I drove a group of some Prairie ladies to see a play being performed in Mazomanie. Ruth’s house is close to mine and on my walking route. Many times I would pass her house and greet her if she was outside and we would chat a bit. Those conversations were always enjoyable. We would often share news about Marcia Johnson, our mutual friend. Ruth opened her home to Marcia whenever she was able to visit Madison.

Below: From left: readers Mary Mullen, Johanna Hatch, Peter Anderson (mostly hidden), Barbara Park, Rosemary Dorney, Al Nettleton, Ruth Calden, and Anne Pryor.
Remembering Ruth

From Mary & John Frantz
We have many memories of Ruth as she welcomed us into the Prairie community. She was an excellent recorder-player, and fostered a fair-sized group of us to play together over several years—we actually met almost every week, often at her house. When we lived in Monroe she was always a gracious hostess for us to spend the night after these sessions or after a circle dinner. For all the years I have sung in Prairie’s choir, I have counted on Ruth at my side as we navigated the alto parts. My acquaintance with George was professional, before we became Prairie members, but I remember him as a caring therapist—when we joined Prairie he was in the last months of his life, but we so admired Ruth as she cared for him and kept his wide musical interests alive. In fact, I would say that Ruth was a primary influence on us changing our close allegiance from FUS to Prairie. My love and admiration go out to her and her family.