

March  
2020

# Prairie Fire



RE kiddos and a few Prairie Members made Valentine's Day cards for Oak Park Place residents

## Prairie Contacts

**Rachel Long**, President—[president@uuprairie.org](mailto:president@uuprairie.org)

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

**Holly Tellander**, DRE—[dre@uuprairie.org](mailto:dre@uuprairie.org)

**Renee Deschard**, Prairie Fire Editor —  
[prairiefire@uuprairie.org](mailto:prairiefire@uuprairie.org)

Please see [www.uuprairie.org](http://www.uuprairie.org) for other contacts, including board members and committee chairs.

## Table of Contents

Calendar & Notes	2
We're Going Home	3
Building Update	3
1/26 Parish Meeting Summary	4
Search Committee Update	4
RE: March News	5
Trip to Albuquerque UU	6
Poet-Lovers' Alert	7
Allied Partners	7 & 8
Member Spotlight: Barb & Bob Park	9

# March Calendar\*

Please see [www.uuprairie.org](http://www.uuprairie.org) for detailed descriptions

*\*All events take place at Oak Park Nakoma, unless stated*

2

## Sunday 1

- 8:45a Choir Rehearsal
- 10a OWL Grades 4-6 (Annex)
- 10a Youth Program: (see RE article)
- 10a Service: "Annual Spring Service Auction" Blessing by Ralph Tyksinski

## Saturday 7

- 5:45a Men's Shelter Breakfast
- 9a Prairie WOW

## Sunday 8

- 8:45a Choir Rehearsal
- 10a OWL Grades 4-6 (Annex)
- 10a Youth Program: (see RE article)
- 10a Service: "Stories in Stone" by Brooke Norsted
- 11:45a Board Meeting (Annex)

## Sunday 15

- 8:45a Choir Rehearsal
- 10a OWL Grades 4-6 (Annex)
- 10a Youth Program: (see RE article)
- 10a Service: "Humanism"

## Saturday 21

- 9a Prairie UU Parents (PUUPs) (Annex)

## Sunday 22

- 8:45a Choir Rehearsal
- 10a OWL Grades 4-6 (Annex)
- 10a Youth Program: (see RE article)
- 10a Service: "Tenant Resource Center"

## Thursday 26

- 7p Program Committee (Annex)

## Sunday 29

- 8:45a Choir Rehearsal
- 10a Youth Program: (see RE article)
- 10a Service: TBD

Impromptu Prairie ice cream outing at The Chocolate Shoppe after 2/16 service to celebrate Ron Fry & Kent Wagner's birthdays!!!



## Notes

### **NEW Group!!! Interweave (LGBTQIA+ & Allies)**

Interweave, a new group for LGBTQIA+ folks and allies at Prairie, has recently started. One of our first goals is working on the Welcoming Congregation Renewal program

<https://www.uua.org/lgbtq/welcoming/program/five-practices-welcome-renewal> Please let Katrina [yaghaffar.yaghafur@gmail.com](mailto:yaghaffar.yaghafur@gmail.com) know if you'd like to join!

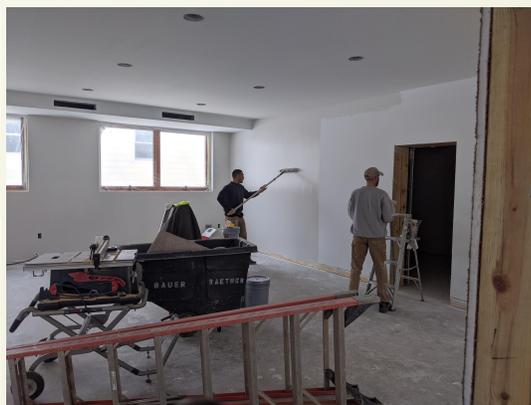
# We're Going Home!

Rachel Long, President

3

At long last, we will soon be moving back to our own space! Though with construction there is always a chance that there will be a delay, our team has informed us that we will be able to take possession of the building again starting April 10th. We are planning 2 work days, on Friday April 10 and Saturday April 11. Many hands will be needed. We will be cleaning the space and moving items to the main building from Oak Park Place and the Annex. We will get things in order for our first service and RE in our renewed home on April 12. Watch for more information when the date gets closer. We are in the final stretch!

Rachel Long, President  
Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society



## Building Update

Heidi Hughes & Karen Deaton, Design Committee

Many of the changes involved in our remodel are complete and our contractor reports that we are "over the hump." All the walls are in place. Exterior windows and doors have been installed.

Here are some highlights of our reconfigured space: The commons area and the stairs to the basement feel bright and spacious. We now have 4 fully accessible bathrooms (3 upstairs and 1 downstairs), and all the classroom doorways downstairs have been widened to be ADA compliant. We have a generous storage room at the east end of our meeting room for our tables, chairs, etc - with a full-size door! At the west end of the meeting room there is another storage room. It's difficult to describe the reconfiguration of the large downstairs kitchen and classroom space, so I'll just say here that it is already brighter and more attractive, and it will be more usable for our Religious Education program. It's exciting to see our improved space!

What remains to be done? Electrical work is being completed (including lots of new electrical outlets for all our gadgets). After the walls are painted, the work crews will install trim work, flooring, and plumbing fixtures, as well as cabinets and interior doors. Unfortunately, the synthetic stucco on the outside of the building can't be applied until the weather warms up. Drywall is being sanded today; painting will begin this week! (written 2/4/2020)

# 1/26 Parish Meeting Summary

Dan Proud, Secretary

4

Forty-six Prairie members gathered for a Parish Meeting after the Sunday service on Sunday, January 26 at Oak Park Place to agree on plans for a minister search for the congregation. President Rachel Long reviewed an informational report that summarized types of ministers, full-time and part-time employment options, costs, yoking possibilities with other UU congregations, and UUA guidelines and other considerations from the Search Committee.



After thoughtful and respectful discussion on what kind of leadership we wanted and what resources Prairie has, we undertook a series of votes. The option of “yoking,” or partnering, with another congregation to each share a minister part-time was considered, but we ultimately voted to offer a full-time position in our search for a candidate. In the final vote, the 100% (full-time) contract received 25 votes, and a 75% (part-time) contract received 20 votes.

The Search Committee will proceed with its work. By advertising a full-time position, the committee will be able to attract a larger pool of candidates. The needs in some areas of Prairie will be met much better with a full-time minister. Further congregational discussion will identify the priority of tasks for the minister, including number of times per month the minister leads the Sunday program, and how else Prairie will look as a lay-led congregation with a full-time minister.

## Search Committee Update

Renee Deschard, Search Committee Chair

The Search Committee has been hard at work. We modified (from the 50 question UUA template) and sent the [Congregational Survey](#) (due 2/26 by 7pm). We have received 59 responses thus far - please fill it out if you haven't yet. We are working on and will finalize the Congregational Record (aka job posting) once we see the summary of the survey results which informs several items in the Record. We then need to get approval from the UUA Transitions Office before the Record is searchable by ministerial candidates. Updates will continue in the Prairie Fire newsletter. Our search committee can be reached at [ministerialsearch@uuprairie.org](mailto:ministerialsearch@uuprairie.org)



# March - Democracy!

Holly Tellander, Director of Religious Education



5

*"Our democracy is designed to speak truth to power."  
— Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez*

## **March's learning theme is DEMOCRACY...**

The 7 UU principles are tied foundationally to the idea of democracy. This month, as kids hear more and more about the upcoming election, we'll give kids a deeper experience of each of the 7 principles through the lens of understanding what it means to live in a democracy. We'll give them tools to remember the principles and help them participate in discussions about how to keep our democracy healthy. We'll practice the democratic process and talk about what they've heard in the media. Older students will be asked to do their research, take a stand and develop and share their perspectives. Check out the principles in kid-friendly language below and see how fundamental they are to a democratic society! <https://www.uua.org/beliefs/what-we-believe/principles>

1st: We believe that each and every person is important.

2nd: We believe that all people should be treated fairly and kindly.

3rd: We believe that we should accept one another and keep on learning together.

4th: We believe that each person must be free to search for what is true and right in life.

5th: We believe that all persons should have a vote about the things that concern them.

6th: We believe in working for a peaceful, fair, and free world.

7th: We believe in caring for our planet Earth, the home we share with all living things.

If you are interested in joining an **opening circle** on any Sunday - please feel free to drop in! **10:00-10:20 a.m.** - Our 7th-12th grade learners have an opening circle for trivia & current events. Feel free to bring your coffee and drop in on these discussions anytime - these kids have lots of opinions and love to debate :)

**10:30 (after story for all ages) - 10:45** ~ our youngest learners LOVE show & tell - come see what they're up to!

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS:** Here's an overview of our month of learning! Please reach out anytime with questions or to inquire about joining us!

**March 1st : No RE today - Prairie's Service Auction! Plenty of activities for kids & maybe they'll even want to bid!**

**March 8th: Littles: UU Principles Song & Crafts Bigs: Democratic Primaries Discussion (All Ages Service: Stories in Stone)**

**March 15th: Littles: What laws would you make? Bigs: Faux Debate**

**March 22nd: Littles: It's spring break - let's vote for our favorite game!**

**March 29th: It's spring break - let's vote for our favorite game!**

## **Our Whole Lives for Grades 4 - 6 continues in March!**

Our 4th-6th graders will continue to meet all month at the Annex on Sunday mornings from 9:45-11:30. The program will run from January 19th-March 22nd on consecutive Sundays.

We are always **looking for folks who are willing and interested to become facilitators** - we especially are interested in helping more male-identifying or transgender folks get trained as facilitators to provide **balanced representation** to our students. Please reach out if you are interested, or if you know someone else who might be interested who perhaps isn't affiliated with Prairie, please ask them to contact [dre@uuprairie.org](mailto:dre@uuprairie.org)

# Trip to Albuquerque

Barbara Frye, Hospitality Committee Chair

6

We very much enjoyed our visit to 1st Unitarian Universalist fellowship of Albuquerque during our holiday trip. There were so many differences! We attended the first service at 9:30 a.m. (second service is at 11:00 a.m.) They had just remodeled their Fellowship area and they focused on having coffee for both sets of folks attending each service. Ron noticed in the order of service that they listed 298 attendees the previous week but some of the people who greeted us told us that sometimes they have 400 in each service (1st Unitarian of Albuquerque lists just under 800 members, 15th largest in the U.S.). My research found that after the Church of the Larger Fellowship in Boston, the next largest church in the U.S. is in Tulsa, Oklahoma and then 1st Unitarian of Madison with 1431 certified members.



We felt very welcomed, both during the service (with the meet and great handshakes) and afterwards. They do not have joys and concerns but they have a grouping of votive candles in the back of the church you may light. During the service, they ask you to raise your hand if you are visiting for the 1st time.

I really loved their huge mural representing every many religions and philosophies. Science related objects fill the little niches and are changed different times of the year with varying themes.

They have 3 ministers in varying capacities including an interim minister from Milwaukee. Here is a link to the sermon we heard. Another interesting aspect is that lay led congregations may use their sermons as long as proper credit is given and utilized by a person who can present it well.



# Poet-Lovers' Alert

## Mary Mullen, Archives Committee Chair

7

Do you like to see an occasional poem in the Prairie Fire? Over the years, starting in 1970, our newsletter has carried poetry by members, and the Archives Committee has been searching them out to include in a special binder. Contact Archives Committee Chair Mary Mullen if you'd like to see what our members have written. An early contributor was Prairie's minister, Dave Meyer, who served the congregation for two years, 1970-72. Enjoy his seasonal poem "Messenger." It was printed in the November 3, 1970, newsletter, which at that time was simply called Newsletter.

### MESSENGER

Hills and prairies fly  
like fall before the thud  
of winter's heavy guns:  
a slaughter of broken weeds  
and blasted seeds caught  
in a no-man's-land that slopes  
from earth's arid shoulders  
to the hard, flat, frozen back  
where cat-tails stand — sentry posts —  
shivered with sharp breath,  
waiting for grey heaven to loose itself.  
And I, a fox by nature,  
fur-blown and trembling;  
am I among the coming casualties?  
Heaven hovers, about to break and fall,  
to draw its sheet across earth's beaten face.  
I stand my little ground  
to beg a bargain of the sky:  
That since I am to die  
but stay me till  
I prance redemption in this prairie snow:  
the word that something lives  
and won't remain interred.  
And I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

David Meyer



Dave Meyer circa 1970



Dave Meyer 9/17/17, 50th anniversary celebration

## Allied Partners

### Molly Plunkett, Social Action Committee Chair

Prairie has been a member church of Allied Partners for many years. The group of congregations that support the Allied Neighborhood is ~10 active churches and includes the neighborhood social worker (Joining Forces for Families) and staff person from the Allied Wellness Center (see July 2019 Fire newsletter). Member churches contributed a total of \$23,035.86 in 2019. Prairie donated about \$856 from our shared offertory collection to the Allied Wellness Center plus \$160 for bus passes and gas cards and \$100 to the neighborhood association to help fund a monthly community meal.

Projects that Allied Partners regularly support include an Eviction Prevention fund which last year helped 49 families or individuals avoid eviction or utility shut offs. A total of \$11,773 was given by the neighborhood social worker in 2019 to help with housing issues. Allied Partners awards scholarships of \$500/semester to any resident of the neighborhood who is pursuing post high school education or training. In 2019 \$2000 was awarded from the Scholarship Fund. The Special Projects Fund gave money to the Brotherhood, a group of teenage boys (\$1,100), \$895 to the Neighborhood Association for its monthly community meals and several congregations prepared and hosted the meals themselves, \$650 for the Neighborhood Association Block Party, \$475 for several neighborhood events such as the Wellness Center Halloween Party, and Easter Celebrations and the Walky Talky program. Like Prairie, other churches purchased a month's worth of bus passes and gas vouchers to be distributed at the Wellness Center for people needing transportation to work, medical appointments or other necessary trips. In June and August member churches made lunches for kids to fill the two week gap between the end of public school lunches and the meals provided as part of summer programming at the Boys and Girls Club.

## Member Spotlight

### Barb & Bob Park

#### What current Prairie positions (i.e. committees) do you hold/past positions?

(Barb) I'm the choir director/music director, on the Program Committee, the Archives Committee and on the Ministerial Search Committee – and also on the new ad hoc Library Committee. In the past I've held almost every available position including President(twice) and Treasurer. The one I managed to avoid was secretary.

(Bob) Currently I am on the Archives Committee, where I serve as digital archivist and maintain all the archival pages on Prairie's website, and on the ad hoc Library Committee where I maintain the online listing of Annex and RE books. I sing in the choir and I am the program organizer for the Humanist Union of Madison (affiliated locally with Prairie and nationally with the American Humanist Association). In the past I have chaired the Communications Committee and the Social Action Committee and I have served on the Board as Vice President. In the distant and recent past I have led RE classes.

#### Where did you grow up? When and why did you move to Madison?

(Barb) I grew up in the snowbelt – Syracuse, New York and then headed east to attend Boston University's Sargent College, majoring in Physical Therapy. After graduation I spent time in Chicago and north-western Illinois before coming to Madison. Recently divorced, I moved to Madison with my daughter Casey in 1971 to work at Central Wisconsin Colony as it was known then. (It was later renamed Central WI Center for the Developmentally Disabled.)

(Bob) I grew up in Ontario and Minnesota. I moved to Madison in 1961 to attend graduate school at the UW and ended up settling in Wisconsin. Barbara and I had a house near Lake Wisconsin from which we commuted to jobs in Madison and programs at Prairie. We moved to Madison in 1992.



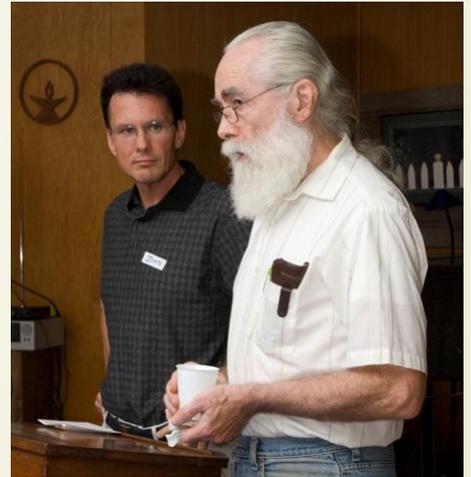
# Member Spotlight Continued

9

## What brought you to Prairie?

(Barb) My journey to Prairie was a lifelong one. When I was four or five, I was introduced to the Universalist Church in Syracuse by the family of one of my best friends. When the family moved away I insisted on continuing to attend so my mother agreed to take me and ended up joining. When I went to college in Boston there was a student group called SRL – Student Religious Liberals – that sustained me through my four years. Moving to Chicago, I joined the UU church in Hyde Park. After coming to Madison I sang in the choir at FUS, but never really felt at home there. In the fall of 1977 I found Prairie. Bob and I met the following fall during Prairie's annual retreat at Upham Woods.

(Bob) As a grad student I joined Channing-Murray Club, the campus Unitarian student group, eventually being elected the group's president. That brought me into contact with First Unitarian Society and, after it split off, Prairie.



2009 - Bob is next to John Rummel of Madison Skeptics

## Do you remember your first impressions of Prairie? Why did you join Prairie?

(Barb) I happened to show up at Prairie at the time of a significant cross-roads. There was a newspaper strike and the congregation needed to decide if they wanted to pull their advertising from the paper. The program that morning was about times members had defied authority. Wow. Did I learn lots about the people that morning. I told friends later that I had walked into an amazing group of old-time liberals. I knew I was home.

(Bob) I began attending Prairie regularly when they moved to the Portal Foster Center a few blocks down the street from where I was living on West Lawn Ave. I was very impressed by the environmental programs being presented by Orié Loucks.



## What do you do with your time when you're not at Prairie?

(Barb) I spend time singing, both with the Raging Grannies (left image) and the Madison Symphony Chorus. In the winter I try to get out and downhill ski, although I'm missing this year due to a knee injury. When the weather warms up I garden, both at home and at the Marlborough Park Community Garden. I volunteer at Olbrich Botanical Garden in the library as part of my volunteer hours required for the Master Gardener program. In between all of that I travel. I also try to squeeze in painting in my spare time.

(Bob) I am volunteer Program Director for WIDE-LP, a low power radio station which Barbara and I first hosted in our garage but which is now hosted in the garage of Ken and Judy Skog. Four of the 5 members of the station board are also Prairie members. Ken and I co-chair that board. Among the programs we broadcast are the presentations by Sunday morning speakers at Prairie and the monthly Humanist Union talks and discussion. I also record for broadcast speakers at public meetings and rallies. Our station slogan is "Progressive Voices on the Air."