

June
2020

Prairie Fire



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on 5/24/20

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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June Calendar*

Please see www.uuprairie.org for detailed descriptions

**All events take place online via Zoom (info emailed to News)*

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Wednesday 3

- 6:30p Wednesday Fun with Holly Tellander

Saturday 6

- 10a Prairie WOW

Sunday 7

- 10a Service: "Ethics, CRISPR, and Human Genome Editing" by Robert Streiffer
- 12p Board Meeting

Wednesday 10

- 6:30p Wednesday Fun with Holly Tellander

Sunday 14

- 10a "Porchlight's Response to Pandemic" by Karla Thennes

Wednesday 17

- 6:30p Wednesday Fun with Holly Tellander

Sunday 21

- 10a Celebrate the Earth by Prairie

Wednesday 24

- 6:30p Wednesday Fun with Holly Tellander

June 24th-28th

- [UUA Virtual General Assembly](#)

Sunday 28

- 10a Building Our Future by Prairie

Annual Parish Meeting

Rachel Long, President



We had our first-ever online Parish Meeting 5/17/2020, one of many strange new experiences we are navigating together. We had 53 members present – WOW! Thanks to all of you who joined this brave new world of high tech meetings!

We covered a lot of ground, including electing new leaders (see separate article.) We discussed future plans for adult and youth programming in this time of social distancing, and got updates from Finance and Minister Search committees. We approved acceptance of a small business loan as part of the Paycheck Protection Program, the majority of which will be forgiven (grant rather than loan) and the rest of which will be retained for now as a cushion for us in these precarious times. We agreed that at the end of the year we will consider additional gifts from our congregation to local non-profit organizations, depending on our own status. We saw a beautiful slide show from the Building Committee with a description of the terrific space that awaits us when we return to in-person services. Please know that your Board will continue to evaluate options in light of recommendations from public health leaders and the UUA, and we will keep you updated.

Thanks to all of you for keeping in touch and supporting your community!

Prairie Leadership for the 2020-21 Year

Rachel Long, President

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At the Annual Parish Meeting, we elected our new Board and Nominating Committee members for 2020-21. Note that terms for all these positions are 2 years. Nominating Committee members are limited to 2 consecutive terms.

Prairie Board of Directors

President – Rachel Long (starting 2nd term)
Vice President – Lynn Currie (starting)
Secretary – Dan Proud (continuing)
Treasurer – Evan Creed (continuing)
At Large member – John Wunderlin (starting 2nd term)
At Large member – Marty Drapkin (continuing)
At Large member – Aiden Small (starting)

Nominating Committee

Ron Frye (continuing 2nd term)
Rebecca Strome (starting 2nd term)
Kent Wenger (continuing 1st term)
Paula Pachciarz (starting 1st term)

A giant THANK YOU to outgoing Board and Nominating Committee members, including Chris Porter (served 1 term as Vice President,) Jesse Garst (served 1 term as At Large Board member,) and Lynn Currie (Nominating Committee member.)

We also had turnover this year in some of our Committee Chairs. Mary Mullen agreed to serve as Chair of the new Archives Committee. Katrina Thompson served until November 2019 as Co-chair of Communications, Molly Plunkett served as Co-or sole Chair before stepping down this month. Patty Stockdale was our stalwart Finance Chair for many years before stepping down at the end of 2019, and Chris Porter stepped forward to assume that role. Erin Bosch has long served as a devoted and diligent Co-Chair of Membership, and stepped down this spring. Patty Stockdale agreed to take her place. After years of doing a tremendous job, Penny Eiler resigned as Program Chair and Renee Deschard bravely took on the role. Our Minister Search Committee was formed in January, and Renee agreed to lead that as well. Our Building Committee with Tom Robinson as Chair is wrapping up its amazing work in the next few weeks. Please take time to thank our terrific volunteer leaders, whether they be outgoing, incoming, or continuing! Here are our Committee Chairs for 2020-21.

Archives – Mary Mullen
Building – Tom Robinson
Caring – Barbara Chatterton-Frye
Communications – vacant
Finance – Chris Porter
Hospitality – Barbara Chatterton-Frye

Housing & Property – Randy Converse and Jim Lyne
Membership – Deesa Pence and Patty Stockdale
Minister Search – Renee Deschard
Program – Renee Deschard
Religious Education – Karen Deaton
Social Action – Pam Gates and Molly Plunkett



And don't forget to thank our paid staff for all their contributions to our society. Our Administrator Dan Klock has performed admirably in his new role of Webmaster this year, and works with many of our committees to make sure things run smoothly behind the scenes. Holly Tellender is our creative and innovative Religious Education Director, and her skills have been greatly appreciated in these challenging times. We will be depending more than ever on our custodian Raju (John) Eliganti when we start to attend services in-person a super-cleaned environment. Thanks to you all!

Rachel Long, President

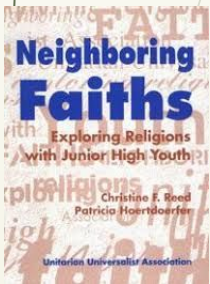
Religious Education Report

Karen Deaton, Religious Education Chair

Committee: Peggy Small, Carl Wacker, Paula Pachciarz, and Holly Tellander.
Contact Karen if you'd like to join us!

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The past year has presented many challenges for the Religious Education (RE) program. Fortunately, we've had the creativity and positive energy of our Director of Religious Education, Holly Tellander, to lead us through. When the congregation moved out of our meeting house and into the Annex, space was very tight. Holly planned a summer of RE on the Road - family field trips that drew about 10 – 30 Prairie members and friends to enjoy fun and fellowship each Sunday morning. At Oak Park Place from September - March, our religious education activities were curtailed somewhat and we had slightly lower-than-usual, but steady, attendance. Our programming attracted some new families during that time. Here are highlights of the year:



- We have an engaged group of middle-school and high-school students (“The Bigs”) who studied Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Humanism with a great group of volunteer leaders: Al, Bob, Carl, Jane Esbensen (remotely), Jennifer, John W, Katrina, Pam, Paula, Peggy, Rachel, Randy, and Robin. The Bigs also had several opportunities to work on team building as a group and to interact with the younger kids.
- Grades 4 - 6 (“The Middles”) worked together on activities such as the fundraising Social Justice Fair. Their participation in UU culture was seen when they did morning check-in while they sipped their hot beverages, then moved on to dividing tasks committee-style.
- Younger children (“The Littles”) practiced kindness, respect, and self-regulation with each other while they played games and did crafts. Regular helpers were our childcare workers Grace, Mimi, and Faith, as well as Jessie, Randy, and Paula. Other volunteers (Chris, Aaron, Erin, Fern, Karen, Kathy C, Susan G,) popped in from time to time.
- Nifty Gifty, our annual holiday gift-making extravaganza, was scaled down to fit in the Annex this year. Participants were able to make several different gifts with the help of many creative volunteers.
- Our Whole Lives (OWL) human sexuality education for grades 4 - 6 was facilitated by Karen, Peggy, and Randy in the Annex, but cut short by Covid19.



Because physical activity is the lifeblood of children’s education, physical isolation during the pandemic presents a special challenge for our community of young learners. Holly is coordinating Wednesday Night Fun online activities and continuing to look for ways to support our families and help our young people maintain their relationships. The RE committee will be happy to put these challenges behind us and move back into our meeting house together when circumstances allow!

The Flamingos are Coming!!!

Karen Deaton, Religious Education Chair

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A flock of plastic flamingos will soon be traveling among Prairie member homes, just for fun. The flock of seven will be decorated with our seven principles. They will be accompanied by a sign that gives a little info about Prairie. The back of the sign will have more information about the flock and instructions about what to do with them.

When they alight in your yard, enjoy them for up to a week. Dress them up if you want to. Maybe take a picture of yourself or your pet with them. Let them remind you to make an offering to Prairie or to another good cause. Perhaps they'll inspire you to do a good deed for a neighbor or friend. Share what you did with the flamingos: email to DRE@uuprairie.org, OR Prairie Religious Education Program on Facebook, OR #PUUREFlamingo on Instagram.

Then sneak them over to another Prairie home! (there will be a list of last names on the back of the sign, where you can cross your name off when the flock visits you).

If it's difficult for you to move the flamingos, the RE committee will be happy to do that for you (you can still choose who gets them next). Just let us know. If you really do not want the flock to alight in your yard for whatever reason, just let us know and we'll cross you off the list.

Karen Deaton (RE-Committee@uuprairie.org)
Holly Tellander (DRE@uuprairie.org)



Social Action Report

Molly Plunkett & Pam Gates, Social Action Co-Chairs

Our group has been rather inactive during the remodel phase at Prairie. A major project we had taken on was the collection of MoveIN household goods for formerly homeless people who were being assisted by the Tenant Resource Center. We have not had space to collect donations from our congregation or store them, so that project has been on hold. We do continue to donate to The Tenant Resource Center from our shared offertory collection.

We continue to be active in Allied Partners, a group of churches that meet monthly to support the Allied Neighborhood. The composition of the Allied neighborhood has changed over time and is now 75% latino. Allied Partners provides funds used by the social worker at Joining Forces for Families to help residents facing eviction, generally several individuals or families are helped each month. Allied Partners member churches donate bus passes and gas cards to the Allied Wellness Center to be used for people with problems with transportation. Allied Partners sponsors two \$500 scholarships per semester to residents seeking post high school education or training. Member churches sponsor a monthly meal hosted by the Allied Dunn's Marsh Neighborhood association either by actually preparing a meal or contributing funds for the meal to be produced. [Click Here for the full report.](#)

Summer Sundays - Program Update

Renee Deschard, Program Committee Chair

Members: Kathy Converse, Penny Eiler, Barb Park, Robin Proud, Rick Ruecking, Nancy Wunderlin



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Starting in June, Prairie will have our online services using Zoom every Sunday at 10am. There may be occasional (like once a month) collaboration with FUS & Reeb. Zoom information is sent out weekly on the Prairie News listserv via News of the Week and in online orders of service. Please contact Dan at admin@uuprairie.org to be added to the Prairie News listserv.

The average Saturday/Sunday Prairie service has approximately 24 devices and 30 people attending and Sunday Virtual Coffee hours have about 15 devices and 20 people attending. Dan Klock has reached out to those without internet access/devices to check in with them. Archives continues to store order of services and services (those with permission) online on the Members Page.

Thanks to everyone who has helped with transitioning to online services and being accommodating during this time of uncertainty. We all have enjoyed seeing people's faces and hearing your voices and can't wait to come together again in person whenever it's safe to do so.

Caring Committee Report

Barbara Frye, Caring Committee Chair

The Caring Committee is continuing to care during these unprecedented times and our team stays in touch with their groups. The Caring committee consists of Dean Schroeder, Nancy Wunderlin, Erin Bosch, Aileen Nettleton and Rebecca Strom with Kathy Converse very connected to a couple of members.

We also are very lucky to have a list of volunteers who will bring meals to people, take them to Doctor's appointments, etc., and those people are officially: Peter Anderson, Lynn Currie, Marty Drapkin, Ron Frye, Chris Porter, Pam Gates, Andy Garst, Heidi Hughes, Millie Moffat, Deesa Pence, Johanna Hatch, Paula Picharz, Renee Deschard, Fern Wedekind, Jane Richards, Orange Schroeder, Katrina Thompson, Halie Moore, Peggy Small and sometimes others depending on the need. We have provided meals and other services, mostly before the restrictions of the virus affected everyone. We will be creative to help under current conditions and we stay in touch by phone to some of those by phone who do not use the internet.

I want to thank each of you and also those whose help to others is not directly known by the committee. Please give me a call or send an email to caring@uuprairie.org if you or someone you know needs help.



Housing & Property Report

Randy Converse and Jim Lyne, Co-Chairs

Members: John Gernandt, Heidi Hughes, Al Nettleton, Morris Sadicario

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Most of H and P energy has been focused in the work of the Remodel Committee. Jim Lyne, Al Nettleton, and Heidi Hughes gave countless hours to the work of the kitchen and interior subcommittees as well as the overall efforts of the Committee.



In addition John Gernandt gave a helping hand on several repair projects. On a lesser note, we spent a major portion of our repair budget on repairing and monitoring our 3 furnaces.

And last but certainly not least Raju, our janitor, did his usual thorough job keeping our buildings and grounds clean and inviting. He also help setup for the services we held at Oak Park Place.

Finance Committee Report

Chris Porter, Finance Committee Chair

Members: Evan Creed (Treasurer,) Gary Gates, Ken Skog, Patty Stockdale

Overall Prairie is in a satisfactory financial position. Operating expenses for the year are tracking slightly lower than expected. Operating receipts are tracking as expected. The Prairie auction was a big success. \$15,000 in purchases were made. So far, people have submitted \$13,000 of the purchased amount.

The remaining unpaid expenses for the building remodel are approximately \$110,000. We have \$71,000 in the capital reserve account to pay towards this amount. There is about \$1300 in outstanding capital pledges. The remainder will be paid out of retained earnings (i.e. general reserve funds) and continued fundraising. Prairie is able to pay the remaining balance out of retained earnings while maintaining a reserve balance of six to nine months of expenses. This is the reserve amount recommended by the finance committee and is within guidelines for non-profits. Thank you to our anonymous donors and to everyone who has contributed to the campaign.

Because the minister search has been suspended until later in the summer, we expect minister expenses for the year will be less than budgeted. Any unspent amount will be held in retained earnings and will be available to cover minister and other expenses next fiscal year.

With the approval of the Board, our treasurer applied for and received a loan of \$12,000 from the COVID19 payroll protection program. We believe approximately \$7000 of this amount will be forgiven. The interest rate on the loan is 1%.

Thank you to everyone for your continued support of Prairie!



Hospitality Committee Report

Barbara Frye, Hospitality Committee Chair

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Kathie Gann and Nancy Wunderlin have been the two main people on this committee and I appreciate their help and input. Nancy and I cleaned out the Prairie kitchen and organized the storage of items and have done lots of planning and Kathie also assisted us in the Annex. Patty Stockdale, Rachel Long, Evan Creed and others stepping up when needed. That is a lovely dynamic and much appreciated. I also want to thank the choir in the mornings when we are getting the coffee ready before the service. Such lovely music and I even know the warmups by heart now! We have not had our ongoing Soup Sundays since we moved to Oak Park Place but on the weekend of Ron's birthday, February 17, we announced that we would be going to the Chocolate Shoppe on Midvale and 14 people joined us. That made me think we could have some variation such as a BYO picnic lunch (with social distancing?) sometime. We will all be so glad when we can populate our newly remodeled building!



Membership Committee Report

Deesa Pence & Erin Bosch (outgoing)/Patty Stockdale (incoming), Membership Committee Co-Chairs

Member: Rick Ruecking

Probably the most important tasks of this committee are greeting visitors on Sunday mornings, collecting contact information, then following up with an email, plus invitations to various Prairie events etc. We also organize introductory sessions for newcomers that are either held in the Spring or Fall or both. The Fall session took place on November 9. We were starting to plan for a Spring session when the pandemic began. We also organize welcoming ceremonies for new members, so the whole congregation can join in officially recognizing them.

The Membership Committee is small, but we consider that "everyone" at Prairie is a member of the Membership Committee. Everyone should be conversing with visitors on a Sunday morning and making an effort to integrate newcomers into the life of our community. If anyone has an interest in joining our committee, you would be most welcome.

Circle Dinner groups were put together in October and hopefully everyone who expressed an interest in being in a group was contacted and the dinners were in full swing when the pandemic interrupted things.

At the Parish meeting in December 2019, we reported 102 members. Since then, we added two new members so the total is now 104.



Archives Report

Mary Mullen, Archives Committee Chair

Members: Barbara Park, Bob Park, and Rosemary Dorney

Board liaison to our committee: John Wunderlin

This report covers activities from 12/8/2019-5/13/2020.



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The Archives Committee continues to meet monthly, although starting with its April meeting, we've been meeting through Zoom because of Governor Evers' "Safer at Home" orders. Unfortunately, our fourth member Rosemary Dorney can't participate in these Zoom meetings. As a committee, we decide what paper, artifact, and digital records should be collected and maintained and recommend who should be responsible for maintaining and updating these records. We've compiled a chart that clarifies these points. We've been a gadfly to make sure Parish and Board minutes are kept up to date on the Prairie website. We also regularly write articles for the Prairie Fire to highlight our archives. During this time period we completed writing our Committee's Policies and Procedures for Prairie's P&P Manual. However, since the Board has established a new policy for recording Sunday services, we will be working these into our P&Ps. Copyright concerns are a current issue: we are proposing that a license be purchased to keep us legal.

Since December, member Barbara Park has completed her review of the Prairie Fire newsletters, copying issues where necessary to make a second complete set which will be taken to the Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS) as soon as it is safe (from the coronavirus) to do so. This was a daunting task. The sets are now in the closet in the upstairs north room at the Annex. Previously, we provided a color copy of our history book set to the WHS, compliments of Orange Schroeder. Barbara is now inventorying and organizing the Board and Parish minutes including their attachments and has completed 10 years of our 53 years of history. If there's not a second set of these minutes, she copies a set for the WHS – minutes only.

Bob Park, our digital archivist, continually works on improving our archives on the Prairie website. He processes the Sunday service recordings by tweaking the audio as necessary, then edits one copy into a publicly available speaker-only version and another into a full-service version which is available to members only. He and Barbara are working on locating Orders of Service for past services so that they may be included in our digital and paper files.

Both Bob and I look at the website regularly to see if it is operating correctly and includes improvements the committee has suggested. Since our last report an updated "Brief History" has been placed on the About page on the website.

We urge everyone to go to the Prairie website, pull down the Connect menu item and choose Archives. You will be amazed at the resources that are available including every newsletter, an updated version of the annotated Prairie Chronology from the history book, many dozens of recordings of our Sunday speakers, a list of titles of all our past programs, several other lists of services presented by frequent speakers, and much more. We feel that our digital archives rival those of the best congregations in our MidAmerica Regional District of 200 congregations (13 states). Mary serves on the MidAmerica History and Heritage Committee which has recently surveyed the congregations to learn what digital and paper history materials they have. The H&H Committee will soon have a page on the MidAmerica District's webpage.

Member Spotlight

Al & Aileen Nettleton

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

Between the two of us we have held almost every position in Prairie. Both of us have served as president, program chairs, and chairs of ministerial search committees. Al has also served as vice president, treasurer, housing and property chair, long range planning chair and lay minister (3 month series).

Aileen has also served as, finance chair, adult education chair, ministerial relations committee, caring committee chair, RE chair, and RE Director. Presently Al is on the Building Remodeling Committee and Housing and Property Committee and Aileen is on the Caring Committee.



50th Anniversary Celebration at Prairie, June 2016,
Photo by John Hoffman

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

Al grew up in Salem, Oregon, and Aileen grew up in northeast Ohio and central Washington. We moved to Madison in 1969 for Al to work on a PhD at the UW in the Speech and Rhetoric/Communication Arts Department and Aileen was hired by the Madison School District as a reading specialist.

What brought you to Prairie?

We had been members of UU fellowships in Pullman, Washington, and Arcata, California, and found the size and community of Prairie similar and found interesting people, shared values, and sense of community at Prairie.

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

Prairie, in its early years, was meeting at the YWCA on the Square when we first attended. There were lots of children. People seemed friendly, very sociable and interested in social action with strong “anti-war positions, members presented all the programs on very interesting topics, invited us to help wash dishes (!), and invited us to their homes for Prairie social events. We admired members like Orié Loucks and Dan Willard for their strong environmental leadership, members like George and Ruth Calden for their creativity and music, and members like Jack and Betty Jallings and Pat Cautley for their strong work for social justice.

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

In our retirement, we have had opportunities (pre-pandemic) to travel to visit family and friends, especially in the Northwest and in Sweden and the Netherlands. Al spends a lot of time repairing things at Prairie and working with the remodeling committee and enjoys puttering with his 3D printer. Aileen has had two very full years serving as president of the League of Women Voters of Dane County and enjoys reading (detective stories in Swedish and English) and gardening. We enjoy time with our son's family with their three children, ages 10, 13 and 16. In “normal times” we enjoy local theater and concerts.

What is something even long-time Prairie members might be surprised to learn about you?

They know us pretty well—but they might not know that Al was a speech and speech therapy major as an undergrad at Pacific University and worked as a surveyor in the national forests of Oregon and Washington. Aileen lived in fruit country in Washington and earned money for college thinning apples, picking cherries and pears and did hiking in the Cascades with her family.