

July  
2020

# Prairie Fire



## Prairie Contacts

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# July Calendar\*

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

*\*All events take place online via Zoom*

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## Wednesday 1 (every Wednesday)

- 6:30p Wednesday Night Fun Night

## Friday 3 (every Friday)

- 4:30p Advanced D&D

## Saturday 4

- 10a Prairie WOW

## Sunday 5

- 10a Service: "Prairie UU Got Talent" by Prairie, followed by Virtual Coffee Hour

## Monday 6 (every Monday)

- 4:30p Beginner D&D

## Thursday 9 (every 2 Thursdays)

- 7p Program Meeting

## Sunday 12

- 10a Service: TBA

## Tuesday 14

- 6p Board Meeting

## Sunday 19

- 10a Service: TBA

## Saturday 25

- 10a Creativity & Connection

## Sunday 26

- 10a Joint Service with the Free Congregation of Sauk County



## Calendar Notes - New Group!

**Creativity and Connection** led by Peggy Small will meet on the 4th Saturday of the month from 10-12 via Zoom. It is a monthly get together to connect and work on creative projects and is open to any level of artistic ability, but best for ages 8 and up. Each month we'll get together on Zoom to work on a project using supplies you should have on hand. The focus will be on the creative process rather than the outcome, but there will be an opportunity to share your project at the end (optional). Projects can vary from writing to drawing to crafting. Please let Peggy know if you have an idea for a project you'd like to lead.

# Reflections from the President

## Rachel Long, President

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So much of importance has happened in our country and our world in the last month. Prairie members have been thinking more deeply about race, privilege and their own role in perpetuating or changing entrenched beliefs in our culture and ourselves. I have been very engaged by the heartfelt discussions among us on Prairieviews and with individual members, and these conversations have helped me with my own thinking.



This experience has me considering the role of religion. I've been thinking that for a religion to serve us well, it has to both comfort us and make us uncomfortable, in the right balance. People seek faith and religious community to find relief from loneliness and sorrow and from guilt and shame, and to find hope for the future. But if religion just makes people feel good, the consequences can be disastrous, from bland complacency all the way to self-righteous hatred and violence. We need the discomfort of knowing that we aren't as good as we want to be, that we can do better, that our beliefs demand this of us. This discomfort motivates us to do the hard work of fighting our biases, recognizing how we have benefitted from the suffering of others and how our behaviors perpetuate

systems of injustice. But a religion that offers only challenge and discomfort won't survive. No one will show up for the hard stuff if we don't find joy and laughter in our chosen faith, and find hope here for ourselves as individuals and for humanity.

Let's keep striving for that balance. Keep challenging each other to be better and do better. And let's keep sharing our joys, small and large.

## RE - Change is Coming!

### Holly Tellander, Director of Religious Education

Nobody enjoys beating around the bush when changes are being discussed, so I'll get right to it. The time has come for me to pass the baton as your Director of Religious Education. Whew. That was very hard to say!



This is a very emotional decision for me. Prairie RE has been a passion of mine since I walked in the doors as a visitor 7 years ago. My kids have grown up in this program and I am very proud of the work I've done here and so thankful to be a part of the community.

And I am still very passionate about this community and this program and I plan to stick around, just in a different capacity. I am working with the board and the RE committee to define the hiring process and find an ideal candidate who is in alignment with our program's mission and goals. I hope to have the opportunity to mentor my successor before I step down later this year. So, I'm not leaving anytime soon! (continued on next page)

This program means the world to me, your children are important to me, and everyone who has ever worked with RE holds a very special place in my heart. And even though it is time for me to focus my professional efforts in a different direction, I know that Prairie RE will continue to grow and thrive and change and stay the same in all the best and most important ways.

It has been an honor to work with each and every one of you. And if I haven't worked closely with you, I am honored that you still take the time to read my messages and/or share your family with our program.

I am happy and available to answer any questions. If you know of a good candidate, please reach out for more information. Don't worry, there are still many more Prairie Fire columns coming from me before I tip my hat for good.

## RE Committee Plans for a New DRE

**Karen Deaton, Religious Education Committee Chair**

If you've been keeping up with your Prairie News, you know that Holly has told us it's time for her to transition out of the DRE role. You may also have read my message where I described a plan to post the job by the end of June - I'm afraid I was overly optimistic about how quickly we can post the job. Because the DRE role is different during the pandemic, we need to take a little more time to figure out how to proceed. Many questions need to be answered, for example, How much do we want to scale back our program while we are not meeting in person? Do we want to bring a new DRE on board during the pandemic, while the job is so different from what we want it to be in the future?

Here are our next steps, which we will take as quickly as we can while still being thoughtful and meeting the needs of Prairie:

1. Write a job description for a Director of Pandemic Religious Education (DPRE) that captures what we want and need over the next few months, until we resume our in-person program in our remodeled building
2. Form a hiring committee with a representative from our Board and a parent as well as two members of the RE Committee
3. Develop a plan and timeline for hiring our next DRE and managing the transition from Holly to her successor. This will include planning for whether the DPRE work is done by Holly, by our next DRE, by an interim employee, or some combination (including volunteers).

Holly plans to stay with us for a few months if needed for a smooth transition, and we are very appreciative of that! Wednesday Night Fun for our youngest learners as well as the two weekly Dungeons & Dragons campaigns will continue online. At this point, we want Holly to shift her focus from building our program to preparing for handing off leadership, so you won't see her planning lots of new activities as she has in the past.

Our committee has ideas for some socially-distanced activities and asynchronous digital activities as well as Zoom-based fellowship, but we won't be asking Holly to plan, publicize, and implement those ideas - we'll be doing that ourselves! Keep an eye out for future announcements and please reach out to me ([re-committee@uuprairie.org](mailto:re-committee@uuprairie.org)) if you'd like to facilitate or lead an activity - or if you want to share thoughts about our hiring process or our program.



# Growing Connections in These Challenging Times

Deesa Pence & Patty Stockdale, Membership Committee Co-Chairs

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*"We have a long and difficult road ahead," as we continue to navigate the isolating confinements of staying safer-at-home and being socially distant. Many of us are yearning for social connections with our family, friends, neighbors, and grandchildren. Early responses include getting video chatting technology up and running to replicate "church" online. Then we really realize that what we need most is straight up pastoral care, and time to connect with one another. We need small group ministry and pastoral care; we need to see each other's faces; and we need to know we are not alone. Paraphrased from Reverend Cecilia Kingman, Minister for Faith and Justice at the Edmonds Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Washington State wrote in the early days of the Pandemic.*

Prairie is struggling as are other congregations to meet the spiritual and social needs of its members and friends, families and children. Sadly, we are without a minister to provide pastoral care and personal connections. We are also without a building to gather to worship, talk face-to-face, sing, share meals, to be together, to hug. **So, we must rely on each other.**

Join us to REACH OUT to Prairie's members and friends, elderly and young, family and friends, with a personal phone call, visit, or card. If you need a visit or call, let us know. Prairie's Caring Committee chaired by Barb Frye and the Membership Committee co-chaired by Deesa Pence and Patty Stockdale are doing all we can to REACH OUT. The Caring Committee provides support and assistance to members experiencing illness, hospitalization, the birth of a baby, grief over the loss of a family member or close friend, or another significant life event. The Membership Committee is working to adapt to the current situations to grow connections among our members and friends, since we probably won't be meeting in person as a congregation for quite a while,

## Here are ways to connect:

**In-Person Visits:** Now that the weather is warming, we believe we can visit safely with each other in the open air and at proper distancing. If you need help finding Prairie members and friends near you to visit, contact Patty or Deesa for help. Or visit the Prairie webpage at [www.uuprairie.org](http://www.uuprairie.org) in the password protected member page for the membership directory or visual map of the directory to locate folks nearby. You can get the password from Patty or Dan. The Membership Committee encourages you to REACH OUT to Prairie members and friends.

**Circle Dinner Groups:** Several Circle Dinner Groups are meeting in person or by Zoom. These Circle Dinner Groups met before the virus for dinner and socializing in each other's homes. There are three or four now gathering if you are interested in joining one.



Wed 6/3 a circle group had supper in the backyard of Judy Lazarus (pic from Ron Frye)

**Interest Groups:** Let the Membership Committee know if there is some interest of yours (i.e. knitting, music, playing games, practicing Spanish, and reading plays) that you would like to create. We can help invite others to join in. Prairie has a Zoom account for social groups, and we can help recruit participants and provide some Zoom training, as well.

**Sidewalk Chalking:** Perhaps when walking, running or biking, you may want to take a couple minutes and chalk some happy messages on fellow Prairie members' driveways/sidewalks who live nearby? Take a picture and send it to Katrina [yaghaffar.yaghafur@gmail.com](mailto:yaghaffar.yaghafur@gmail.com) to post on the Prairie Facebook page. No Chalk? Leave a note in the door to say hello and sorry to have missed them.

**Do you have a spare computer, iPad, tablet, or smartphone?** Unfortunately, not everyone has the proper equipment to use Zoom or video chat. If you have a spare device to loan for a while, let the Membership Committee know, so we can match with someone in need of one.

**New Ideas?** Necessity is the mother of invention. Let Patty or Deesa know how we can help start a new group or help formulate your creative ideas.

Reach Patty and Deesa at the [membership@uuprairie.org](mailto:membership@uuprairie.org) or 608-298-0843. Reach Barb at [caring@uuprairie.org](mailto:caring@uuprairie.org). Reach Administrator Dan Klock at [admin@uuprairie.org](mailto:admin@uuprairie.org).

## Playhouse Refresh

Carl Wacker



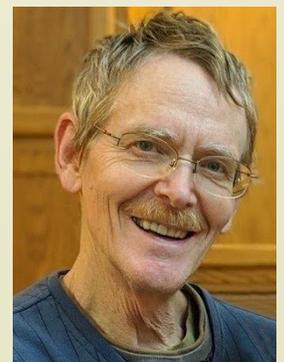
Paula and I spent about 4 hours at Prairie today (June 7th), working on the playhouse and Leopold benches. Paula treated the benches with water. I repaired and painted the playhouse's trim. In the future, I will put another coat on for the trim and re-paint the rest of the playhouse. The playhouse was donated by Erin Bosch's friends.

## Member Spotlight

Carl Wacker

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

Currently I serve on the RE committee, and was teaching until the pandemic. I've been the choir accompanist since Doleta died in 2012. I've taught all the RE grades more than once, and served as the RE Committee Chair. I've done lots of miscellaneous jobs for Prairie, but I'm sure I can't remember them all. Music and the RE program have always been my main interests.



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

I grew up with my 3 sisters and Mom and Dad in a small town in Illinois. We lived in the same house for my entire childhood. My Dad was a family physician in town, so everyone knew me. I couldn't get away with anything! I met Paula when I moved to Champaign, Illinois from San Diego to go to college. Paula and I both graduated from U of I and moved around the midwest, following my job. We lived in Champaign, Decatur, and Danville Illinois, and in Macomb Illinois, where our daughter Judy was born. Our daughter Toby was born in Mankato, Minnesota. Their older half-brother, Marlon, lives in Atlanta Georgia. Madison was always a dream destination for us, because it's a great town and close to family. We were lucky. In August, 1990, before our kids were old enough for school, we managed to get a job transfer to Madison. We bought our house in 1990 for \$76,000 and thought it was sooo expensive. Raised our kids here, and still live in the same house.



### **What brought you to Prairie?**

When I lived in Champaign I remember attending various churches at random, trying to find one that clicked. But when Paula and I discovered a small UU fellowship in Decatur, we knew that was the place for us. We were married in Danville, where there was no UU fellowship, so we asked our minister from Decatur to preside, and she drove over to get us hitched.

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

We knew we wanted a UU fellowship. We tried First Society, but to me it felt too much like the Presbyterian services I grew up with. Prairie felt like home.

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

I'm retired from a job with the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service. Now I work about half time training horses, helping owners solve problems and build trusting and safe relationships. I love that work, and hope to keep going at least until my daughter Judy moves back to Madison and takes over for me. I write and play piano and guitar music and am busy now writing another musical children's book. I'm an avid gardener, and generally like active outdoor activities. I've played racquetball for 45 years. I'm not bad, but now that I'm on Medicare, I'm beginning to think I may never make it to the pro circuit.

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



After my summer stint as a Presbyterian church camp counselor, I did a year and a half of volunteer work with the Mennonites in Kansas, where I earned my EMT certification and worked as an ambulance attendant. Some of the other volunteers were conscientious objectors to the Vietnam War, completing their mandatory volunteer service. I had already decided I would not fight in that war, but my draft lottery number was so high I didn't get drafted, so I did the voluntary service anyway. I was a volunteer fireman for a couple years. I lived right across the street from the fire station, so when the siren blew, I'd throw on my coat and boots, rush out the door, and be hanging on to the back of a speeding fire truck within a couple minutes. For a young guy, that was exciting! In my 20s I was an avid hitch-hiker, taking several cross-country trips with few provisions, once with no money - just bumming around and making my way day to day. On one trip I lived in a migrant camp for a month, picking apples in Washington State. On another, I was robbed of everything I had, including my driver's license, and then got arrested for driving with no license, spending the night in jail in Rolla, Missouri.