

Sep
2020

Prairie Fire



Our virtual bouquet to Holly on 8/2

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September Calendar*

Please see www.uuprairie.org for detailed descriptions & public event links

**All events take place online via Zoom*

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Wednesday 2 (every Wednesday)

- 6p Wednesday Night Fun Night

Thursday 3

- 7p Program Meeting

Friday 4 (every Friday)

- 4:30p Advanced D&D

Saturday 5

- 10a Prairie WOW

Sunday 6

- 10a Joint PUUS, FUS & Reeb Service: Labor in the Pulpit - followed by Virtual Coffee Hour
- 7pm Sing Along (every Sunday)

Monday 7 (every Monday)

- 4:30p Beginner D&D

Tuesday 8

- 6p Board Meeting

Thursday 10

- 7p Search Meeting

Sunday 13

- 10a Service: Ingathering

Monday 14

- 7p Study Group: *White Trash* pt 1

Sunday 20

- 10a: "Voting During a Pandemic" by David Canon

Thursday 24

- ~7pm Beyond Categorical Thinking Workshop pt 1

Saturday 26

- ~9am Beyond Categorical Thinking Workshop pt 2

Sunday 27

- 10a Service: Beyond Categorical Thinking

Monday 28

- 7p Study Group: *White Trash* pt 1



Deciding on Meeting in Person

Rachel Long, President

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After all the time, trouble and treasure spent on remodeling our meeting house, the Society that calls it home is still unable to gather there. We are aching to be together, especially to be with those of us who haven't shared in our "zoom" gatherings. I want to briefly explain your Board's thinking on when we will be able to share physical space again.

The guiding principles we are using in our deliberations are to attend to the state of the Covid-19 pandemic in Dane County, to protect our members from illness or the necessity for quarantine, and to be inclusive of all who want to share in our activities.



As of August 21, Dane County Covid 19 status is still considered "red" but cases have been declining.

https://publichealthmdc.com/documents/2020-08-20_data_snapshot.pdf

As is typical for UU (and many other) congregations, our attendance skews older, which puts our membership at higher risk for complications of Covid. Our members who are employed have a different kind of risk, as some of us have employers who would impose quarantine if we have any known exposure, forcing us to use up sick time (as recently happened to our vice president) or go without pay. We could make the argument that our members have the right to choose for themselves whether to take on such risks. However, as an organization with a moral purpose, we have a responsibility not to exclude people who could not attend a function due their inability to afford time off work, or because their age or health status make them particularly vulnerable to the effects of this virus.

Until we drop below "red" level of Covid-19 transmission in Dane County, the Board will not consider offering any in-person gatherings at Prairie. When case counts improve, we will start by offering the opportunity for small groups to meet outside only, masked and with appropriate distancing. We will be asking groups to accommodate those who can't attend by offering speakerphone or video attendance options. We will proceed in steps, working our way towards distanced meetings in our renewed home with the option of video participation.

We are all so weary of these limitations, but this too shall pass. Please consider reaching out to the more isolated among us, and participate in our online activities if you can. We will be together soon!

Rachel Long
President



Our 2 flamingo flocks are continuing to fly - this flock now has scarves and necklaces :)

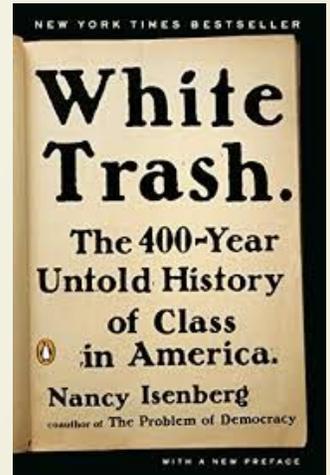
Get Ready for Prairie Study Group!

Rachel Long, President

2nd and 4th Mondays from 7-8:30 pm

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Prairie's new Study Group to get us educated on race, class and other oppressions is starting in just a few weeks. Hopefully you are already reading Part 1 of *White Trash. The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America* by Nancy Isenberg, which we will be discussing on 9/14/2020. This study group is part of Prairie's initiative to become a more truly welcoming congregation to those of all ethnic and class backgrounds, genders and sexual orientations as we proclaim at the start of our services. Please participate if you can. Suzanne Gernandt is supplying the study questions and facilitating the discussions for our first selection. In the future we will have selections focusing on race, indigenous peoples issues, immigration, and LGBTQ concerns. Below is the schedule so far. Look for the link on our website or in our weekly Prairienews emails. Join us!



- 9/14 – White Trash Part 1
- 9/28 – White Trash Part 2
- 10/12 – White Trash Part 3
- 10/26 – next selection to be determined

Religious Exploration (RE): Circle of Friends

Karen Deaton, Religious Education Committee Chair

All of us are facing challenges as we move through this bizarre year, but you who have children at home are facing a special set of challenges. Are you working at home while supervising your children in remote learning? Are you sending your children off to school with hopes that they and their classmates will maintain safe distance and keep their masks on? Are you working on some other plan to manage child care and your children's learning this fall? Please know that we at Prairie are rooting for you as you make the transition from summer to fall.

On Facebook, [join the Prairie Unitarian Universalist Group](#) to have a way to reach out to other Prairie members and friends when you'd like to organize a gripe session with other parents or ask for somebody to spend an hour listening to your child's detailed account of their Roblox activity, or any other crazy thing that might help you make it through a day.

In the month to come, we're continuing to offer Wednesday Night Fun for kids from toddlers up to about third grade, as well as Dungeons & Dragons campaigns for beginners and for experienced players. We'll keep evaluating how we best can support our families and maintain our connections with our friends. Let me know what ideas you have!



Beyond Categorical Thinking Workshop

Renee Deschard, Search Committee Chair

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Mark your calendars for the evening of September 24th and the morning of September 26th! Prairie has applied and been scheduled for a virtual workshop (broken into the 2 days about 1.5 hours each) of Beyond Categorical Thinking (BCT).

BCT is a UUA program designed to promote inclusive thinking and prevent unfair discrimination during a congregation's search for a minister. The program began in 1988 at request of ministers who experienced discrimination during the search process. It has evolved over time to meet the needs of the congregations and ministers in search. Originally concerned with issues of gender, race, sexual orientation, and disability, it now includes gender identity, ethnicity, mental health, class, age, and size.

One or two trained UUA facilitators will lead the virtual workshop and also present during Sunday Service on September 27th.

The Prairie Search Committee invites all members, friends & staff to participate in this workshop. More information coming soon.

Prairie UU Fall Retreat

Karen Deaton, Nancy Wunderlin & Renee Deschard

Originally the retreat was scheduled for October 2th-4th 2020. Unfortunately we will not be able to meet at Bethel in person this year, but we can still have fun activities at the end of September/beginning of October. Please [fill out this short form](#) by Tuesday August 25th to help with planning.

Below is a picture from August 23rd's Wheel 'N Greet. This is a possible example of an outdoor, distanced, mask wearing event (virtual options are also being investigated).



Prairie Landscape Takes Root

Karen Deaton, Landscape Sub Committee Chair

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If you go by our Meeting House, you'll see the butterfly rain garden that Kathy C, Barb P, and I put in last month looking healthy and colorful. You might even see a butterfly sipping the flowers' nectar! You'll also see grass growing where there was bare soil for over a year during the remodel. Near the patio by the upstairs entrance there's an area planted with a no-mow lawn mix (mostly fescues). It'll grow only about 6" tall, so it'll provide a little low-maintenance lawn where we can stand or sit to enjoy the view.



Lawn turf is planted in a wide border inside the sidewalk, continuing the mowed border between the established prairie plantings and the sidewalk. The terraces and the disturbed areas in front of the Annex and behind the Meeting House have also been seeded with lawn grass. Most of the hillside between the Meeting House and Whenona will be a continuation of our signature prairie garden. We're starting with prairie grass. Wildflowers will be added as the prairie grasses get established. I'm happy to talk about the particulars if you're interested.

Let me know if you have plants or seed you'd like to donate- we're especially interested in rock garden plants and prairie plants (though we don't want your plants if you have jumping worms in your yard).

Thank you Barb Park, Martin Arnold, and Mary Mullen for helping the grass get started!

Circle Dinner Gathering

On 8/11, this circle dinner group met at Marshall Park: Suzanne Gernandt, Margit Moses, Barb & Ron Frye, Molly Plunkett & Peter Anderson, Judy Lazarus, Gene & Evelyn Kain. There was a travel theme complete with stories and songs!!!



Member Spotlight

Paula Pachciarz



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In addition to leading several services, Paula has served on many committees. She currently is on the RE, Design and Social Action committees.

Paula grew up in Danville, located in Vermilion County in east central Illinois and jokes that she comes from an ill-sounding place :) She is one of six children. Her older sister became profoundly deaf before she was two but through her determination and tenacity, and because of Paula's mother's support, went on to get her PhD and MD. Her memoirs will be published soon. Paula's younger sister was born with a defect in hepatic circulation and died at age 33 during liver transplant surgery. Paula also has three brothers. They were all raised Roman Catholic and attended Catholic grade school and high school. Paula's family and church were strongly patriarchal with limited roles for women. Questions challenging faith, or anything of the status quo, were not encouraged at school and strongly discouraged at home. Paula was very athletic and bitterly disappointed that because she was a girl, she couldn't join teams--Little League, track, basketball, golf, etc. But at the time she accepted this, followed all the rules and tried hard to be good, at one time considering becoming a nun. In her first year of high school, she had an epiphany over a period of a few days, beginning with questioning why she was in mental anguish over one of her many "sins", and ending in the realization that the entire Catholic belief structure was all in her head, that there was no actual proof that a god existed, and that she could decide for herself what to believe in. She then became an atheist but didn't tell her family for years.



Paula was working with another volunteer, Marianne, for a women's organization in Decatur when she talked of her non-religious beliefs but lamented that there wasn't a place where one could discuss/explore ethical issues with other adults without "God" or religious dogma being the default solution. Marianne told Paula about UUism. Carl and Paula went the next Sunday. The minister was a woman, discussion of the topic was encouraged, and there was coffee. Sold!

First impressions of Prairie were feeling seen and welcomed. Seeing the warmth and community that is Prairie. Their older daughter had fun in RE and it felt like home. The reasons for joining included feeling useful and being appreciated. When not at Prairie, Paula enjoys: gardening, bike riding, bird watching, learning to sew on vintage sewing machine that belonged to her younger sister, working out, reading, singing, writing song lyrics, practicing the didgeridoo, occasionally writing a tune, being directed by Carl in one of his music videos, writing short stories and plays, and canoeing. Carl and Paula were regularly volunteering at the Allied Drive Food Pantry but that's on hold now.



You might not know that Paula belonged to a choir that: sang backup for Holly Near at a live performance, recorded two songs with Ginny Clemmons, featured on one of her albums and sang at The National Women's Music Festival in Champaign-Urbana.