Prairie Fire

Prairie Contacts

Rachel Long, President—president@uuprairie.org
Dan Klock, Administrator—admin@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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Key Log on 9/26/20, part of Retreat activities
December Calendar*

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

*All events take place online via Zoom

**Tuesday 1**
- 4:30 Beginner D&D (every Tuesday)
- 7p Trivia (1st & 3rd Tuesday)
- **Deadline to register for Nifty Gifty**

**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 Service: "Addressing Bias in Healthcare" by Naomi Takahashi
- 11a Virtual Coffee Hour (every Sunday)
- 7pm Sing Along (every Sunday)

**Tuesday 8**
- 6p Board Meeting

**Sunday 13**
- 10a Service: “Symbol Tree”

**Monday 14**
- 7p Study Group

**Sunday 20**
- 10a “Winter Watches” by Prairie

**Saturday 26**
- 10a Creativity & Connection

**Sunday 27**
- 10a Service: Tune into a UU service; 11am Prairie Coffee Hour

**Monday 28**
- 7p Study Group

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Andy Garst, Evan Creed & Karen Deaton moved a fridge into RE (fridge donated by The Deschard Family)
The December selection will be *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You* by Ibram X. Kendi and Jason Reynolds, published in March 2020. It is aimed at readers ages 12 and up, and I encourage older youth to please join us for this read and discussion. The New York Times book review titled "Can you dismantle white supremacy with words?" said "Reynolds’ engaging, clear prose shines a light on difficult and confusing subjects, including anti-blackness and the creation of racial capitalism." This book was a "remix" of the *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas America* by Kendi, which won the 2016 National Book Award for Nonfiction. The newer book was written to make the information more accessible to older youth and young adults, but has been hailed as a great read for older adults as well.

Study Group meets the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month from 7-8:30 pm. Our upcoming schedule is as follows:
- Dec. 14 - Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You part 1
- Dec. 28 - Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You part 2

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The Board has been considering requests for small groups such as committees or families of members to use Prairie to meet in person. We are very sympathetic to these requests, and understand the wish to be together in real space. This need is especially urgent for families who aren’t allowed to visit someone in their residence, such as an assisted living center, and who don’t have other options for socially distant gathering.

However we are in the middle of a big spike in Covid cases in our area, and are being cautioned by public health experts to stay home and avoid gathering. The Annex is an old house, and doesn’t have any better air exchange than any other private home. We do not want to endanger our employees, one of whom is in the Annex 5 days per week. The Board decided that several things would need to be in place to allow anyone to use our space.

1. We will need to wait until the inspector allows our use of the main building, likely in a few weeks. Air exchange is very much better in the main meeting hall with its new HVAC system than in the Annex. The meeting hall is much bigger than any space in the Annex to better allow for social distancing.
2. We need to set up a process for scheduling small groups, to assure no one else is in the building for an adequate time beforehand and afterwards to clear any aerosolized particles.
3. We need to establish protocols including expectations for mask wearing, social distancing, size of group allowed, use of the bathroom and other areas, and cleaning procedures after the meeting.
4. We need to create a waiver form for all users to sign in which they agree to abide by the protocols, and agree that Prairie isn’t liable if anyone becomes ill.
5. We need to assure our employees aren’t put at risk and are comfortable with these procedures.
6. We will not want to start implementation until there is improvement in the current Covid spike in our area. The Board will be working on the protocol, procedures and waiver form at our December meeting.
Holiday traditions coming up! Advance preparation required this year!

Lots of activities are canceled on account of the pandemic, but Prairie holiday traditions will go on!

**Nifty Gifty**, our annual event for Prairie youngsters to craft gifts for loved ones, will be held via Zoom the weekend of December 5-6. Projects suitable for all ages will be offered. [Advance registration (register here)](#) is required (by December 1) so that we can deliver supplies and treats.

**Santa Lucia candlelight procession - Everybody join in this year, not just the children!** Our Symbol Tree Service on December 13 will begin with a virtual candlelight procession. Please take a photo (similar to the one shown here) of each person in your house. Use a candle or a battery-powered candle or a flashlight or a glowing toy to light your faces in a darkened room. Send it to re-committee@uuprairie.org. I'll make a slideshow of the images to start the Symbol Tree service. Send the photo by Monday, December 7.

**Symbol Tree Service** - In this annual service, attendees can show a physical item that represents an important milestone from the past year and talk about it. Though we will not be able to hang our symbols together on a tree this year, we will still be able to learn about each other's lives through this sharing.

**DRE hiring (from Fall Parish Meeting report)**
- RE committee has been working on defining our staffing needs and structures
- Hiring committee will be chaired by Carl Wacker. Includes Rebecca Strome, Lynn Currie, Jesse Garst, and Karen Deaton
- We plan to have a DRE in place to prepare for resuming in-person RE activities next summer

See you in December! Karen Deaton, RE Committee chair
Other committee members: Pageen Small, Paula Pachciarz, Carl Wacker, Jesse Garst, Holly Tellander
2021 Pledge Drive Update

Chris Porter, Finance Committee Chair

Thank you so much to everyone who has already submitted their pledges. We’re doing great! So far, we have 37 pledges for a total of $109,231! Last year we received 49 pledges during the pledge drive so I am hoping some more pledges will be coming in soon. If you haven’t submitted your pledge yet, please send it today!

If you prefer to make pledge payments by credit card, you can set that up through the Give button on the Prairie home page. You do need a PayPal account to make recurring payments. Even if you will use the online option, please submit a pledge form.

Thank you for all the ways that you support Prairie. And, particularly at this time, thank you for your financial support. Wishing you happiness and good health!

2020 Retreat Report

Planners: Karen Deaton, Renee Deschard & Nancy Wunderlin

2020 Virtual/Hybrid Retreat: we had mainly virtual activities using Zoom on September 24th thru October 4th. In person events: Keylog and Wheel ‘N Greet. Drop off kits for: friendship bracelets & origami/papercrafts

Future date: October 1st-3rd 2021 is held for us; our 2020 deposit can be put to 2022 reservation, FYI: The Farmhouse will not be available in 2021 due to remodeling or demolition

Budget: Goal is the retreat expense is similar to (but not exceeding) retreat income; in light of covid19 we did not contact those who registered but did not pay
Retreat Income: $225 (charged $10 per adult, $5 per youth over age 5)
Retreat Expense: $130 for Holy Wisdom Monastery fire ring rental
Profit: $95
Note: the 2020 retreat budget (expense) includes a $900 deposit for our 2021 reservation

Numbers: 29 online registrations for 49 adults and 11 youth
2019 total attendees: 43 adults, 10 kids & 1 baby attended

Survey Highlights: 21 people took the survey with 76% attending all/most retreats, 19% about half of retreats and 4.8% rarely or never attend retreats
Check your top 3 favorite things to do at the retreat
80% Talent show
70% Hanging out with people
40% Key Log service
Although we don’t know what the covid19/vaccine situation will be in the fall of 2021, right now what are your thoughts with the 2021 retreat?
78.9% I’d be fine with day, food and overnight events at Bethel (like 2019 and before)
63.2% I’d be fine with in person events in the Madison area
57.9% I’d be fine with online events
52.6% I’d be fine with in person daytime events at Bethel
Program Committee Report

Renee Deschard, Program Committee Chair

Members: Penny Eiler, Ron Frye, Suzanne Gernandt, Barb Park, Robin Proud, Rick Ruecking, Nancy Wunderlin

The Program Committee experienced a couple of changes since May. Suzanne Gernandt and Ron Frye have joined the committee and Kathy Converse has stepped down. We welcome our new committee members and thank Kathy for all of her help on the Program Committee!!!

Covid19 required Prairie to change how we deliver our Sunday Services. Starting in March we held Saturday or Sunday Prairie services virtually and collaborated with FUS and Reeb as well. In June, we moved to Prairie virtual services every Sunday using Zoom with a Virtual Coffee Hour following. Amber is now playing live twice per month (began in August).

Zoom information is sent out weekly on the Prairie News listserv via News of the Week, on the homepage of our website, on Facebook and in online orders of service. Please contact Dan at admin@uuprairie.org to be added to the Prairie News listserv.

The average Sunday Prairie service attendance is about 30 people. 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. Most services (depending on copyright and permissions) are also emailed out to News and the recording can be watched online for about 1.5 weeks.

In collaboration with Prairie’s Interweave group, Program is actively working on our Welcoming Congregation Renewal. You can read more about the process here: https://www.uua.org/lgbtq/welcoming/program/five-practices-welcome-renewal

We held a discussion for the movie Disclosure on 10/26 which met the religious education requirement (fourth practice).

Program committee did come in under budget this year in large part to many wonderful member/Prairie created services. We thank all of our Prairie presiders, presenters, coordinators, readers, musicians, & Zoom helpers who make our services so wonderful!

Caring Committee Report

Barbara Chatterton Frye, Hospitality Committee Chair

What a challenging year we have all had since our last parish meeting! Even though the limitations due to Covid 19 have prevented us from acting in the manner that we normally would have, the Caring Committee and many excellent volunteers have been doing everything we can under these circumstances to help some of our members in need. We have had some severe medical crises and hospitalizations to address and I applaud all the continuing support and ongoing help more than I can say. We are staying in touch with people and we always appreciate calls to inform us of someone who may need assistance in some way who has not contacted us. Thank you Caring Committee team and all of Prairie.
Membership Committee Report
Deesa Pence & Patty Stockdale, Membership Committee Co-Chairs

Membership Committee 2020 is composed of Deesa Pence and Patty Stockdale as co-chairs and Rick Ruecking and Dan Proud as committee members. Long time co-chair Erin Bosch stepped down June 2020. We thank Erin for her years of service welcoming and orienting new members as well as being a positive force for growing Prairie.

The duties and responsibilities of the Membership Committee have changed because of the pandemic. Since Prairie cannot have Sunday services in-person and only online, we cannot meet and greet current nor new members in quite the same ways. As alternatives, we continue to look for ways to have social interactions both online and in-person.

Summer activities: Membership Committee 2020 picked up on ideas suggested by members to encourage in-person meetings in driveways (Thank you Robin Proud). Renee Deschard with Dan Klock’s help created a google map on the Members Only page where we can see each other with our addresses on a google map. The Membership Directory is there as well. It is located at https://uuprairie.org/connect/for-current-members/. Please ask us for the password. In July, we began a Singalong group to keep us singing. We continue to meet Sunday evenings at 7.

Circle Groups: Initially, we asked Circle Dinner Groups that were formed in the fall 2019 to continue to meet. Often Circle Dinner Groups wind down in late spring or early summer, but some groups had stopped before that because of the pandemic. Prairie was resourceful enough to secure Zoom accounts for group video conferencing for members to use. Some Circle Dinner Groups continued to meet during the summer by Zoom or in-person, when weather permitted outside gatherings and group members could physically distanced. We just completed the launch of 15 self-directed circle groups. Six are virtual groups and meet over Zoom around interest areas as movies, poetry, arts and crafts, and games and cards. The rest of groups of 4 to 7 people who are interested in meeting outside to walk or hike with or without kids, with or without dogs. Let us know if you want to be added to a group. The groups can also add floaters, if they choose to do so.

Cards: Another endeavor currently underway is to send members and friends greeting and birthday cards. The idea was inspired by Judy Lazarus who makes nature and handmade cards and sends them to friends. This group consists of Judy Lazarus, Mary Mullen, Jane Richards, and Patty Stockdale.

Soon we will be working on updating the Member Directory and assessing our member count which currently stands at 102.
Building Committee Report

The interior and exterior of the Prairie Remodeling and New Construction project have been accepted by the building committee. The storm water infiltration problems we were having have been worked out with the new site drainage design. The only items that remain to be completed are listed below.

01. City of Madison building inspector’s acceptance, and occupancy permit.
02. Contractors final lien waivers from material suppliers and sub-contractors.
03. We will need to install exhaust hood above the utility sink in the Maker Room, and we may be grandfathered in, and not need to install a vent fan above the basement stove. Not sure if we can get the grandfather status on the lower level stove, but the HVAC contractor is checking this with Madison Code Enforcement.

The only glitches that have not been worked out as of this writing are the exhaust hood fan for the lower level kitchen. This is being worked on by the HVAC contractor, who was meeting with the city building inspector for a resolution to this issue.

We will not be able to occupy the building with meetings until we get an occupancy permit, which we are hoping to have in place by the end of November 2020. I will keep the Board of Directors informed of this status as it unfolds.

Housing & Property Committee Report

Members: Jim Lyne and Randy Converse (co-chairs), Al Nettleton, John Gernandt, John Wunderlin, Heidi Hughes, Morris Sadicario
Staff: Ra ju Eliganti (janitor)

Several of our members have been part of the Meetinghouse Remodeling Committee. Heidi Hughes has been a key voice in the Remodeling Committee’s Interior Subcommittee. John Wunderlin and Al Nettleton have saved us much money by doing a great deal of the audio-visual tasks designated for the new and improved Meetinghouse sound system. They also helped Dan, Prairie’s administrator, improve our Internet accessibility.

Lock boxes have been installed on both buildings. Both buildings have been totally “rekeyed.” As a committee, we are waiting eagerly for the time when the Remodeling contractor is 100% finished so we all can begin several proposed projects.
Before the Prairie remodel began and then Covid struck we had been focusing on projects to help the homeless. We had been soliciting and collecting household goods for folks who were moving into permanent housing for the Tenant Resource Center and The Road Home. However with no use of Prairie buildings to store stuff we couldn’t continue that work. As a committee we have met infrequently over the last year.

**MOSES:** Co-Chair Pam Gates has continued to be very involved with Moses and Beacon. Pam plans to share books that she reviews for Moses with Prairie. Pam and others from Prairie also volunteer regularly at the Beacon and have also volunteered at the Dane County Jail.

**ALLIED PARTNERS:** Co-Chair Molly Plunkett has continued as a Board member of Allied Partners and attends Neighborhood Resource Team meetings for that area. Both hold monthly zoom meetings. In the spring she developed a Covid Resource Guide for the neighborhood detailing financial resources, food resources and housing assistance for families. She succeeded in getting $12,500 in grant money for the Allied Wellness Center which will be used to pay "salaries" to neighborhood women who are training to become Community Health Workers and for the center staff. She also worked with several voter registration drives in the neighborhood.

**DANE SANCTUARY COALITION:** Johanna Hatch represents Prairie on the Dane Sanctuary Coalition. There has been one family that was in sanctuary at Orchard Ridge UCC in past year. Dane Sanctuary has been working closely with Voces de la Frontera and Centro Hispano to register and mobilize latinx voters for the recent election. Voces reports that they garnered 74% turn out for the election. Post election a project of Voces called Kids Forward is working on advocacy and legislation to improve circumstances of low income children and children of color. The Sanctuary Coalition has also trained and coordinated 40 drivers for immigrants who have to attend deportation proceedings in Milwaukee and Chicago. Molly was trained to be a driver.

**MEN’S SHELTER BREAKFAST:** Continues to be handled by Paula Pachciarz as it has for many years. We are eternally grateful to Paula.

We have shared our offertory collections with Allied Wellness Center, Catalyst, Street Pulse, and Tenant Resource Center. We will add a local LBGQT organization next year as part of Prairie’s effort to be recertified as a Welcoming Congregation. Please feel free to let us know if there is a local group you would like to see benefited. Our focus has been largely on organizations that work with homeless people or issues but is not exclusive to that.
Ministerial Search Committee Report

Members: Renee Deschard (Chair), Barbara Park, Jane Richards, Katrina Daly Thompson, Peggy Small, Steve Hingle

After putting a pause on the search process due to covid19 this spring, the Search Committee re-convened over the summer. The Negotiating Team was formed and together with the Board has modified the UUA’s Minister Contract to meet Prairie’s needs.

In September, the Search Committee worked with the UUA to bring Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop & Sunday Service to Prairie. Beyond Categorical Thinking is a highly recommended part of the search process for our congregation. In finding the person who would be the best match for our minister, we could potentially overlook or even let biases keep us from knowing that a particular person would be the best match for us. Our trainers, Carol Carter Walker and Amanda Schuber, facilitated the two part workshop on September 24th & 26. They also presented at our service on Sunday September 27th. In October, we had a Zoom meeting with the UUA Transitions Program Manager, Christine Purcell, where we received clarification on the search process and how it is different during covid19.

This fall, the Search Committee continues to work on updating and submitting materials to the UUA in order to get our job post ready for the UUA’s recommended search timeline. The tentative goal is to have a new minister start in August 2021.

Carol Carter Walker, Amanda Schuber, Christine Purcell

Archives Committee Report

Mary Mullen, Archives Committee Chair

Since its 6/9/20 meeting the Archives Committee has taken a break from regular meetings because there have been no particular issues to deal with and we can’t meet in person to work on organizing archival materials. In addition, Barbara Park and I were occupied with our plots in the Marlborough Community Garden.

Prior to that, Barbara had been organizing Board and Parish minutes and had taken 3 full boxes of folders to the Annex, consecutive years in the 1981-93 time frame. Mary had been collecting and printing out poems written by our members that had been shared via the Prairie Fire or at Sunday services or other occasions. She also continues to participate on the MidAmerica Region History and Heritage Committee. Our digital archivist Robert Park continues to process Sunday service recordings that are then posted on the Members’ page on the Prairie website.

At present we are working with the Interior Committee to obtain a display cabinet for various archival artifacts. It will sit in the lobby near the stairway.