

April  
2021

# Prairie Fire



Prairie Monday walkers on one of the SO cold days (2/8/21) in Madison at the Orchid Show in Olbrich Gardens. Suzanne G., Barbara C., Margit M., Deesa P., and Mary F. pictured here. Barb Park was our host.

## Prairie Contacts

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

## Table of Contents

Calendar	2
Returning to In-Person Services	3
Prairie RE: April Edition	4
Congreg. Covenant of Good Relations	5
Nettleton's Move is Prairie's Gain	6
Help Prairie Thrive - Open Positions	7
News from MOSES	7
Member Spotlight: Martin Arnold & Rachel Long	8

# April Calendar\*

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

*\*All events take place online via Zoom*

2

## Thursday 1 (every Thursday)

- 6:30p Thursday Fun Night

## Friday 2 (every Friday)

- 4:30p Advanced D&D

## Saturday 3

- 10a Prairie WOW
- 12pm Beginner D&D (every Saturday)

## Sunday 4

- 10a Service: "Searching for the Historical Jesus" by Bill Katra
- 11a Virtual Coffee Hour (every Sunday)

## Tuesday 6

- 7p Trivia (1st & 3rd Tuesday)

## Thursday 8

- 7p Sing Along (2nd & 4th Thursdays)

## Sunday 11

- 10a Service: TBA

## Monday 12

- 7p Study Group (2nd & 4th Mondays)

## Tuesday 13

- 6p Board Meeting

## Sunday 18

- 10a Service: TBA

## Saturday 24

- 10a Creativity & Connection

## Sunday 25

- 10a Service: TBA



# Returning to In-Person Services

Rachel Long, President

3



The Prairie Walkers Group has been meeting masked outside. Pheasant Branch Conservancy on 2/22/21 with Barbara C., Margit M., Nancy S., Suzanne G., Kathy C., and Mary F.

We have been waiting seemingly forever to have access to our building and grounds after our big remodeling project. After a lot of back and forth, we have been instructed that we have to use venting over the stoves similar to commercial kitchens, and are in the process of getting that installed. This step will allow our inspector to finally sign off so that our land will no longer be a “construction site” and we can resume use.

We have also been anxiously waiting for the opportunity to safely gather together again. You may have seen the group meetings policy and procedures that the Board approved several weeks ago. You can find these documents on our website under “ABOUT” then “[Our Policies](#)”. Prairie folks will be getting letters in the next few days inviting you to review and sign consent forms that describe how we will all protect each other from Covid-19 when we meet together. And it won’t be long now! The Board, Program and Religious Exploration Committees will be working out the details for beginning outdoor services, tentatively planned to start at the beginning of June.

Small groups can begin meeting at Prairie as soon as our building and grounds are accessible, though we strongly recommend meeting OUTDOORS, as we are very much less likely to transmit Covid that way. From the UUA’s updated recommendations on gathering, *“We strongly discourage smaller in-person gatherings (such as meetings or one-to-one pastoral care) in indoor spaces, even with masks. Even the best masks are not 100% effective in preventing the spread of the virus from person to person. Our values of safety and inclusion call on us to minimize risk. We do not always know who might be most vulnerable to being harmed, or killed, by this virus. And we do not want to place the burden of educating or correcting us on the people who are most vulnerable”.*

Let’s keep taking care of each other and of ourselves, but let’s be joyful that soon we can do it together!

Rachel Long, President

# Prairie RE: April Edition

**Karen Deaton**, Religious Exploration (RE) Committee Chair

4

I feel such a sense of hope these days. Vaccination rates are rising, covid rates in Wisconsin are falling, and spring has actually arrived. It feels like we're moving into a new period, and that has me looking back with appreciation at things I've learned and activities I've really enjoyed over the difficult winter that is now behind us.

In Prairie's Religious Exploration program, Fun Night has indeed been fun! I'm grateful to the families that have arranged their evenings so that we can be together once a week as well as to the adults who have led activities. Our youngest friends have been growing fast over this past year. If not for Zoom and the adults who help Fun Night happen, Prairie would be a distant memory to these children and we would not know about their current interests and ever-increasing abilities. I'm glad our relationships have been able to continue to grow this year.

I've learned lots of new ways of working with our young teens while developing the HAWKS curriculum (based on OWL). Presenting a sex ed program virtually has pushed me to work hard on making things engaging and comfortable for this group. I think in the future we'll incorporate more games and videos into our programming, and spend less time reading aloud or looking at flip charts. It's been a pleasure to work with Katrina, Pageen, and Holly - all skilled educators and advocates for diverse representation and respectful language - in this program.

Remote activities, though sometimes frustrating, have opened the door to different kinds of participation and leadership. Youth who are not yet able to drive have been able to lead and participate in Dungeons and Dragons campaigns, without needing an adult to bring them to Prairie on a Tuesday or Friday evening. And those of us who can drive ourselves around have not needed to spend as much time doing that. This afternoon, for example, the DRE hiring committee was able to do its work in about 30 minutes via Zoom. I live pretty close to Prairie, but if we'd met in person I would have spent that much time just getting myself over there for a meeting and back home afterwards.

Looking ahead, we'll be considering conducting some outdoor family activities this summer, perhaps similar to our RE on the Road program in the summer of 2019. Ideas are welcome.



March 18 Fun Night was led by Kathy. We drew pictures of our favorite animals or characters and talked about them.

# Prairie's Congregational Covenant of Good Relations

Mary Mullen, Archives Committee Chair

5

*Congregational Covenant of Good Relations* – “a written expression of our Society’s commitment to create an environment where members and friends treat each other well”

**What????** Prairie has to have a written document to help us treat each other well? And how important can it be when those who have become a part of Prairie since the adoption of Prairie’s “Congregational Covenant of Good Relations” in December 2007 have never even heard about it? And those of us who do recall it probably haven’t thought about it for well over a decade.

**So why bring it up now?** Credit the group of seven of us who volunteered to look into how Prairie could engage with the denomination’s effort to become fighters against racism by studying the UUA’s report *Widening the Circle of Concern* (WTCC) and making recommendations to the Board.



Six members of the committee that is studying *Widening the Circle of Concern*: from top, Katrina Thompson, Mary Mullen, Katherine Liu, Rebecca Strome, Anne Pryor, and Pageen Small, on 3/20/21, by Zoom.

The seven of us – Rebecca Strome, Anne Pryor, Katrina Thompson, Pageen Small, Katherine Liu, Carolyn Schueppel, and Mary Mullen – soon found out that a very major first suggestion in the fight to become more welcoming to those who are not just like us is to stop emphasizing the idea that being a UU is all about individualism and the “freedom to believe whatever we want.” Instead, good UUs, even those of us who were attracted to it because we couldn’t stomach the religion of our youth, need to start thinking of ourselves as bound together by our covenants, perhaps better stated in our first and seventh UU principles.

Note that the opening statement of the principles is, “We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, COVENANT to affirm and promote” the principles. The first principle is “The inherent worth and dignity of EVERY person,” and the seventh is “Respect for the interdependent web of ALL EXISTENCE of which we are a part.”

An eighth UUA principle that is much more specific about dealing with racism and other oppressions is now (since 2013) being promoted to UU congregations. You can read more about it at <https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/> The principle affirms and promotes “*journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountability dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.*” One of the WTCC Committee’s recommendations to the Prairie Board may be to support the eighth principle both for Prairie’s use and to be adopted by the denomination as a whole.

This article appears to have gone far afield from *Prairie’s Covenant of Good Relations*, but never fear. Our covenant is now on Prairie’s website. We recommend that everyone take a look at it and tease out how it may relate to the eighth principle. You’ll find it at <https://uuprairie.org/our-policies-and-procedures/>. It’s the last item in the list of policies, found by navigating to About/Our Policies.

# Nettleton's Move Is Prairie's Gain

## Mary Mullen, Archives Committee Chair

6

As Aileen and Al Nettleton were packing up to move to Capitol Lakes, they came across some historical treasures for Prairie's archives. The most exciting find passed on to me as Archives Committee Chair was a letter and a scan of two pages specifically about our meeting house and the Annex.

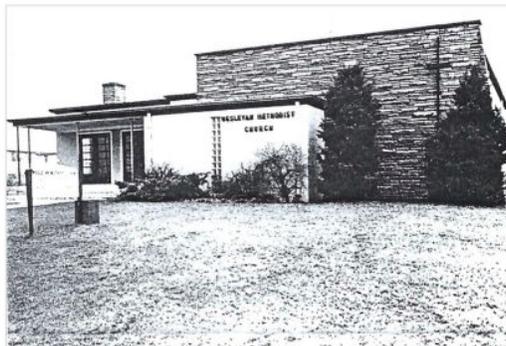
The pages were from the centennial book of the Wisconsin Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, published in 1967. Don't I wish we'd had the three pictures of the buildings at the time we published the Prairie history book set! Our earliest photos were from 1980. But better late than never.

As a result of this lucky find, we now know that

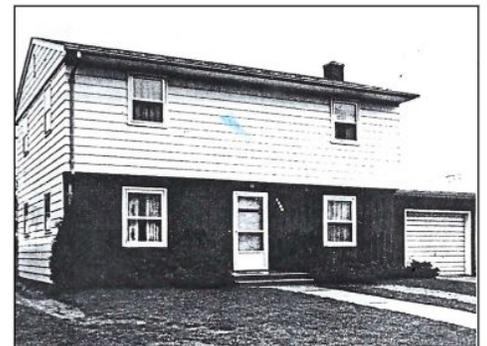
- the first service in what was to become Prairie's meeting house was held in August 1955. Planning to establish the church had begun in 1952. The congregation was officially organized as a Wesleyan Methodist Church in July 1956.
- the Annex was the parsonage, a building project started in August 1962 and completed in January 1963. The minister and family lived in the basement starting in November 1962. (Don't we wish our building project could be completed so promptly!)
- there are some parallels in the development of Prairie and the Wesleyan Methodists who built and occupied our buildings before we did. Prior to building the church, the Wesleyans had met in the home of a member and then for 3 years in the YWCA (Some to-be Prairie members met in homes before the founding of Prairie in 1967, and our early congregation met in the YWCA from August 1969 until November 1971.)
- the names Floyd Titus, Dave Titus, and Dave Peterson that were found written on a wall in the Annex were names of some of those Wesleyan Methodists



The interior of the main meeting room in the 1960s when it was owned by the Wesleyan Methodists. Prairie saved two of these pews.



This is how the building looked in 1967 or earlier when it belonged to the Wesleyan Methodist Church that built it. They held their first service in the new building in August 1955, 25 years before Prairie purchased the building. Note the cross on the stone wall.



Parsonage construction began in the summer of 1962 and was completed in January 1963. The minister and his family lived in the basement while the upper floors were being completed.

# Help Prairie Thrive - Open Positions

**Paula Pachciarz, Nominating Committee**

As we look forward to communing together in the Meeting House for the first time this year, we, the Nominating Committee, want to inform you of opportunities to deepen your connection to Prairie and help it thrive. We encourage you to consider serving in one of the following open positions. Each is for a term of two years:

**At-Large Board Member**

**Treasurer**

**Nominating Committee member**

If you would like to know more about the time commitment and functions involved, please contact us at [nominating@uuprairie.org](mailto:nominating@uuprairie.org). You may also reach out to any of us who are on the committee.

If you decide you are not a good fit for one of the open positions, but want to participate more in our society, please think about volunteering your time on one of the committees. They are crucial to helping our Prairie community to thrive, and they can connect us to the larger community we live in. You do not need to be a member to serve on a committee.

Prairie's permanent committees and contact information: Archives ([archives@uuprairie.org](mailto:archives@uuprairie.org)), Caring ([caring@uuprairie.org](mailto:caring@uuprairie.org)), Finance ([finance@uuprairie.org](mailto:finance@uuprairie.org)), Hospitality ([hospitality@uuprairie.org](mailto:hospitality@uuprairie.org)), Housing and Property ([housing-property@uuprairie.org](mailto:housing-property@uuprairie.org)), Membership ([membership@uuprairie.org](mailto:membership@uuprairie.org)), Nominating ([nominating@uuprairie.org](mailto:nominating@uuprairie.org)), Program ([program@uuprairie.org](mailto:program@uuprairie.org)), Religious Exploration ([re-committee@uuprairie.org](mailto:re-committee@uuprairie.org)), Social Action ([social-action@uuprairie.org](mailto:social-action@uuprairie.org))

We hope to hear from you soon! The Nominating Committee - Kent Wenger (chair), Paula Pachciarz, Becca Strome

## News from MOSES

**Pam Gates, Social Action Committee Co-Chair**



One of MOSES's efforts is shorter prison and supervision sentences. Research shows that longer sentences do not help and in fact may hinder an offender's reinstatement into the community. An excellent presentation on this topic was held via Zoom on March 16. We heard from Nehemiah, Marquette University Law Professor Michael O'Hear, UW-Madison Law Professor Cecelia Klingele, Dane County District Attorney Ismael Ozanne, and the Office of the Public Defender, as well as MOSES and EXPO (EX-incarcerated Persons Organizing) members. The link to see the recording of this event is:

<https://www.facebook.com/MOESMadisonWI/videos/4566608022216>.

Madison Action Day is coming up April 15. WISDOM (the Wisconsin umbrella group) will hold an informative plenary session in the morning, and in the afternoon there will be opportunity to communicate with our representatives in the Legislature, all via Zoom. Madison Action Day has always been an inspiring in-person event, bringing people from all over the state to Madison to lobby for needed changes to Wisconsin's corrections system. I hope the Zoom format will be inspiring as well. To sign up to participate: Madison Action Day Registration Link <https://secure.everyaction.com/o11Ai73fr003ebFiL8pEyQ2>

# Member Spotlight: Martin Arnold & Rachel Long



8

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

Martin - I co-led the initial phase of the meeting house remodeling task force, then continued to serve on the building committee. I have helped Housing & Property intermittently. I served on the Annex remodeling committee as well

Rachel - I am currently Prairie's President, and organize the Study Group. I had one other stint as president about 10 years ago, and have also served on committees to remodel the Annex and main building, been a member and chair of the RE Committee, and taught RE for many years. I have organized and presented Sunday programs as well.

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

Martin - I grew up in Lincoln Nebraska. I moved to Monroe, WI in 1992 to take a job at Monroe Clinic, where I worked as an Anesthesiologist for 20 years. Monroe was reasonably close to my parents and my spouse Rachel's, and at the time we had a toddler (Reuben) and a baby (Madeline) on the way.

Rachel - My family of origin moved around quite a bit, but I went to high school and college in Lincoln, Nebraska and medical school in Omaha. After training in Philadelphia, my spouse and I settled in Monroe to raise the kids in fairly close proximity to both sets of grandparents.

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

Martin - We attended UU churches before we moved to Monroe, and were looking for a small UU church near our new home.

Rachel - We needed to find our people! We hadn't been to a UU church since before we had kids, and we missed it. Our kids were finally old enough that we figured they could manage staying in the nursery. Monroe hadn't had a UU church in quite a while, and Prairie was the closest UU society to us.

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

Martin - Prairie had a warm, family-like atmosphere.

Rachel - We dressed up to come for the first time, and were relieved to find we didn't need to do that again! We appreciated the open discussion and acceptance of a variety of opinions. We received a warm welcome, and soon felt at home.

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

Martin - I garden, bicycle, fell trees from our woods, and prepare firewood to heat our home in the winter. I also own and manage some apartments in Stoughton

Rachel - I work as a psychiatrist for Monroe Clinic. I sing a lot. My life at home is kind of an opera, mostly about doing dishes or whatever else is happening at the time. Feel free to offer sympathies to my family members.



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

Martin - I had a motorcycle (instead of a car) when I was a graduate student in Berkeley, CA

Rachel - I had two radio shows on a Lincoln, NE community access radio station: "Women's Topics" & "Punk Rocker."