

May  
2021

# Prairie Fire

This beautiful chalice was created by Prairie Member Gene Kain. The Design Committee asked him to add small holders for our joys and concerns candles and it turned out great!



## Prairie Contacts

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

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# May Calendar\*

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

*\*All events take place online via Zoom*

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## Saturday 1

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

## Sunday 2

- 10a Service: "Disability Dissemination During the Pandemic" by Mitchell Hagopian
- 11a Virtual Coffee Hour (every Sunday)

## Tuesday 4

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

## Thursday 6 (every Thursday)

- 6:30p Thursday Fun Night

## Friday 7 (every Friday)

- 4:30p Advanced D&D

## Sunday 9

- 10a Service: TBA
- 11:15a Congregational Meeting

## Monday 10

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

## Tuesday 11

- 6p Board Meeting

## Thursday 13

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

## Sunday 16

- 10a Service: "Summer Reads" by Prairie

## Saturday 22

- 10a Creativity & Connection

## Sunday 23

- 10a Mini Service & Parish Congregational Meeting

## Sunday 30

- 10a Service: TBA



Approximately 17 Prairie members picked up trash & recyclables in the neighborhood on 4/18 10am. Renee Deschard & kids, Margit Moses (rt)

# So Much Change!

Rachel Long, President

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After such a long period of waiting, many changes are coming to Prairie seemingly all at once. What will happen to our society in May? Our grounds are now available to start small group meetings outdoors. Our building remodel is in the last stage of completion, and though it has been tantalizingly close for several months, we have good reason to hope we will have access to use our building by June. We are in the process of hiring a new Director of Religious Exploration. And this month we may choose to engage a new minister at our congregational meeting 5/9 after service. Our Annual Meeting will be 5/23/21. Whew! It's a bit overwhelming, and especially remarkable that our Society is accomplishing these things during this time of continued pandemic and political upheaval.

Let us congratulate, thank, and be proud of one another. So many in our community have continued to work behind the scenes to keep our community going during this long separation, often without acknowledgement. And let's be kind. We have all had losses this year, and we can't know all that each other have suffered. Be supportive of each other. And be joyful – we will soon gather together again!

## May Study Group

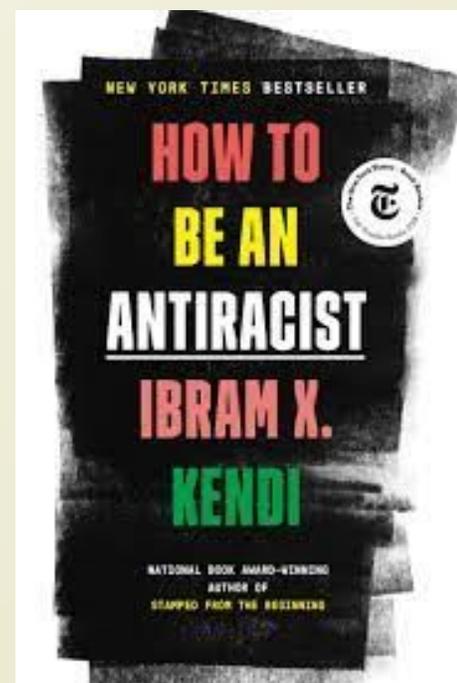
Rachel Long, President

The Prairie Study Group selection for May will be **How to Be an Anti-Racist**, by **Dr. Ibram X. Kendi**. The author of *White Fragility*, Robin DiAngelo, said Ibram Kendi is today's visionary in the enduring struggle for racial justice. In this personal and revelatory new work, he yet again holds up a transformative lens, challenging both mainstream and antiracist orthodoxy. He illuminates the foundations of racism in revolutionary new ways, and I am consistently challenged and inspired by his analysis. *How to Be an Antiracist* offers us a necessary and critical way forward."

Even if you can't make it to both sessions, and whether or not you have finished the book, please come when you can. The zoom link will be on Prairie's website. The schedule is as follows:

Mondays from 7-8:30 pm, May 11 and 25

See you there!



# May 9th Congregational Meeting

**Renee Deschard, Search Committee Chair**

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On 12/8/19 & 1/26/20, the Congregation voted for the Search Committee to search for, vet and bring to the Board/Congregation a full time 1 year contract Minister. Search began meeting in January of 2020 (sometimes weekly). We sent out and analyzed the responses to a Congregational Survey. We used these responses to complete our Congregational Record (aka job posting) and this was posted in March 2020. Then covid19 happened and Search recommended pausing the Search process.

We reconvened in the summer of 2020. In September, we brought the UUA's Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop & service to Prairie. We then re-posted our Congregational Record in December and began receiving applications in January.

The spring moved quickly with conducting virtual interviews (questions based on responses from the Congregational Survey), watching recorded services, completing reference checks with multiple references, reading through their websites and extensive application packets.

We found a recommended candidate which the Board approved on Saturday April 17th and then according to our bylaws the Congregation will need to vote on.

Please see the email sent to Members on Monday April 19th and join us on Sunday May 9th 11:15am to discuss and vote. We have worked extremely hard and tirelessly to bring Prairie an excellent candidate.

Thank you,

Renee Deschard (Search Committee Chair, email [reneedeschard\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:reneedeschard@gmail.com)), Barb Park, Gary Gates, Jane Richards, Katrina Thompson, Peggy Small

## Announcing our Annual Parish Meeting

**Rachel Long, President**

On Sunday May 23 at 10:15 am after a short service we will hold our Annual Meeting. The meeting will be held on Zoom, link will be on our website. Please plan to be there!

### Agenda

1. 10-10:15 short service with chalice lighting, opening words, etc.
2. Review of the process and agenda for this meeting
3. Elections
  - a. Board – Secretary, Treasurer and 1 At Large Member
  - b. Nominating Committee – 2 Members
4. Building update
5. Gathering in person
6. Minister update
7. Religious Exploration plans
8. Finance update
9. Approve Minutes from winter Parish Meeting
10. Accept Committee Reports
11. Closing words
12. Adjourn

# Prairie RE: May Edition

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

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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.



Our Prairie community has been through a time of turmoil - the difficult decisions to remodel the building and to hire a full-time minister, a year of meeting off-site, the departure of our DRE Holly, the pandemic and our shift to all-virtual programming. I'm tired, but I can see the way through to the other side of many of those challenges. For many of us "white" people, the last year has also been a time to become more aware of the racism baked into our society and the dangers faced by people of color every day. Helping dismantle systemic racism is a challenge that we will be wrestling with for the rest of our lives.

And so will our children. When the ministerial candidate met with the RE committee last week, they talked about RE in UU congregations as a garden that nurtures the people who will fight for social justice in the future. We met another potential leader for Prairie recently, too. I'm happy to let you know that the RE committee has found a DRE who has a passion for social justice. A lifelong UU, they have been involved in youth justice work since their teen years. We're working our way through the final details. I hope by the time the next Prairie Fire comes out, they'll be on staff and helping us tend our RE garden that helps raise fair, brave, kind people. (I've used "they" here to avoid prematurely identifying our new DRE or our possible new minister, not because that's their pronoun).

After spending an hour or so on Zoom with each of these new people, I am struck by both of their commitment to inclusivity and to making it clear that our space is safe and welcoming for all. I think that showing each other and our children how to do that is one of the most powerful things our congregation can do. The RE committee hopes that Prairie will have the help of these two professionals to - in Biden's words - build back better as we start to gather again. Thank you to the search committee for all their careful work on our behalf, and to the members of the DRE hiring committee (Rebecca Strome, Lynn Currie, Carl Wacker, Jesse Garst, and me) for their varied expertise, and their Sunday afternoons.

Being together again in person will be wonderful. Many of us are vaccinated (Andy and I got our second shots today and will be considered "fully immunized" on May 5). But many of us are not vaccinated. The RE committee is working with the Board to develop a policy for unvaccinated members of our Prairie family, including all children under 16. Health and safety of our congregation and broader community, equal access for as many as possible, and quality of children's experience are all important considerations. I don't know what plan we'll land on, but I do know that I welcome input from all of you.

The first Sunday in June will be our Bridging service, honoring our young people who are moving on to a new stage in life - middle school to high school, preschool to kindergarten - as well as all of us who are (we hope) moving toward a new normal full of togetherness. Let me know if you or a family member are crossing an important bridge this year.  
[re-committee@uuprairie.org](mailto:re-committee@uuprairie.org)



## And the Nominees Are ...

**Kent Wegner (Chair), Paula Pachciarz, Becca Strome,**  
Nominating Committee

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The Nominating Committee is pleased to announce the slate of nominees to be voted on at the May 23 Parish Meeting. We believe we have found excellent candidates and we feel fortunate that Prairie has such a deep pool of talent to draw from.

Treasurer: Suzanne Gernandt  
At-Large Board Member: Penny Eiler  
Nominating Committee: Heidi Hughes

Some of you may not know that you can always put yourself forward for a position even after candidates have been identified and even on the day of the vote. If you would like to throw your hat in the ring for any of the above positions go for it!

At this time we'd like to put a plug in for Prairie's committees. If you have been thinking of participating more in our society, a great way to start is by serving on a committee. They are crucial to helping our community to thrive, and can connect us to the larger community we live in. You do not need to be a member of Prairie to join a committee.

Prairie's permanent committees and contact information:

Archives (archives[AT]uuprairie.org)  
Caring (caring[AT]uuprairie.org)  
Finance (finance[AT]uuprairie.org)  
Hospitality (hospitality[at]uuprairie.org)  
Housing and Property (housing-property[at]uuprairie.org)  
Membership (membership[at]uuprairie.org)  
Nominating (nominating[at]uuprairie.org)  
Program (program[at]uuprairie.org)  
Religious Exploration (re-committee[at]uuprairie.org)  
Social Action (social-action[at]uuprairie.org)



# 2020 Welcoming Congregation Renewal

Renee Deschard, Program Committee Chair



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Exciting news! Prairie completed the Five Practices of Welcome Renewal for 2020! The Program Committee has been working on this over the past year along with consulting our Interweave group (for Prairie members and friends who are LGBTQ+ or allies). Below is the email from Rev. Michael J. Crumpler from the UUA. You can find more information here

<https://www.uua.org/lgbtq/welcoming/program/five-practices-welcome-renewal>

You have successfully completed the Five Practices of Welcome Renewal for 2020. Sincere congratulations on your ongoing commitment to LGBTQ+ welcome and inclusion in and beyond Madison, WI. It was a pleasure to read about all you have accomplished and the powerful work you have done to ensure that Prairie UU is meeting the needs of queer and trans congregants and the wider community in the following ways:

- I. Becoming a Welcoming Congregation – 1998
- II. Welcoming Worship
  - Lessons in Inclusivity: What UUs Can Learn from Progressive Muslims – 10/6/2019
  - A Rose by Any Other Name? - 8/16/2020
- III. Welcoming Days of Observance
  - Day of Silence
  - International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, Biphobia
  - Stonewall Riots Anniversary
  - National Coming Out Day
  - Transgender Day of Remembrance
  - World AIDS Day
- IV. Welcoming Religious Education
  - Disclosure Film – 10/26/2020
- V. Support a Welcoming Project
  - Donation to Willma's Fund

For more information on all of our LGBTQ programs and activities, please visit: The Five Practices of Welcome Renewal, subscribe to the quarterly UPLIFT newsletter, and read the UPLIFT blog. We also invite you to join the new Welcoming Congregations of Unitarian Universalism Facebook Group and follow UPLIFT Twitter and Instagram @uua\_lgbtq.

Thanks again for your congregation's life-giving, essential work!  
With appreciation,

Michael

Rev. Michael J. Crumpler :: He/Him/His  
LGBTQ and Multicultural Programs Director

# Hearts Tell a Story

Mary Mullen, Archives Committee Chair

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What you don't find when you clean out the basement! A flood of memories flowed from the discovery of three displays created by Prairie folks on July 17, 2005, and carried in the Madison Pride Parade that afternoon. There in the basement, preserved in 3-D living color, were the hearts on which members wrote reasons they supported gay relationships and gay marriage.

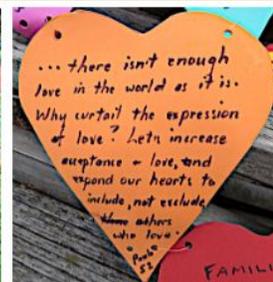


The newly-discovered hearts were made all the more poignant by the fact that several of the writers are no longer with us due to taking on their adult lives, moving or moving on to other things, or transitioning to the great beyond.



This display alone contains statements from nine people no longer at Prairie. In the top row: Emma (age 8) and Caleb (age 5) Swartz and Kris (age 40) Long, Rowen (age 9) and Corrine (age 40) Hornbeck, all of whom have either grown up, moved on, or moved away. In the second row, Jean Matos and Mike Briggs (second and fourth hearts) have died. Third row, middle and right hearts, Lawrence Nahlik lives in Thailand, and Sarah Lord has moved on to other things.

Paula Pachciarz carries the Prairie Society banner while Patty Stockdale holds one of the heart displays in the Madison Pride Parade on July 17, 2005, the same day that the heart displays were created.



Some of the reasons, as articulated by Anne Urbanski, now living in Santa Fe, NM, but still participating in the Prairie Women's Group, Norma Briggs, deceased 4-30-2015, and Paula Pachciarz, current member.