

Prairie Fire

February
2022



Join the WOW group (Women of Wonder) the 1st Saturday of the month. In attendance in January: Kate Liu, Mary Mullen, Barb Park, Kathy Converse and Mary Frantz (not pictured). Zoom screenshots captured by Mary Mullen on 1/8/2021.

Prairie Contacts

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Please see www.uuprairie.org for other contacts, including board members and committee chairs.

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February Calendar

Please see www.uuprairie.org for detailed descriptions & public event links (where applicable)

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Tuesday 1

- 7p Trivia (1st Tuesday)

Friday 4 (every Friday)

- 4:30p Advanced D&D

Saturday 5

- 10am WOW (Women of Wonder)

Sunday 6

- 10a Service: "The Kids Scare You: And Other Uncomfortable Truths About Education in America" by Holly Tellander

Wednesday 9 (every other Wednesday)

- 1p Rev. Matt's Chats
- 7:30p Rev. Matt's Chats

Sunday 13

- 10a Service: UUA Side With Love service

Monday 14

- 7p Study Group: The Water Dancer by Ta-Nehisi Coates

Sunday 20

- 10a Service: Rev. Matt Aspin

Saturday 26

- 10a Creativity & Connection

Sunday 27

- 10a Service: Rev. Matt Aspin



SIDE WITH
LOVE

Join us on February 13th for a UUA Side With Love Sunday Service

Study Group

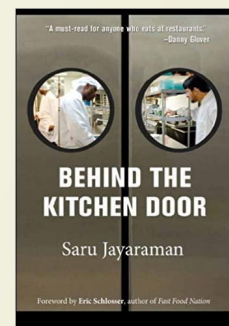
Rachel Long, President

We meet once per month on the second Monday from 7-8:30 pm. See our website for the link. Please join us! Even if you haven't read the book, let's learn from each other.

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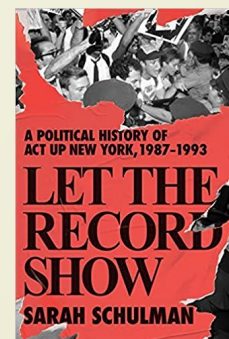
FEBRUARY- *Behind the Kitchen Door* by Saru Jayaraman, led by Katrina Thompson

"For all its talk of organic foods and sustainability, the restaurant industry pays little mind to the health and welfare of its own low-wage employees. In this persuasive volume, Jayaraman draws attention to servers, bussers, runners, cooks, and dishwashers across the country 'struggling to support themselves and their families under the shockingly exploitative conditions that exist behind most restaurant kitchen doors.'... Jayaraman champions employee causes and argues fervently against discrimination, giving restaurant owners, diners, and readers considerable food for thought." —Publishers Weekly



MARCH -- *Let the Record Show - A Political History of ACT UP New York, 1987-1993* by Sarah Schulman, led by Rachel Long

"An outstanding chronicle . . . an expansive portrait of the people, principles, and campaigns that made ACT UP the most formidable political organization to emerge from the AIDS crisis . . . Schulman writes as a witness to and a survivor of a catastrophe, clear-eyed and committed to remembering the dead . . . *Let the Record Show* serves as both history and handbook of how a small coalition can achieve fundamental political change . . . an invigorating work." --Dagmawi Woubshet, *The Atlantic*



APRIL – *Colonize This! Young Women of Color on Today's Feminism*, edited by Daisy Hernandez and Bushra Rehman, led by Pegeen Small. Daisy Hernandez and Bushra Rehman, self-described as a "Catholic Cuban-Colombian girl from New Jersey" and a "Pakistani Muslim girl from Queens," offer various perspectives--their own and others--of life lived as young feminists of color, exploring commonalities and cultural differences and examining macho cultures and American capitalism. The essays explore four major themes: family and community; mothers; cultural customs; and talking back to white feminists, men, mothers, liberals, and others. These women express a more radical, racialized feminism that broadens the movement beyond its early incarnation. *Vanessa Bush*



Study Group Calendar (7-8:30 pm on the 2nd Monday of the month)

February 14 – *Behind the Kitchen Door* by Saru Jayaraman

March 14 - *Let the Record Show* by Sarah Schulman

April 11 – *Colonize This!* edited by Daisy Hernandez and Bushra Rehman

May 9 - to be determined

Rev. Matt's Musings

Rev. Matt Aspin, Minister



Looking back and looking ahead...

The changing of the calendar invites moments of reflection of where we've just been, along with imaginings of where our adventures might take us in the future.

It's hard to believe I've been with you for 6 months already. This first stretch has been spent primarily developing relationships and just listening. While this process is far from over, my hope is that we have begun to build a solid foundation of relational trust-the key ingredient for success in any human endeavor.

What I have learned so far is that this community is strong, resilient, and caring. You have already taught me so much, and I can't imagine a better place to be continuing these early steps of my ministerial formation. I'm learning just as much as you are about what this work is all about!

As I look ahead, your Board and Committee on Ministry will be continuing the never-ending process of imagining what's next for Prairie. We will be reviewing your mission to ensure it still provides a clear compass to guide our collective decisions. We'll be considering what makes this place unique. We'll look at our processes, and see if there are any easy opportunities to do what we do better. And we'll look at our capacities and begin to imagine what might be possible in the future.

Along the way, we will begin to implement programs designed to strengthen our selves, the connections in this community, and our impact in the broader world. To borrow from a common metaphor, we will be "flying the plane at the same time we are assembling and maintaining it." The world calls on us to be engaged in this moment, not a few years from now. Challenges will arise. My intention is to create and maintain safe enough space that this community can truly live into it's vision while ensuring that anyone and everyone that might want to join this ride feels comfortable and eager to lend their support to our efforts.

And, Covid-willing, we'll be planning a grand re-opening (hopefully sooner rather than later!)

So hang on, because while the ride of beloved community may be bumpy at times I do believe the journey will always be worth it. In fact...it's safe to say that the work we will be doing together in the coming years is the critical work of our times.

As we look forward in this emerging year, may we commit to practices that will help us live more fully into the democratically developed, ever-evolving principles of this noble (and admittedly imperfect but designed to continually get better!) faith tradition.

Religious Exploration (RE)

Alice Mandt, Director of Religious Exploration

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Well, friends, we're not back in the building yet—omi- cron has made everything more complicated. As much as I cannot wait to be in our RE space to gather, learn and grow together, proceeding with caution is of the utmost importance in keeping our community healthy and safe. For now, we must look forward to when we can be together again, fostering the religious lives of our children. But for now we have discontinued in-person Religious Exploration activities.

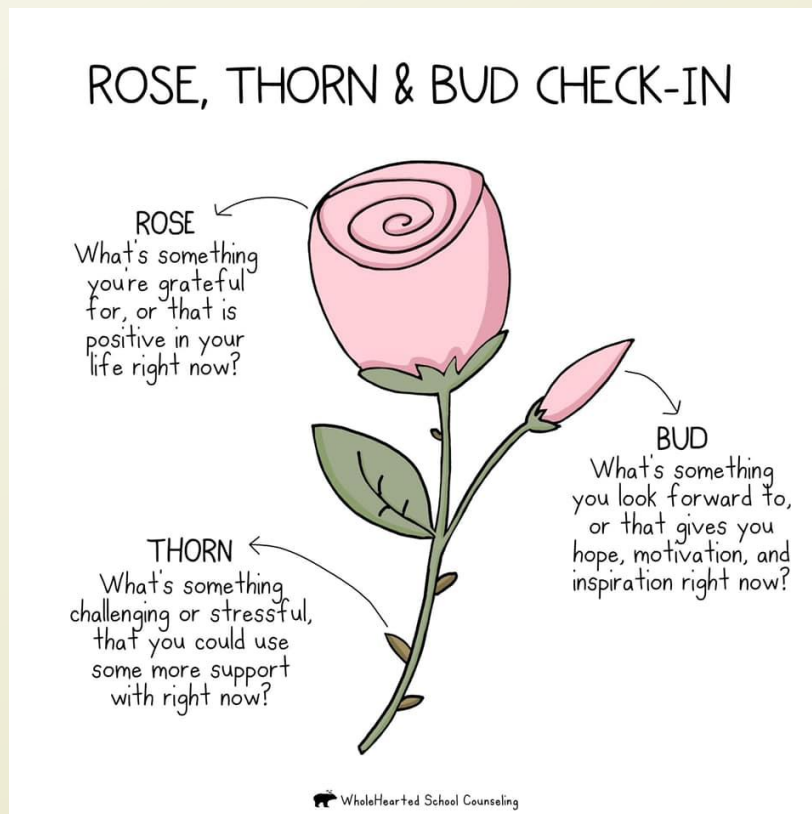
30 Days of Love

30 Days of Love is Side With Love's (a UUA sponsored public advocacy campaign) annual celebration that runs approximately from Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in January through Valentine's Day in February. It is an opportunity to collectively nurture our spirits, deepen our understanding, and take action on our values for collective liberation.

In 2022, 30 Days of Love will focus on Side With Love's four intersectional justice priorities, with opportunities each week for communities and people of all ages to ground, grow, and act together for justice.

For each week of 30 Days of Love there is a playlist of activities for a multigenerational audience. These activities are kid friendly and a great way to engage in issues of Religious Exploration with your children while we're not meeting in person.

Click this [link](#) for more information



RE still needs volunteers to help our vision for February and beyond to happen!! [SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER!!!](#)

Change in Staff Supervision

Rachel Long, President

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When we hired Reverend Matt, he was surprised that he was not being tasked with staff supervision. While it is typical for UU ministers to supervise staff, we decided to continue having Prairie members supervise staff since we had only had a 1-year contract with Matt. The situation has changed now that we are planning for Matt to stay with us for a while, at least another year and hopefully many more.

The Board and our members who have been supervising staff have decided (in consultation with our staff members) that supervision of all staff will be the responsibility of our minister going forward. Prior to being a UU minister, Rev. Matt held many leadership roles for teams ranging from entry to senior level professionals, and he is very eager to add this new responsibility to his role at Prairie.

This change should help all our staff and our minister work as one team, and remove what has sometimes been a very challenging role for our lay leaders. Please let Rev. Matt or me know if you have any questions.



Pledge Drive Good News!

Chris Porter, Finance Committee Chair



We are just \$73 away from meeting our pledge goal! The goal is \$130,070. So far, we have pledges of \$129,997. I am hoping, with a few more pledges, we can exceed our goal and rely less on our reserves. Thank you to everyone who has already pledged. If you are able to pledge but haven't yet, please submit a pledge today!

If you want to submit an auto-payment pledge, please fill out the pledge form available under the Current Members section of the Prairie website Prairie 2022 pledge form. Other pledges can be an email sent to finance@uuprairie.org
Thank you!

WOW, Women of Wonder, Shared Stories and Art on January 8, 2022

Mary Mullen, Archive Committee Chair

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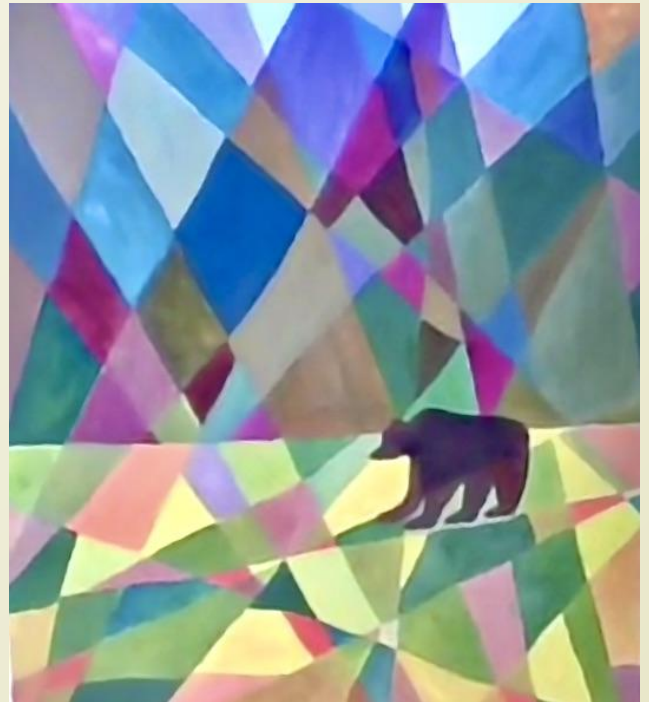
Due probably to the unusual meeting date – not the first Saturday of the month – the WOW women’s group drew a small number of women: Mary Frantz (not pictured), Kate Liu, Mary Mullen, Barb Park, and Kathy Converse. This time because of the small group, instead of doing formal check-ins, we just chatted.

During the chat we learned that the crafting group and the hiking group that started in September 2020 are both continuing. Mary Frantz belongs to the hiking group, and Kathy Converse belongs to both groups.

COVID-19 and its repercussions in our lives was a major theme. Mary Frantz reported that most in-person activities at Capitol Lakes have ceased, so “things are boring.” Most of us are holing up at home because of the high incidence of the Omicron variant of COVID.

Toward the end, Kathy showed off the informal plein air watercolor paintings she has been doing throughout COVID-19 and the “mystery piece” she is knitting. This led to Barb’s showing her mushroom painting and a bear painting done in a totally different style.

Join us next month on Saturday, February 5, 10 a.m., by Zoom. The link is on the Prairie website. All women who are Prairie members and friends are cordially invited to attend.



Mushroom and bear paintings by Barb Park, pictures taken by Mary Mullen 1/8/22.



Paintings by Kathy Converse, pictures taken by Mary Mullen 1/8/22.