

Prairie Fire

July
2022



The “Dreamsicles,” a group of Prairie musicians, played at ArtJune in Baraboo on June 18. Band members include (from left) Lynn Currie, Kate Liu, Barbara Chatterton, Karen Deaton, Cecylia Richards, and Jane Richards. Photo credit: Ron Frye, who also ran the music all day for the event.

Prairie Contacts

Rev. Matt Aspin, Minister -
minister@uuprairie.org
Kathy Converse, President -
president@uuprairie.org
Alice Mandt, Director of Religious Exploration -
dre@uuprairie.org
Dan Klock, Administrator -
admin@uuprairie.org
Pageen Manolis Small, Prairie Fire Editor -
prairiefire@uuprairie.org

Table of Contents

Calendar	2
Staff Office Hours	2
Message from Prairie’s Incoming President	3
Minister’s Musings	4
Religious Exploration (RE): OWL	4-5
The Maypole and Prairie	6
Sundays Abound in Live Music	7-8
RE Committee Report	9
Hospitality Committee Report	9
Social Action Committee Report	10-11
Archives Committee Report	11-12

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

Calendar

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

2

Friday 1, 8, 15, 22 (every Friday)

- 4:30p Advanced D&D (online)

Saturday 2

- 10a WOW (Women of Wonder)

Sunday 3

- 10a Service "Community Gardens" by Barb Park and Mary Mullen
- 12p Humanist Union

Sunday 10

- 10a Service "The War in Ukraine" by Yoshiko Herrera

Thursday 14, 28 (every other Thursday)

- 1p Spiritual Exploration (online)

Saturday 16

- 5p Rock Painting for Reproductive Justice

Sunday 17

- 10a Service

Saturday 23

- 10a Creativity & Connection (online)

Sunday 24

- 10a Joint Service with Free Congregation of Sauk County

Sunday 29

- 10a "The Dangers to Society of Social Media" by Matt Wise

Office Hours

DRE Alice Mandt's Office Hours:

Mon: 3pm to 7pm
Wed: 3pm to 7pm
Thu: 3pm to 7pm
Fri: 3pm to 7PM

Administrator Dan Klock's Office Hours:

Mon-Fri 11:30am – 2:30pm



Photo credit: unsplash.com

Message from Prairie's Incoming President

Kathy Converse, President

3

I am excited to be Prairie UU's incoming president. As a member for 31 years, I hope I can lead us into the future while understanding the significance of our history together. I find it very encouraging that after over three years of disruption with our building restoration, losses of long term members, and the endless pandemic, we have retained most of our members and have gained dynamic new members and a minister who have already made significant contributions to PUU. Thank you to the many people who worked so hard on keeping us together and participating.



In our Monday Article II discussions, we listened to Rev. David Pyle, and I related to his words for the future of UU groups. He said we need to make space in our congregations for new people and perhaps form new groups. At the same time we need to hold in care those who have made our UU what it is and who may no longer be able to change and are in their place of comfort. They have brought us here; we would not be here without them. Let us move forward with kindness, tolerance, and understanding.

We are moving from holding our breath and protecting it with a mask to taking a needed deep breath to start the work of restoring PUU to a new mode of operation. We will be retaining the ways of connecting us virtually, which added immensely to improving members' participation during the pandemic. We will continue to meet in small groups that ensure ways of staying in touch and supporting each other. We hope to widen our contacts in the local community. We should be proud of our endurance, patience, and commitment to each other.



Minister's Musings

Rev. Matt Aspin



4

Final thoughts as I pack up and head out to help represent this community at General Assembly 2022:

“May my words and actions make this community as proud of me, as I am of them.”



Thank you for placing your trust in me for another year.

We've only just begun...

Religious Exploration (RE)

Karen Deaton, she/her, Religious Exploration Committee Chair

Talking about Sex: Our Whole Lives

Think back to how you learned about human sexuality: relationships, gender, orientation, consent, and sexual pleasure, as well as reproduction and safer sex. What do you wish you had known or understood as you were growing up and moving through adulthood?

Our Whole Lives (OWL) is a comprehensive lifespan sexuality education curriculum that delivers accurate age-appropriate information in a framework that emphasizes relationships, respect, and responsibility, while supporting parents in having important discussions with their children. Developed by the UUA and the UCC, the curricula are now used and appreciated by many progressive faith groups, schools, and other institutions. Learn more about the OWL program [here](#).

The Prairie RE program is committed to offering OWL education at three points in our children's lives: at about ages 5-7, at about ages 9-11, and at about ages 13-15. We plan to offer one of those programs in each of the next 3 years, starting with the youngest group. There are also curricula designed for adults, including young adults and older adults. Some in our congregation have expressed interest in participating in adult programs, and I hope Prairie can get those rolling in the near future as well. Generally, other organizations in our area only offer the program for young teens. We can provide a community service by offering OWL to younger and older people in the broader community.

(continued on next page)

Religious Exploration (RE) cont'd.

Karen Deaton, she/her, Religious Exploration Committee Chair

5

Specially trained facilitators implement the program. Facilitator training is offered in a variety of formats, for example, online one evening a week for a few weeks or in a weekend-long retreat. It's a good idea to repeat your training if it's been several years because our knowledge and understanding continues to evolve. I have attended facilitator trainings for grades K-1, 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12. I learned a lot about human sexuality as well as about creating inclusive and supportive classrooms for various developmental stages. I found these trainings to be fascinating and empowering.

Prairie needs OWL facilitators! Please check out these links for upcoming training sessions. We will foot the bill for facilitator training for several people. We plan to offer OWL for grades K-1 in the 2022-23 RE year so facilitators for that age are our most pressing need. OWL for grades 4-6 and 7-9 is planned for the following years.

- [UUA facilitator training schedule](#) (note especially the online training for grades K-1 and 4-6 in August)
- [UCC facilitator training schedule](#) (note especially in-person training for grades K-1 and 4-6 in Milwaukee or Green Lake)

Perhaps you don't feel confident in your ability to talk frankly and positively with children about sex. Training and practice can take care of that (I remember our long-ago DRE Robin Carre sitting with me while I talked about genitalia until I could do so without hesitating or getting embarrassed). **be willing to help spread complete and accurate information about human sexuality with our community!**



If you are **at all** interested in learning more about becoming a facilitator, please contact me at re-committee@uuprairie.org If you are a parent or adult interested in participating in OWL, watch the Prairie Fire for more information in the months to come!



The Maypole and Prairie

Barbara Park

6

A search of old Prairie Fires shows that Maypole celebrations date back to 1971 and again in 1977 when we were invited to Folklore Village for a May Day celebration. However, Prairie did not celebrate using our own Maypole until we owned our current building and had an actual place outside to dance.

When I mentioned a Maypole, people immediately mention Mike and Norma Briggs. It would make sense that they brought this tradition to us as it dates back to pagan Germany and migrated from there to England in the Middle Ages. The celebration was frowned on during the Reformation but was later revived. The Briggs were members of the Morris Dancers, and, bedecked in their bells and finery, the group brought the Maypole to Prairie in the early '90s. They must have delivered the pole the week before the event because there is a notation in 1993 that the teenagers were recruited to unwrap it. That tradition continued while we had a large enough contingent of teens to do it.

Erin Bosch remembers that Norma made a Maypole that we used in the early 2000s. That one must have eventually fallen apart because there is a gap in our Maypole celebrations.

The Maypole reappeared in 2016. Mary Mullen had cedar trees go down in front of her house. She asked if anyone could make use of them, and Carl Wacker stepped up.

He took one of the trunks and created a Maypole. We used it every year from 2016 to 2018, then paused due to the building remodeling and the pandemic. After we moved back in the building this year, the Maypole was recovered from storage in the garage and unwrapped by several adults the morning before we used it- a real challenge requiring coordination and team building.

The revival of this multi-generational tradition felt good. It was a lovely morning, perfect for an outside activity. We missed Mike Briggs on the squeeze box, but the musical tradition was carried on by Dan Proud on guitar and penny whistle, Nancy Wunderlin on flute, and Phoenix Wardell on Shakers.



Maypole braiding at the 2022 Maypole dance. Photo credit: Mary Mullen.

Sundays Abound in Live Music

Mary Mullen

7

During the pandemic, many of us mourned the lack of congregational singing and the relative dearth of live music. No more! Recent Sundays are alive with both. The Music Committee – Nancy Wunderlin, Barb Park, and Dan Proud – are doing a great job of recruiting the musicians and participating as performers as well.

If you attend Sunday services regularly, you know how music-filled are services are now. If not, take a look at the musical line-ups since May 8.



Dan Proud (left) and Nancy Wunderlin play for the Maypole dance on May 8. Photo credit: Mary Mullen.

On May 8, Dan Proud (guitar and harp) and Nancy Wunderlin (flute) performed the prelude and led congregational singing of “Sleep My Child.” Dan also played for the offertory. Both provided the music for the Maypole dance outside.

The next Sunday our regular accompanist Amber played special music on piano and saxophone, and the choir, directed by Barbara Park, provided a spirited rendition of Harry Belafonte’s “Turn the World Around.”

On May 22, which had a very short service due to the Annual Spring Parish Meeting, Ron Frye did a soulful “I Shall Be Released,” singing with his guitar.

The May 29th Memorial Day service brought out an abundance of musicians. The service, entitled “Three Generations of Veterans,” was led by Dan Proud. He had written all the songs that were performed by himself and his guitar group “Vets on Frets”. Nancy Wunderlin played on flute for one of the pieces.



Nancy Wunderlin (left) joins presenter Dan Proud and his Vets on Frets (seated, from left), Mark Loder, Rick Larson, and Thomas Hopfensperger at the May 29 Memorial Day Service. Photo credit: Mary Mullen.

(continued on next page)

Sundays Abound in Live Music cont'd.

Mary Mullen

8

Transition Sunday featured youth Luna Small on the cello. She received extended applause for her accomplished performance of “Bourree” by William H. Squire.

Then on June 12, an ad hoc group of four led congregational singing: Patty Stockdale and Mary Mullen on ukuleles, Carl Wacker on guitar, and Paula Pachciarz keeping rhythm. The songs included “We Are a Gentle Angry People,” “Love Will Guide Us,” and “Come and Go With Me”- all good singalongs. People broke out into clapping on the last verse of the final song.

Finally, on Sunday, June 19, Marie Andrae and her son Miles performed string duets on their violas, and the choir at full-strength numbers performed Handel’s “Come, Live With Pleasure.” Youth are always welcome to perform.

Don’t miss another live music opportunity! Contact one of the Music Committee members if you wish to perform! Prairie is a very appreciative and forgiving audience.



Luna Small plays cello on June 5.
Photo credit: Pageen Small



Miles (left) and Marie Andrae perform at the June 19 Prairie service. Photo credit: Mary Mullen.

Religious Exploration Committee

Committee Report, Spring 2022 Parish Meeting

9

The Religious Exploration Program was happy to welcome children back to Sunday morning activities in March. A robust crew of volunteer teachers have led activities under the leadership of our Director of Religious Exploration (DRE) Alice Mandt. Highlights of this spring's activities, aside from the joy of being together in person, were the backyard easter party and Prairie's retreat at Bethel Horizons.

Covid-19 is an ongoing concern, so we have taken great care to tailor our precautions for each age group in order to minimize exposure for children, volunteers, staff, and vulnerable congregants. Infants stay in the Meeting Room with their parents or other caregivers. Toddlers and preschoolers (old enough to wear a mask, too young to be vaccinated) stay with their teachers in the Annex or backyard. Children and teachers in the rest of the classes wear masks and all classrooms have supplemental air filtration.

Classes for ages 5 to 7 and 8 to 10 have had attendance approaching our pre-covid numbers. Attendance has been low this spring among preschoolers and tweens/teens.

If you have questions, suggestions, or concerns about Prairie's programming for children and youth, please contact a committee member!

Karen Deaton (she/her/hers) and Karen Loughran (she/her/hers) co-chair the committee made up of Liam Creed (he/him/his); Marie Andrae (she/her/hers); Jesse Garst (they/them/theirs); Paula Pachciarz (she/her/hers); Andrea Scott (she/her/hers), and Carl Wacker (he/him/his), with Alice Mandt (DRE) and Reverend Matt Aspin serving ex officio.

Thank you volunteers!
Thank you families!

Hospitality Committee

Committee Report, Spring 2022 Parish Meeting

Members: Barbara Chatterton, Margit Moses, Nancy Wunderlin (chair)

Our committee is overjoyed with Prairie's kitchen remodel! The new dishwasher, sink, oven, cabinets, and countertops, make it so much easier to keep things organized and clean. Thank you to the kitchen sub-committee that worked on the remodel design. We spent time last year moving items back into the kitchen and labeled the cabinets and drawers. Thank you to everyone who made donations towards our new dishes, glasses, flatware, linens, aprons, and utensils.



We are working on completing instruction manuals for the dishwasher and coffee service. We understand the kitchen is used by a lot of different groups of people and we want to make things easy to navigate. Per our COVID guidelines, we just stopped coffee service beginning May 8th. Once this is lifted, we'll be looking for a few more volunteers to help with coffee service and cleanup. We're all looking forward to when we can share meals together again at Prairie with our soup Sundays and potlucks.

Photo credit: unsplash.com

Social Action Committee

Committee Report, Spring 2022 Parish Meeting

10

Allied Partners

Prairie has continued its long time involvement in Allied Partners, which is a group of churches that support the Allied neighborhood. Churches may donate money to help with eviction prevention in the neighborhood or sponsor and/or prepare and serve dinners hosted by the Dunn's Marsh Allied Neighborhood Association or volunteer time of church members with projects or events in the neighborhood. Donations for prevention of eviction prevention and utilities cut off are channeled through the Dane County social worker (JFF). Allied Partners has also supported the Allied Wellness Center (AWC), a free-standing non profit in the neighborhood, with donations and supplies.

Prairie has shared its offertory plate years with AWC for several years. Molly has been our representative to Allied Partners, and she also attends monthly meetings of the Neighborhood Resource Team, which brings together elected official and city staff: such as representatives from the mayor's office, the local police, public health, and library systems with residents of the neighborhood. AWC had been a drop in center for general economic assistance (personal supplies, bus passes and gas cards), holistic education opportunities (diabetes training), and healthy lifestyle projects (walking groups, grandparents raising grandchildren). It had one half-time employee.

In the past two years the model has shifted, and AWC has funded the training of a group of residents to become certified Community Health Workers, a category of paraprofessionals who help other residents with health issues to connect with health system providers. The Community Health Workers have helped promote covid vaccination clinics and assisted at the clinics. And for approximately 9 months CHW and other volunteers have delivered fresh food from 2nd Harvest and other sources on a weekly basis to as many as 250 households to counter food insecurity. Several CHW also have individual "clients" in the neighborhood to whom they provide support with reminders about medications or help accessing My Chart. AWC has recently hired a Community Health Worker Supervisor and several part-time CHW, all of whom will be on staff. Molly has been on the board and applied for various grants for the agency.

WUUSAN

The entity with a crazy name which stands for Wisconsin Unitarian Universalist State Action Network. Many states now have "Sans" or action networks to try to develop coordinated and collaborative work between UU congregations in their state. WUUSAN has grown slowly and gotten increased recognition from UU fellowships. With funding from a Faithify campaign, the group recently hired an Outreach Coordinator. Molly is on the board for WUUSAN.

-Molly Plunkett



Photo credit: unsplash.com

Social Action Committee cont'd.

Committee Report, Spring 2022 Parish Meeting

11

MOSES

Prairie continues its membership in MOSES (Madison Organizing in Strength, Equity and Solidarity for Criminal Justice Reform). Prairie's MOSES representative, Pam Gates, contributes to and helps edit the bimonthly MOSES newsletter, participates in most general meetings (usually held on the first Sunday of the month and open to anybody), and attends the quarterly MOSES leadership board meetings. She also served as editor-in-chief of the MOSES 2021 yearbook. Gary Gates is Prairie's alternate rep to leadership board meetings.

Prairie enjoyed a presentation by MOSES organizer Eugene Crisler 'El at our April 10, 2022, service. The service was well attended, and Eugene answered many questions afterward.

In conjunction with the Wisconsin umbrella organization, WISDOM, MOSES tries to keep members alert to injustices in proposed legislation and to lobby against those injustices.

EXPO (EX-incarcerated People Organizing), another WISDOM affiliate, has been training people to go door-to-door in some Madison neighborhoods to encourage voting. MOSES members have been participating, and there will be more work on this as upcoming elections get closer.

For more information, visit the mosesmadison.org website, or check past issues of the Prairie Fire. Pam has submitted MOSES updates to some of the issues.

Archives Committee

Committee Report, Spring 2022 Parish Meeting



The Archives Committee is finally starting to meet in person again as well as carry on its routine activities of

- Preparing and posting recordings of Sunday services, sending out notices when the recordings are available (Bob Park)
- Collecting paper copies of Prairie Fires, orders of services, Parish and Board Minutes, and budgets (Barbara Park)
- Updating the ongoing yearly chronology for the Archives part of the website (Mary Mullen)
- Submitting articles to the Prairie Fire on past history and current activities that make up our ongoing history (Mary Mullen)

(continued on next page)

Photo credit: unsplash.com

Archives Committee cont'd.

Committee Report, Spring 2022 Parish Meeting

12

Recently, we have updated our “brief history” to include topics suggested by the MidAmerica Region’s History and Heritage Committee including how Prairie has negotiated COVID-19. (Mary Mullen serves on this regional UUA committee.) Our Digital Archivist Bob Park has posted it on the Archives section of the website. Recently we also met in person and decided on answers for the Ministerial survey that was due on May 25.

Planning Ahead. We plan to meet again soon to review the Archives Committee’s Policies and Procedures so that we can submit it to the Board. Since Barbara has completed organizing second copies of our major paper collections, we plan to take them to Wisconsin Historical Society soon. We also need to find a safe and dry dedicated space in our Prairie buildings to house our own paper collections. Currently many of these documents are taking up space in our homes. We still have plenty of history book sets for sale, now at a reduced price of \$25 per set.

We would welcome more committee members to augment the four of us who are getting on in age and will eventually need to pass on our duties to others.

Members are Chair Mary Mullen, Digital Archivist Bob Park, Barbara Park, and Rosemary Dorney.

-Submitted by Archives Committee Chair Mary Mullen

Editor’s note

Please contact the editor at prairiefire@uuprairie.org if you would like to submit an article or photograph to the newsletter. Submissions are due by the 21st of each month for the next month’s edition.



A rainbow over the prairie seen by many Prairie UUs at our retreat. Photo credit: Pageen Small