

Prairie Fire

August
2023



Flowers adorn a table at the front of the meeting room for the recent Flower Ceremony Service. Photo credit: Mary Mullen

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Prairie Contacts

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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)

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Friday 4, 11, 18, 25 (every Friday)

- 4:30p Dungeons and Dragons (online)

Saturday 5

- 10a Women of Wonder (WOW)

Sunday 6

- 10a What Happens When We Die? by Ilene Haykus
- 11:30a Soup Sunday

Saturday 12

- 10:30a New Member Orientation
- 12p Mending Day

Sunday 13

- 11a Joint Service with First and James Reeb at Vilas Park

Tuesday 15

- 6p Board Meeting (online)

Thursday 17

- 7p Guys Group

Saturday 19

- 1:15p Games Group

Sunday 20

- 10a Rainbowland by Prairie Interweave
- 1p Magic Pride Fest - meet up details TBD

Saturday 26

- 10a Creativity and Connection (online)

Sunday 27

- 10a Service by Robin Proud

Office Hours

Administrator Nancy Wunderlin:

Sun-Tue: working on site in the Annex
Wed-Fri: working remotely

DRE Alice Mandt:

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

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.

Words from the President

Kathy Converse, President

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As I reside in Wisconsin's warm weather and hope for rain for our gardens, I can't help but feel guilty because it could be far worse.

In Vermont, where many of my family reside, they are digging out friends, neighbors, and total strangers from the mud and water left by floods that damaged or destroyed their homes, schools, post offices, and businesses. Residents and the people helping them are getting sick from exposure to floodwaters.

There are many examples of caring communities in Vermont. Landowners with higher ground are welcoming farmers to bring their livestock, and they will provide food and shelter. People without flooding are inviting others to park on their land, use their showers, and eat their food. Local businesses with trucks, tree cutting services, back hoes, and boats are providing their services free and rescuing people and making their exits safe. Restaurants not flooded are providing food and beverages.

In many of these communities, restaurants and other stores are just coming out from under the weight of the pandemic and have now lost everything and are beyond recovery. Community members are digging them out and encouraging them to stay and rebuild. One town lost their post office, gas station, and only grocery store, and all incoming roads are gone.

We can feel helpless given we are too far away to help these communities and the whole climate crisis is too overwhelming to know how to take action.

However, we can show recognition of the growing climate crisis, vote, make calls and write letters to our voting representatives and give financial support to rescue agencies.



Photo credit: Linus Nylund on [nsplash.com](https://www.nsplash.com)

Saying Goodbye to Rev. Matt

Mary Mullen

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We had to say goodbye to Rev. Matt after two years with him as our first full-time minister. He has taken a job with a congregation much, much closer to where he lives in the Milwaukee area.

Top left: Rev. Matt with Rosemary Dorney, both enjoying the delicious cake and fruit-bobs after his last service on July 2. Top right: Childcare worker Ollie Warneke presents Rev. Matt with an artful poster from the Religious Exploration children. It says, "Best Minister Ever, Hands Down." Bottom left: Cards and gifts for Rev. Matt. Bottom middle: One of the many bouquets provided that day by Patty Stockdale from her garden and yard. Bottom right: Andrea Scott and two of her children say goodbye to Rev. Matt.

Photo credit: Mary Mullen.



Religious Exploration

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Religious Exploration on June 25 included water bucket races, washing the backyard houses, and water table play with Alice, Andrea, and Ollie.

A recent planned RE trip to Picnic Point was canceled due to poor air quality, but that did not stop RE from having fun indoors. Tim, Andrea, Jesse, Judy, Alice, and seven children played Agricola, Grounded for Life, and Mouse Trap. The group also enjoyed a snack. The Picnic Point activity will be rescheduled.

PUUPs (Prairie UU Parents) is on hiatus in August. Join us after the service on September 10 for our next meeting!

Photo credit: Andrea Scott



Retreat Activity Leaders Wanted

Retreat Committee

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We are gearing up for our annual Prairie retreat which is again at Bethel Horizons in Dodgeville, September 29th-October 1st.

Every year people lead activities (crafts, games, hikes, discussions, etc) to enhance our retreat experience.

If you are willing to lead (or co-lead) an activity, please fill out this form by August 5th <https://tinyurl.com/23retreatactivity> There are also a few paper copies on the back hymnal cart. Or if you really want to see an activity, please fill it out and put that in the comments section.

Carl made a lovely [Retreat Video](#) that gives a good overview of what a retreat looks like. An initial schedule and registration will open in August. Hope to see you all there in September :)

Renee, Nancy, Alice & Karen
retreat@uuprairie.org



Photo from Bethel Horizon's website at bethelhorizons.org

Consider Serving on the Committee on Ministry

The Nominating Committee

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Our Committee on Ministry has three members, elected by the congregation, who serve staggered three-year terms. COM member Barb Park will be stepping down on December 1st, and the Nominating Committee is recruiting for a new COM member. Could it be you?

Our Bylaws state, “The purpose of the Committee on Ministry is to work with the Board, Minister, congregation and committees to ensure the effectiveness of the congregation’s ministry in fulfillment of its mission.”

Do you like thinking about the “big picture” of Prairie’s purpose and potential to do good in the world? Are you dedicated to helping Prairie to become even more effective at living out its mission? Can you make a three-year commitment to serve, starting 12/1/23? You would need to participate in online meetings once or twice per month and be able to work with documents online at times between meetings. You would need to be able to keep personal information confidential, and to effectively communicate results from the committee’s deliberations to our Minister (when we have one), the Board, Committees, and the congregation as a whole.



As a member of the Committee on Ministry, you would be joining Anne Pryor and Katrina Thompson, who along with Barb Park would be happy to talk with you about the nature of their work and the time involved.

Being a member of the Committee on Ministry has the potential to be one of the most rewarding volunteer positions in our society. Please contact us if you are interested in the position. Thanks so much for your consideration!

Nominating Committee:

Heidi Hughes, Rachel Long,
Margit Moses, and Paula
Pachciarz

Photo credit:
Shane Rounce on
unsplash.com

MOSES Meets at Prairie- 7 from Prairie Attend!

Pam Gates, Social Action Committee Chair

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On Sunday, July 9, Prairie hosted the monthly general meeting of MOSES, a grassroots group working for criminal-legal system reform with an emphasis on racial equity. Prairie is one of 17 local congregations (including all three UU congregations) that comprise the bulk of the MOSES membership, though people can and do participate as individual members.

Cathy Peterson was one of Prairie's attendees. "It was great to attend the MOSES meeting – and see and hear James again," she said. "He did such a great job at Prairie's service in March. His energy and passion is contagious." {The reference is to James Morgan, who has since been hired as the MOSES organizer.)

Commenting on the meeting's outside speakers, Cathy continued: "Itina Johnson and Davita Walker from Safe Communities: Madison-Dane County African American Opioid Coalition shared what it's really like for people dealing with addiction, jail, and drug court in Dane County. It is amazing how isolated and unaware we can be about what is happening in our 'justice' system! It was eye-opening, and it made me feel even more compelled to get involved with MOSES.

"It was wonderful to see MOSES members in action and learn more about the mission and projects," Cathy concluded. "I am very impressed with this organization and its members' commitment and dedication."

In addition to Cathy, five more Prairie members took the time on that beautiful Sunday afternoon: John and Susan Gernandt, Mary Mullen, Chris Porter, and Gary and Pam Gates. Barb Park had wanted to attend but couldn't, due to previous plans.

Raging Grannies Star at Madison Action Day

Pam Gates

The Raging Grannies of Madison, dolled up in their usual flouncy skirts and outrageous hats, offered a perfect addition to WISDOM's* Madison Action Day activities. The songs they chose to sing were perfect, as you can probably tell from the titles: "Black Lives Matter," "This Land Needs Honest History," "Forward Together Against Racism," and "Prisons Are Growing." Donna Lillethun selected the songs, and Deb Lofgren directed the group on April 27.

The Madison group has about 30 active grannies right now, co-director Barb Park told me. They sing at every other downtown Farmer's Market at 10 a.m. as one of their regular gigs. They have 170 songs in their library, and they keep adding. Sometimes they borrow from the international library, but they always rewrite the songs at least to some degree. (The Raging Grannies actually started in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. In Madison, the Grannies were founded in 2003.)

"This Land Needs Honest History," for example, was written relatively recently by Kathy Miner. The Grannies sang it to the tune "This Land Is Your Land, This Land Is My Land." Most of their songs are sung to familiar tunes.

"We always try to tailor our songs to the event," Barb said. "We were very pleased with the wonderful response at Madison Action Day. In fact, we were thrilled! It was a wonderfully responsive crowd. We had a ball!"

Notes: This article was originally published in the MOSES newsletter. We thought it might be interesting to Prairie Fire readers, since it features Prairie's own Barb Park!

** WISDOM is the statewide umbrella for MOSES, the local criminal-legal system reform group that Prairie belongs to.*