

Prairie Fire

September
2023



Set of tie-dyed shirts made by a Religious Exploration participant. For more on RE happenings, see page 4.
Photo credit:Patty Stockdale.

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Prairie Contacts

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Pageen Manolis Small, Prairie Fire Editor - [prairiefire\[at\]juuprairie.org](mailto:prairiefire@juuprairie.org)

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

Calendar

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

Friday 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 (every Friday)

- 4:30p Dungeons and Dragons (online)

Saturday 2

- 8:30a Prairie and Reeb Volunteers at the River Food Pantry (sign up w/ Pam Gates, Social Action co-chair)
- 10a Women of Wonder (WOW)
- 1p Game Group

Sunday 3

- 10a Service: Labor in the Pulpit
- 11:30a Soup Sunday

Sunday 10

- 10a Service: Ingathering by Prairie
- 11:30a PUUPs
- 11:30a Visitor Orientation

Tuesday 12

- 6:30p Board Meeting

Sunday 17

- 10a Service by Ilene Haykus
- 12p Interweave

Tuesday 19

- 5p Spanish Speakers' Potluck

Thursday 21

- 7p Guys Group

Saturday 23

- 10a Creativity and Connection (online)

Sunday 24

- 10a Service: Wisconsin Pollinators by Susan Carpenter

Friday 29

- 5p Retreat starts

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\[at\]uuprairie.org](mailto:prairiefire[at]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

A Portion of our Bond of Union: "We, the members of Prairie, wish to associate ourselves together in a religious community which affirms that we share a common humanity, that we need one another, and that our futures are inescapably bound together."

This past month many of us at Prairie have had experiences that confirm these words. We participated in a Sunday service followed by a potluck at The Free Congregation of Sauk Prairie and participated in a Sunday meeting and lunch with James Reeb UU Society and the First Unitarian Society. Additionally, many of our members participated in multiple celebrations of Madison Pride Fest and gave a presentation at our Sunday service.

I hope we can continue to grow in our associations with all of these communities.



Committee on Ministry Member Needed

Rachel Long, Nominating Committee Chair

Have you thought about our offer of a position on the Committee on Ministry? If you missed our article in the August Prairie Fire, take a look [HERE](#) to see that past edition. We explained the role and expectations of a Committee on Ministry member, and shared that you can ask current members Anne Pryor, Katrina Thompson, or Barb Park for more information. Please contact a member of the Nominating Committee if you are interested in serving. Be aware that you may be called! If one of us contacts you, please consider saying YES!

The Nominating Committee: Heidi Hughes, Rachel Long, Margit Moses, and Paula Pachciarz

Financial Update

Finance Committee

Prairie is currently in good financial condition. We now have five certificates of deposit with varied maturity dates. Total bank deposits (savings, checking, money market, CD's) as of 7/31/23 was \$224,095.

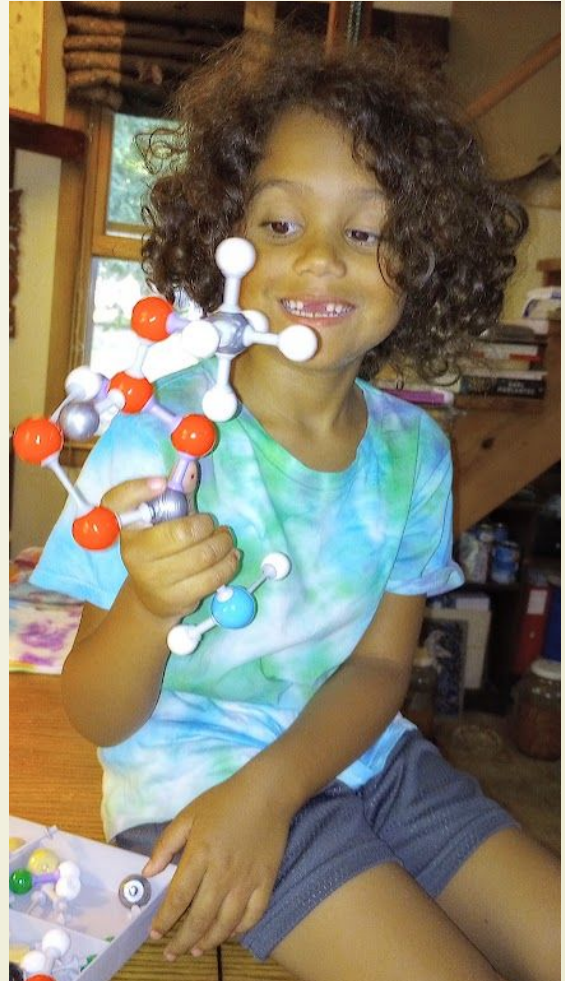
We are in the process of developing the 2024 budget. Committees have submitted their budget requests. The finance chair and treasurer will develop a budget and submit it to the board for initial approval in September.

The 2024 pledge drive will begin in September. We want you to know that 26% of 2023 pledges are from three pledgers (\$37,500 of \$144,500). On behalf of the Prairie community, we want to say we are tremendously grateful for these pledges, and for all pledges. We need to acknowledge that we can't rely on the very high pledges from a few pledgers long term. It's important to gain support from all pledgers to share the load. The finance committee asks that you consider whether you can increase your own pledge.

Religious Exploration

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July 30 was tie-dye day at RE. Volunteers included Michele, Jesse, Karen, Susan, Dirk, Karen, and Patty. Eleven children joined. Prairie is grateful to the RE volunteers who got messy which helped RE be more fun.



Top left: RE participants prepare shirts for tie-dyeing. Bottom left: a queen ant found by Trevor in the yard. Photo credit: Andrea Keyser

Right: Haku wears one of his finished tie-dyed shirts. Photo credit: Patty Stockdale.

Coming Up in Religious Exploration!

8/27 - Park Day

We will go to Marlborough Park down the street from Prairie. If our Splash Pad field trip on 8/6 was rained out, we will go there on this day.

9/3 - Picnic Point Fire Circle

Families are welcomed to join Prairie's RE program offsite at Picnic Point. We have reserved a fire circle from 9:30- Noon. We'll enjoy each other's company and make campfire treats. We need to have at least one adult (parent or Prairie friend) present to supervise each family's children.

9/10 - Ingathering

Prairie will mark the end of the summer and the beginning of a new RE year.

Retreat Registration Is Open (closes Sept 12th)

Retreat Committee

What do crafting, hiking, discussing, gaming, stargazing, a talent show, and keylog service have in common? They are all happening at the 2023 Prairie UU Retreat September 29th - October 1st! [Registration is open now](#) (closes September 12th as Bethel needs meal counts). Online registration preferred. There will be paper forms on the back hymnal cart at Sunday services. Room preferences are based on first register and pay/first availability.

Check out Carl Wacker's [2016 Retreat Video](#) for a nice overview. Note that Bethel is charging us more and thus we are charging more. Retreat's goal is to break even. Scholarships are available.

Thanks to our talented Prairie peeps, our activity schedule is full, and the current plan can be seen [here](#).

Questions? Please email [retreat\[at\]juuprairie.org](mailto:retreat[at]juuprairie.org) or talk with Nancy Wunderlin, Renee Deschard, Alice Mandt, or Karen Deaton. Hope to see you there!

Circle Dinner Sign Up

Membership Committee

Don't miss this opportunity to get to know Prairie UU Society folks better!

Circle Dinner Groups consist of Prairie UU Society members and friends who meet about once a month in each other's homes to share a meal. Both individuals and families can participate. Households in the group take turns hosting; the host provides the main dish at their home and lets the others know which side dishes to bring.

The Membership Committee uses the [information from the sign-up to form the groups](#). We honor everyone's preferences as best we can, and try to avoid duplicating groups from the previous few years. We designate a convenor in each group to get the ball rolling.

Please don't let your small dining or kitchen area stop you from signing up. You have options: reserving the Meeting House or Annex, providing the main dish but meeting in the home of another in the group, or meeting in another venue agreeable to all. Circle Dinners have taken place in people's yards, in park shelters, and even at the Curling Club in McFarland.

If you cannot commit to a monthly potluck, you can still participate by signing up as an alternate or floater. Any of the Circle Dinner groups may then invite you to join them for dinner.

Please sign up by September 13. We also have signup sheets in Prairie's foyer as well.

Contact Membership Committee members Deesa Pence, Patty Stockdale, Paula Pachciarz, Judy Lazarus, and Diane Knoener at [membership\[at\]juuprairie.org](mailto:membership[at]juuprairie.org)

Social Action Update

Molly Plunkett

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Prairie continues to be active in Moses and Allied Partners and Allied Wellness Center and WUUSAN.

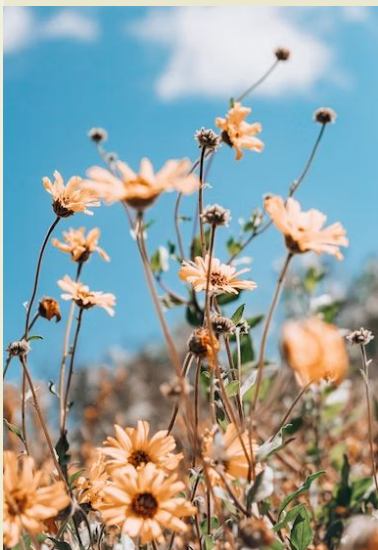
Food Support. Once a month, a fairly constant group from Prairie, with support from folks from James Reeb congregation, makes hearty lunches on a Saturday at the River Food Pantry. The food is for distribution in east side neighborhoods and parks.

MOSES continues to be active in many areas. A current report will be in our next issue. In the meantime, look for copies of the MOSES newsletter in Prairie's welcoming area.

Allied Partners, which is a group of churches supporting the Allied neighborhood, has become more active with Allied Dunn's Marsh Neighborhood Ass. (ADMNA). The Association is trying to revitalize after Covid. Allied Partner churches also donate funds that area social workers can use to help residents facing eviction, help with utility bills or for special projects/events in the neighborhood such as monthly community meals sponsored by the ADMNA.

Members of Prairie planted flowers in front of the Dane County social worker office of Joining Forces for Families. Allied Partners has financially supported Allied Fresh which is a project that brings boxes of fresh produce and meat to the Boys and Girls Club and to Chalet Gardens every Friday. 75 households pick up food boxes with food contributed by 2nd Harvest and packaged by volunteers at Badger Prairie Health Care Facility. During Covid Allied Fresh delivered food to more than 200 households in the Allied Drive area. Several Prairie members helped with those deliveries. Allied Fresh needs volunteers and donations to continue its food pipeline. Contact Janice Ferguson at [jmfergot3403\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:jmfergot3403@gmail.com) if you have time or money or both.

Allied Wellness Center (AWC) has moved its office and currently rents space from Prairie. The Center has a Spanish speaking Manager and is now able to better serve the large Latine population in the area. On staff are several Community Health Workers, who have been trained through financial and organization support of the Center, and who are currently working support some neighbors who are dealing with trauma issues from gunfire in the area. AWC has sponsored debriefing sessions post violent episodes and sessions around prevention of violence and other training.



WUUSAN is a state wide UU organization for collaboration and coordination around social action. They have been active with UU the Vote and are gearing up to mobilize voters in 2024 in Wisconsin. Prairie is represented on their Board.

Dane Sanctuary Coalition. Among other initiatives the Coalition is providing transportation for undocumented immigrants to IMS hearings in Chicago, Milwaukee and Waukegan II. There are 60 people who registered to drive and have attended a training but only 30 people actually drive with any regularity. In one year the Coalition has arranged for 172 round trips, some include families or more than one member of a family, to a hearing. You can contact Dan Zimmerman at [Zimmerman_Dan\[at\]hotmail.com](mailto:Zimmerman_Dan@hotmail.com) if interested in helping.

Meet Our New Members So Far in 2023

Patty Stockdale, Membership Committee

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Central to Prairie UU Society is growing our congregation by growing our membership. Our Members are the cornerstones to provide our church with vitality to sustain our thriving congregation. On Sunday, September 10 at the annual Ingathering service, we are happy to welcome New Members to our congregation who joined this summer. Please be in attendance to greet and chat with them and come to know them better.

This summer we are happy to say that four folks joined Prairie. These new members are Michele Clark, Katy Mulligan, Lynn Siegfried, and Karen Smith. As a refresher, last Spring, our new members included Evan Fisher, Diane Knoener, Lori Knoener, Rachel Knoener, Cathy Peterson, Ruth Ann Saul, Ann Sawyer, and Chris Unger. They were welcomed in May with a New Member Recognition.

The Membership Committee includes Deesa Pence, Patty Stockdale, Paula Pachicarz, Judy Lazarus, and Diane Knoener.



Above left (L to R): Lori Knoener, Karen Smith, Katy Mulligan, and Lynn Siegfried. Photo credit: Patty Stockdale

Above right: Michele Clark. Photo credit: Michele Clark.

Below (L to R): Evan Fisher, Rachel Knoener, Ruth Ellen Saul, Cathy Peterson, Chris Unger, Ann Sawyer, and Diane Knoener. Photo credit: Mary Mullen



Prairie Folks Take the Prize for Participation

Mary Mullen

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In two joint meetings of area UU churches, according to my count, Prairie took the prize for participation in attending events away from their home grounds.

On July 23, the traditional trek out to the Free Congregation of Sauk County saw at least 27 people associated with Prairie showing up, including some of our newer members and two online. This was half of all the people in attendance! Afterward, all who came in person shared a truly outstanding potluck and a lot of visiting.

Then on August 13, all three Madison UU congregations – First Unitarian Society of Madison (FUS), the James Reeb Congregation (Reeb), and Prairie – gathered in a joint meet-up at the Vilas Park shelter. At least 32 Prairie-ites made up the congregation of probably over 100 people.

Not only did Prairie show up, Prairie members participated materially to the services. At Sauk City, Prairie’s President Kathy Converse and member Mary Mullen gave short talks on the topic of “Gratitude.”

At Vilas Park, several things stood out for me. When the minister from FUS credited only FUS and the UUA for launching the James Reeb Congregation, someone from Prairie shouted out, “Prairie, too.” Well I remember that several of our members volunteered to help give Reeb its start. Prairie had passed a resolution at the April 27, 1986, Parish meeting to “empower the Board to cooperate with First Society and the Central Midwest District in discussing the establishment of a third society.” The helping Prairie folks never returned to us, but that’s the way such things go. Reeb’s minister noted that it is now 30 years old.

Again, during this joint service, Kathy Converse represented Prairie, this time speaking on “The Stories of Us.” At the end, when she displayed a copy of one volume of the Prairie history set, an audible sound of surprise and awe rose from the gathering. The brown-covered book, obviously a tome of weight, clearly surprised and impressed folks from FUS and Reeb.

Prairie members also contributed to the music. Ron Frye led singing with his guitar, and John Wunderlin wowed everyone with two numbers on his Alphorn. Too bad it started sprinkling and we had to miss two chances to sing as gathered congregations.

Note: the Prairie history book set, Prairie UU Society: 50 Years in the Life of a Congregation, 1967-2017, is available for \$25 and is given free to new members.

John Wunderlin plays his Alphorn.
Photo credit: Mary Mullen



Photos from the joint service with The Free Congregation of Sauk County are on the next page.

Prairie Community Photos

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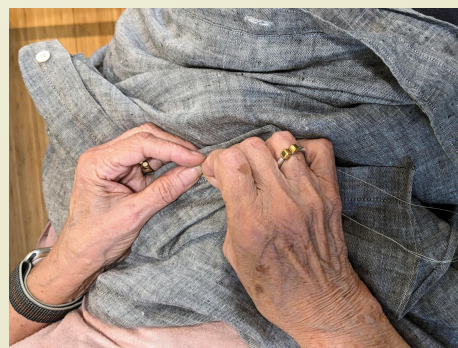
Above: Sauk Free Congregation's Nick Schweitzer speaks at the joint service at Sauk's Park Hall (built 1884, remodeled 2020-2022). Nick spoke at Prairie on July 16 on "The Last Freie Gemeinde: The Free Congregation of Sauk County." Photo credit: Eleanor Chiquoine.

Below left: Sauk trio including bass player Bob Kelter, bassoon player Willy Walther, and pianist Marita Kelter. Photo credit: Eleanor Chiquoine.

Below right: three Prairie members sit in a row facing the front of the beautifully remodeled building of the Free Congregation of Sauk County. Zoom participants are shown on the screen. Photo credit: Mary Mullen.



Left: A group of Prairie members and friends at an Epic garden tour on Saturday, August 5th. The tour was a Prairie auction item offered by Jane and John Richards and Karen Deaton. Photo credit: Rachel Long.



Above: A volunteer mender reattaches a button during Prairie's Mending Day on August 12. Photo credit: Pageen Small.