

Prairie Fire

May
2024



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

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May 2024 Calendar

Please see www.uuprairie.org for detailed descriptions.

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Saturday 4

- 10a Women of Wonder (WOW)

Sunday 5

- 9a Congregational Discussion
- 10a "Muslims on the Margins: Creating Queer Religious Community in North America" by Katrina Daly Thompson
- 10a RE Cooking Day
- 11:30a Potluck Sunday
- 11:30a RE meeting
- 11:30a Lunch for OWL participants
- 12:00p OWL workshop for 11&12yo

Thursday 9

- 5:00p Spanish Speakers Potluck

Sunday 12

- 10a "Flower Ceremony"
- 10a RE age group classes
- 11:15a Brunch by Prairie Guys Group
- 11:30a PUUPS (Prairie UU Parents)
- 11:30a Visitor Orientation

Tuesday 14

- 6:30p Prairie Board Meeting

Thursday 16

- 7p Prairie Guys Group

Saturday 18

- 1:10p Prairie Game Group

Sunday 19

- 10a Spring Parish Meeting
- 10a RE Movie Day
- 10a OWL workshop for 11&12yo
- 11:30a Interweave

Thursday 23

- 6p Prairie Evening Potluck

Sunday 26

- 10a Service by Rev. Ralph Tyksinski
- 10a RE Game Day
- 11:30a Prairie Covenant Group

Office Hours

Administrator Nancy Wunderlin

Sun-Tue: on site in the Annex

Wed-Fri: working remotely

Pastoral Care, Rev. Ralph Tyksinski

Tues and Wed: on site in the Annex.

Available for in-person meetings upon request.

Director of Religious Exploration

Karen Deaton

Mon & Wed 12-4pm and by appointment



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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.

From Prairie's President

Kathy Converse

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I have been attending regional and national meetings of UUs via Zoom and have learned about the status of churches of all sizes and religious beliefs. Churches and their staffing are undergoing major changes.



In many churches, Zoom capability was never initiated and they were closed throughout much of the pandemic. Even with Zoom, many congregations lost members or are having difficulty getting members back to Sunday services. Many churches lost staff and ministers due to loss of revenue.

I am so grateful for our Program Committee and Technology Support Team that got our Zoom capability up so soon and have maintained it through all the quarantine iterations. It says a great deal about our community that PUU has gained members, and our Sunday attendance is stable even with the possibility of staying home on zoom.



Photo by Chris Montgomery on unsplash.com

What's Going on in Religious Exploration?

Karen Deaton, Director of Religious Exploration



Coming up in RE

- May 5 - Cooking Day - children through age 10 will work together to prepare a treat for the potluck. Games and crafts, if time permits.
OWL for 11 & 12 year olds will be in the Annex from 10am to 1:30pm, including a lunch break.
- May 12 (Mother's Day) - Age group classes. The service upstairs will be our Flower Communion, where everyone, including children, can bring a flower and take a different one home. Guys' Group will serve a pancake brunch after the service in celebration of Mother's Day. Prairie Parent's Group (PUUPs) will have discussion and child care after the pancakes.
No *OWL for 11 & 12 year olds* today - spend time with Mom!



Photo by nikldn on unsplash.com

- May 19 - Movie Day for children through age 10, so as many adults as possible can attend the Parish Meeting.
OWL for 11 & 12 year olds will meet in the Annex 10am to 11:30am
- May 26 (Memorial Day weekend) - Age group classes.
No *OWL for 11 & 12 year olds* today because of the holiday weekend.

Looking for young musicians

Our congregation enjoys performances by our young musicians at any level of expertise. Children can sing or play instruments, as a solo or with another musician, as preludes or offertories. We would especially like to have young people perform at our Bridging Service on June 9. This service is a celebration of our RE program and of our children, especially graduates. If a young person in your family is willing, please let our music coordinator Nancy Wunderlin know at admin@uuprairie.org.

Announcing Nominations...

But We Still Need a President!

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Rachel Long, Nominating Committee Chair

The Nominating Committee is announcing its candidates for elected positions, including both Board and Nominating Committee positions. The congregation will vote to affirm these nominees at our annual Spring Parish Meeting. Unfortunately we are still recruiting for President.

Here are the current members completing their terms on 6/30/24:

Board

President - Kathy Converse, completing a 2-year term.

Vice President - Renee Deschard, appointed to complete an unfinished term. She started in Feb. 2024.

At Large - Susan Herr-Hoyman, appointed to complete an unfinished term. She started in Feb. 2024.

At Large - Molly Plunkett, elected to complete an unfinished term. She started in Feb. 2023.

Nominating Committee

Paula Pachciarz - completing her second 2-year term.

Rachel Long - completing a 2-year term.



Photo by Austin Chan on unsplash.com

Kathy is stepping down as President. We have not yet recruited Prairie's next President.

Could it be YOU? Keep in mind that our bylaws have been changed to allow real flexibility in this role. The President can work with the rest of the board to share or delegate such tasks as facilitating meetings, working on policies, or writing articles for the Prairie Fire. The board is a team and decision making is shared. Please consider whether you can offer Prairie your energy and inspiration as President.

Continued on next page

Nominating Committee, cont'd.

We are thrilled that Renee, Susan, and Molly have all agreed to continue in their current roles on the Prairie Board. All board members agree to serve a 2-year term. Dan Proud (Secretary), Chris Unger (Treasurer), and Ken Skog (At Large) all will be completing their terms on 6/30/25.

Paula must step down from serving on the Nominating Committee, because individuals are limited by our bylaws to two consecutive terms. Rachel will not be serving another term. We are very happy to share that Barbara Chatterton and Mary Frantz have agreed to serve on the Nominating Committee. They will be joining Heidi Hughes and Margit Moses, who are both completing their terms on 6/30/25.

Since Prairie is a volunteer-driven organization, people being willing to serve in leadership positions is essential to our functioning. Please take the time to personally thank our board and Nominating Committee members and all our committee chairs for their hard work in service to our Society!



Photo by Ioann-Mark Kuznietsov on unsplash.com

R.E. Welcomes New Co-Chair

Andrea Keyser, R.E. Co-Chair

I am excited to announce the addition of Susan Herr-Hoyman as my RE-Co-Chair!

Susan has been helping RE forever, most recently, along with her husband Dirk, on the potluck Cooking Days. On those mornings, the kids prepare sandwiches, cookies, fruit kabobs, salad, and more; this gives the regular age group volunteers a day to attend the service upstairs.

I have not been at Prairie that long yet; I am still in graduate school; I have 3 kids; and this is my first ever church type thing, so Susan provides a wealth of experience, knowledge, and support as co-chair. Please join me in welcoming Susan Herr-Hoyman to Team RE (again)!

Calling All Gamers!

Andrea Keyser

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Please join us for the all age Game Group every third Saturday of the month from 1:10pm - 4:00pm.

Kids and adults sometimes play different games or play together. We bring snacks to share. When the kids lose interest, we have a bin of Duplos or something of ours we share, or they play out back.

Check the Prairie calendar if we have switched days. We have a vast collection of games from the local game stores Pegasus and Noble Knights. My favorites are cooperative games where we all win or lose together.



Photo courtesy of Andrea Keyser

Skills and Interests Survey

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Rachel Long, Nominating Committee Chair

It was two years ago that the Nominating Committee first created Prairie's member and friend **Skills and Interests Survey**. Your responses have been very helpful for committees to find people who are interested in and can help with the work they do.

We have updated the survey by adding questions that we think will help us better understand how you can help Prairie grow and Prairie can help you grow!

We are asking all our members and friends to fill out the updated survey with your current interests. Here is the link:

[2024 Skills and Interests Survey](#)

Please let one of us on the Nominating Committee know if you have any questions.



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PrairieUU
Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society

Wisconsin UU State Action Network

Molly Plunkett Social Action Committee Member

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Each month the Wisconsin UU State Action Network (WUUSAN) sends out an informative newsletter about timely campaigns. To subscribe, see link below. Check the WUUSAN Facebook page often for updates on important statewide action efforts and continuing information on voter organization efforts.

This is an example of a recent article from the February newsletter:

Activists Seek County Endorsements

Please help us demonstrate to elected officials and others that the Rights of Nature has deep and broad support from around our state of Wisconsin by signing this petition:

Wisconsin Elected Officials: Adopt Rights of Nature Laws Today

Today, we face global environmental crises - including soaring extinction rates and accelerating climate change. This has happened despite thousands of environmental laws. What those laws have in common is that they regulate the exploitation of nature - treating nature as existing for human use. It's time for that to change - for our laws to recognize nature -- the waters, plants, animals and ecosystems we live among -- as a living being with legal rights.

We call upon our elected representatives at the state and local level to adopt rights of nature laws - as communities across the U.S. have, as countries including Ecuador and Panama have, and as many indigenous nations have done - to secure the right of nature to exist, flourish, and be restored.

Click on the button to go to the Rights of Nature Wisconsin and sign the petition.

<http://tinyurl.com/petition1212>

Sign up for the Rights of Nature Wisconsin newsletter at

<https://wisdomwisconsin.org/join-us>

