

Prairie Fire

September
2024



Photo by Anne Pryor

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

September 2024 Calendar

Please see www.uuprairie.org for detailed descriptions.

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Sunday 1

- 10a "The Past, Present, and Future Labor Movement" by Aaron Liu
- 11:30a Potluck Sunday

Saturday 7

- 10a PrairieWOW (Women of Wonder)

Sunday 8

- 10a "Ingathering" by Prairie Members
- 10a RE Ingathering of Waters
- 11:30a Prairie UU Parents Group (PUUPS)
- 11:30a Visitor Orientation

Saturday 14

- 9:30a Apple Picking

Sunday 15

- 10a Service by Vicar Vica-Etta Henrietta Steel
- 11:30a Interweave

Tuesday 17

- 6:30p Prairie Board Meeting

Thursday 19

- 7p Prairie Guys Group

Saturday 21

- 1p Prairie Game Group

Sunday 22

- 9:30a OWL Workshop
- 10a "Food Sovereignty" by Daniel Hayden
- 11:30p Prairie's Journey Circle

Friday 27 - Sunday 29

- 5p Prairie Retreat

Sunday 29

- 10a Service: "Key Log Ceremony" by Prairie (Off Site)

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

Wed 1-4pm and by appointment

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.

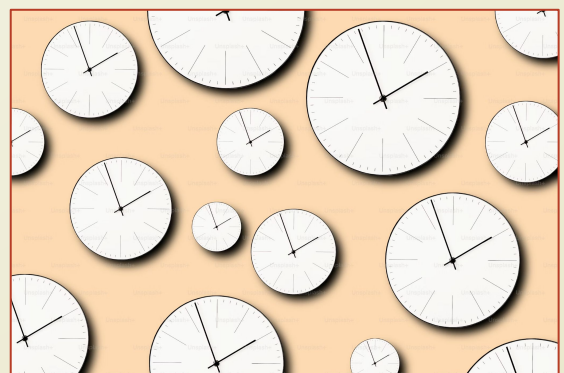


Photo in collaboration with Getty Images on unsplash.com

President's Perspective

Ken Skog



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Have you seen the little “Be Kind” signs on people’s houses? I first think, “I’m sorry people that come to your house are not kind when they should be.” But then I think, “Oh, they mean this more generally.” Like I should be kind to others I meet.

But maybe the “Be Kind” is also a reminder to be kind to myself (a very kind thought of them).

The fact that I see these signs often, suggests to me there is a general sense that people intend not to want to boost the spirits of those who are outside their close circle (or maybe inside too). One way I think about the value of being kind to those who are occasionally seen acquaintances or strangers is that I am paying it forward. If I am kind to them, then they are more likely to express kindness and so on until, as a result, at some unknown time and place, someone expresses kindness to me. Of course, kindness can also be offered in the spirit of pure generosity without expectation of a return. Such generosity gives its own feeling of personal well-being. Among many good things, kindness is one thing that Prairie does well.

In communities such as the Prairie community, members and friends express kindness in the form of deep listening and respectful consideration of views. This is the foundation of trust. Trust results in honest sharing. This honest sharing enables us to address concerns that may not otherwise be expressed. Kindness can extend to expressing warmth, appreciation, and understanding of the views of others, which could include facilitating ways to have their views be heard. This is in contrast to standoffish acceptance.

Prairie members and friends also express kindness by helping each other in small and large ways—a ride, a call, sharing a fun activity, listening, helping someone move, and comforting in stressful times. Many Prairie committees have kindness as a key purpose, for example, the appropriately named Caring Committee, also the Hospitality Committee, and of course the Membership Committee, all the RE classes, and family activities. The Program Committee and Minister also have kindness as a key purpose in Sunday programs—by bringing topics that affirm the values of members and encourage deep listening and respectful thoughts during the discussion after presentations. There is a kindness purpose for every committee. Each committee seeks to respond to and meet the needs of Prairie members and friends in a way that is thoughtful and supportive. I am grateful for the kindness expressed by the members of each committee.

In my view, kindness is a foundation for all we do at Prairie. With mutual support and trust, we can do more within our community and in communities beyond Prairie. Our vision states, “We aspire to be a community where all voices are heard and valued, collectively acting as a catalyst for positive change, inspiring empathy and curiosity to champion a more just, equitable, and sustainable world.”

Past and Future in Religious Exploration (RE)

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Karen Deaton, Director of Religious Exploration



This summer has been a time for building community among our RE children and their families. Children enjoyed various activities in the backyard, with tie-dye and giant bubbles being favorites. In July, we had our first-ever Family Camp weekend at the Friendship Center near Dodgeville. Five families, with children ranging from a few months to 12 years of age, spent the weekend together, some in cabins and some in tents. Several others joined us for a beautiful day at the beach on Saturday. Another highlight of the summer was our Sunday morning family field trip to the Fitchburg Splash Pad, where children had a great time while parents connected and discovered common interests. Our final family field trip of the summer was a campfire at Picnic Point, where we enjoyed toasted treats and kids were challenged with a nature scavenger hunt. We've welcomed new families this summer - keep an eye out for new faces!

Please check out the TV in the Prairie foyer to view photos of recent activities. For the protection of children's identities and privacy, we do not typically post photos of children on our website or in this newsletter, which is accessible through the website.

The 2024-25 RE Year will kick off on September 15. Our RE classes this year will explore UU principles and values and learn about beliefs and practices of religions of the world. Children and youth will also participate in social justice projects. Children and youth ages 7 and up will have a choice of activities, in consultation with their parents. I'm still working on recruiting volunteer facilitators and aides. You may hear from me soon!

Children and youth will continue to contribute to our congregation's potluck the first Sunday of each month. My plan is that each cooking day will also teach about the stories and practices of a religious holiday that takes place in that month: Judaism's Rosh Hashanah in October, Hinduism's Diwali in November, and Christianity's Christmas in December. Please let me know about your faith background if you might be willing to advise or participate this fall or later in the year, when we will learn about Islam and Buddhism as well.

We will offer OWL for kindergarten and first grade children in the fall, and OWL for grades 4-6 later in the year.





Photo courtesy of [Kubala Washatko Architects](#)

Retreat Registration Open until Sept. 8!

Marie Andrae, Renee Deschard, Nancy Wunderlin

Come to the annual Prairie retreat!

[Registration is still open](#) but it closes on September 8th. Rooms are filling quickly so register soon. We prefer online registration but there are paper copies on the back hymnal cart at Sunday services for paper-based registration.

To see how wonderful the retreat experience is, check out Carl Wacker's [2016 Retreat Video](#) for a nice overview. Here is a [brand new slideshow](#) explaining the different accommodation options. Partial and full scholarships are available.

Thanks to our talented Prairie peeps, many amazing activities will be available at the retreat. [Here is a detailed schedule with activity descriptions](#) and this is the [overview in a grid-like visual format](#).

Do you have questions? Please email [retreat\[at\]juuprairie.org](mailto:retreat[at]juuprairie.org) or talk with Nancy Wunderlin, Renee Deschard or Marie Andrae. Hope to see you there!

Honoring Mary Wollstonecraft

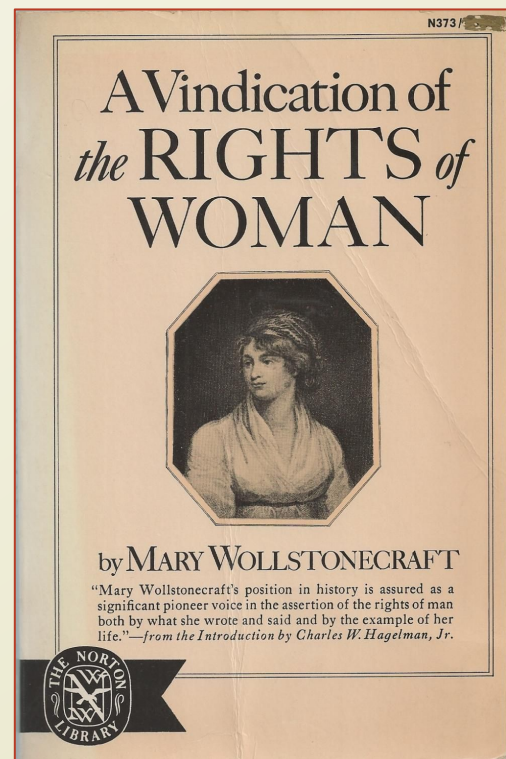
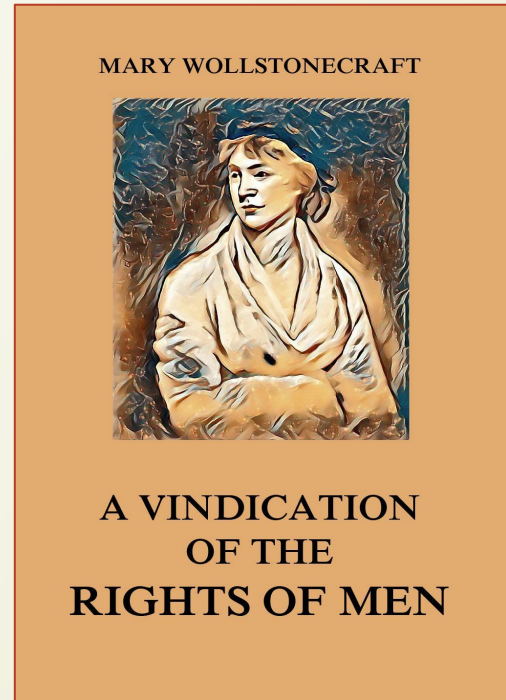
Nick Schweitzer

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The Free Congregation of Sauk County will dedicate and install a portrait of Mary Wollstonecraft at the 10:10 a.m. service on September 1, 2024.

Mary Wollstonecraft was a "relentless champion" of the rule of reason and women's rights to an equal education. She was a philosopher, feminist, author, and war correspondent during the French Revolution. Among her authored pieces are *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790) and *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792).

The Free Congregation will honor Mary Wollstonecraft at Park Hall as exemplifying their value of equality among all peoples. They invite everyone to the dedication and discussion of Mary Wollstonecraft's championed ideas and concerns, still with us more than 200 years later.



Join Prairie RE for Apple Picking!

Karen Deaton, Director of Religious Exploration

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Everyone is invited!

Would you like to get to know Prairie's children and new families better? Or perhaps you'd just like to say hello, pick a few apples, enjoy some fresh air, and savor a cider donut from the store at [The Eplegaarden](#).

Join us there on Saturday, September 14. The Eplegaarden is at [2227 Fitchburg Road](#), southwest of Madison. We'll meet at 9:30 in the playground near the parking lot.

You may buy a bag in the store to fill with apples you pick from the orchard. The farm allows sampling from the trees so that you can be sure to pick your favorites. More than a dozen kinds are expected to be ripening in mid-September.

If our group is already out in the orchard when you arrive, pick up a bag and call me at 1+[usual Madison area code]+481-6284. I'll help you find us.

Rain Date: Saturday, October 5



Former Prairie kids at the Eplegaarden 10 years ago!

Photo by Karen Deaton

Circle Dinner Signups

Deesa Pence, Patty Stockdale, Paula Pachicarz, and Judy Lazarus, 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.

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, even at the Madison 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 mid-September. We will have signup sheets in Prairie's foyer.

If you have questions, contact Membership Committee members Deesa Pence, Patty Stockdale, Paula Pachicarz, and Judy Lazarus at membership@uuprairie.org.



Photo in collaboration with Davey Gravy on unsplash.com