

Prairie Fire

March
2025



Photo by Bob Park

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

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March 2025 Calendar

Please see www.uuprairie.org for detailed descriptions.

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Saturday 1

- 10a Women of Wonder (WOW)

Sunday 2

- 10a "Healing Communities through Kinship" by Mary Sue Reutebuch
- 10a Religious Exploration (RE)
- 11:30a Potluck Sunday

Sunday 9

- 10a "Who Is My Neighbor?" Intergenerational presentation by Prairie Youth
- 10a RE Intergenerational Service includes children
- 11:30a PUUPs (Prairie UU Parents)

Saturday 15

- 1p Prairie Game Group
- 2p Prairie Book Discussion Group

Sunday 16

- 10a "Annual Spring Auction" by Prairie
- 10a RE Movie Day and OWL
- 11:30a Visitor Orientation

Thursday 20

- 7p Prairie Guys Group

Sunday 23

- 10a "Relationships Matter" by James Morgan
- 10a Religious Exploration (RE)
- 11:30a Prairie's Journey Circle

Thursday 27

- 6p Prairie Evening Potluck

Sunday 30

- 10a Service by Ari Lo
- 10a Religious Exploration (RE)

Office Hours

Pastoral Minister Mary Sue Reutebuch
Most Tues and Thurs or by appointment

Administrator Nancy Wunderlin
Sun-Tue on site in the Annex
Wed-Fri working remotely

Director of Religious Exploration Karen Deaton
Wed 1-4pm and by appointment



Invitation to Add Your Voice

Prairie's vision statement opens with, "We aspire to be a community where all voices are heard and valued." Toward that end, all Prairie members and friends are invited to contribute a column to the *Prairie Fire* on a topic of their choice. Please send to [prairiefire\[at\]uuprairie.org](mailto:prairiefire[at]uuprairie.org) by the 21st of the month for inclusion in the following issue.

President's Perspective

Ken Skog, Prairie President



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This not an article to promote action on climate change. It is an article on using our voices by writing letters to the editor to protest all kinds of harm and injustice.

I opened an email today from Bill McKibben founder of the climate action groups 350.org and Third Act. Third Act is a climate action group for people who are in the third act of their lives and want to directly protest for action on climate change. He cites the current radical changes in government and our need to protest. He states, “The most powerful tool we have right now is our voice—and we need to use it.” He urges “WRITE: We’re launching a targeted Letter to the Editor campaign. The message? ‘I’m X years old and I’ve never seen an attack on our democracy like this.’ Young people don’t always recognize how abnormal this moment is. We need to name it and our experience gives us credibility.”

You need not be X years old to submit a letter to the editor. And we need to be protesting all aspects of the attack on our democracy. We all have experiences and opinions that are important to share. Every letter on a topic counts! Editors read all letters, even if they aren’t published. High letter volume on a topic can push newspapers to increase coverage or write editorials. Lawmakers and their staff monitor letters to gauge public sentiment. In your letters ask legislators for action by name. Published letters reach thousands of readers and can shape public opinion.

Start with a Strong Opening

- Grab the editor’s attention immediately. Your first sentence should be compelling and directly relevant.

Examples:

- Fact-driven: “Your recent article on climate resilience missed a crucial point: community-led initiatives are the key to real change.”
- Personal connection: “As a lifelong teacher, I was heartened to see your coverage of literacy challenges but we must go further.”
- Provocative question: “Why are we still debating the need for affordable healthcare when families are making impossible choices every day?”

Use Evidence and Examples

- Support your argument with a statistic, real-world example, or expert quote.

Example:

- “Studies show that early childhood education reduces crime rates by 30%—yet funding is being cut.”

President cont.

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Make It Personal

- Editors favor letters with personal stakes.

Example: “My family struggled with medical bills so I know firsthand why universal healthcare matters.”

Offer a Call to Action

- Suggest a solution or encourage readers to take action.

Example: “Contact your local representative to demand immediate action on clean energy investments.”

End Powerfully

- Reinforce your main point with a strong conclusion.

Examples:

- Call to action: “It’s time for leaders to act—our future depends on it.”
- Restate importance: “This issue affects all of us. Let’s not wait until it’s too late.”
- Urgency: “Ignoring this crisis is not an option. We must act now.”

Keep It Polite

- Avoid personal attacks; focus on issues.

Set up a Google alert to learn when articles are published that you may want to respond to. For example, “Wisconsin State Journal” - “climate change” or “Capitol Times” - “transgender rights.” Here are the links to submit letters to the editor:

- Wisconsin State Journal - https://madison.com/forms/online_services/letter
- Capitol Times - https://captimes.com/site/forms/online_services/ct_letter_to_the_editor

Remember, perfection is the enemy of the good. Every letter submitted is good.



Photo by Scott Graham
on unsplash.com

Ministry Moments Shared

Mary Sue Reutebuch, Pastoral Minister



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February has brought insights for me into the beauty of Prairie UU through slowly meeting our community. Here are a few learning experiences thus far:

- ❖ Our Prairie Board is led with integrity and seeks the delicate balance of freedom within boundaries. I have worked with many boards but rarely have I seen such humility, honesty, and dedication to truth in action.
- ❖ The Woman of Wonder (WOW) breakfast is one I intend to join as often as possible. It was wonderful to see the friendships in action.
- ❖ The Program Committee knocks it out of the park. Their dedication to UU values and principles, creativity, and orbital skills are extraordinary.
- ❖ Our Religious Exploration program welcomes youth and young adults into leadership with more joy than I have ever witnessed. This effort is building confidence and promoting teaching skills that are so desperately needed. Also, the PUUPs group is clearly cherished by parents as a safe and welcoming place to share. I was honored to meet with them.
- ❖ It is important and essential for our voices to be heard. It certainly seems the best practice is for direct communication to a committee or person before using Prairie Views. This helps uphold our UU value of right relations and at the same time promote honest and open opinions.
- ❖ The Committee on Ministry has already provided space, care, and support. This has meant a great deal to me as I entered my ministry here in Madison. Not only am I new to Prairie, I am new to the UU ministers of Madison.
- ❖ Our Social Action Committee has moved me deeply. The members I have met inspire through involvement and give meaning to the saying, "Actions speak louder than words."
- ❖ I am humbled and in awe of our Caring Committee. I will be sharing time with them over breakfast in March and seeking ways I can support this shared ministry.

I look forward to March and the opportunities of service and learning that await me!

What's Going on in Religious Exploration?

Karen Deaton, Director of Religious Exploration



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Coming soon to Prairie UU! *The Good Samaritan*, a play written and directed by Robin Proud, will be performed by our Religious Exploration students on March 9 as part of our Sunday Service. This biblical story resonates with the UU value of love.



Come to the intergenerational service on March 9 to understand this photo.
Photo by Karen Deaton

Making costumes and scenery for the play has occupied some of our youngsters on recent Sunday mornings, along with rehearsing lines (though we will not memorize lines to go off-script for this production). Andrea, Alice, Jesse, and Karen, as well as Robin, have worked with them.

Other RE activities in the past month:

- Learning about the Muslim holiday Ramadan with KD or Tim, and cooking for Prairie's potluck with Dirk, Carl, and Robin
- Practicing turn-taking with the new spinny chair in our preschool room, under the guidance of Betty, Jesse, Liam, and Ollie
- Exploring transformations in nature and how sunflower seeds can turn into plants or bird food or artwork with Avalon, Carl, Daniel, and Randy
- OWL classes about body image and puberty with Casey, Matt, and Karen
- Table-top gaming with Tim
- Creating with paper or blocks while parents are in choir practice
- Building with giant blocks, coloring on a cityscape mural, or relaxing with friends while parents are in the PUUPs meeting (thank you Alice, Lynn, and Betty for supervising)
- Learning a song about Prairie UU written by Carl and Toby Wacker

Would you like to be involved with the fun, creativity, and learning in our RE program? Talk to me on Sunday morning or email [dre\[at\]juuprairie.org](mailto:dre@juuprairie.org).

Prairie's Annual Auction: Fun, Fellowship & Fundraising!

Nancy Wunderlin, Administrator & Chris Porter, Finance Chair



Prairie's auction in 2024. Photo by Nancy Wunderlin

Join us for Prairie's Annual Auction on Sunday, March 16 at 10:00 am for a day of fun and fundraising. Help us reach our goal of \$11,000! Every donated item and winning bid supports Prairie and strengthens our community.

Here's how you can get ready:

- 1. Browse & Donate:** Visit our [auction website](#) to submit items and view items available for bid at the in person auction event. New items are added regularly.
- 2. What Can You Donate?** Consider donating homemade treats, handmade items, host a party or an outing, teach a skill, or anything else you or your family love to do! [Click here to submit your items.](#)
- 3. Plan to Attend:** Join us for a brief service followed by the auction. Can't make it? Have someone bid on your behalf. Childcare will be available but some children may enjoy attending with their families. Our auctioneer, Orange Schroeder, will explain the bidding process and then the auction will begin.

Winning bid statements will be emailed the same day with a link to pay online. Payments via check or cash will also be accepted. Questions? Contact Chris Porter, Finance Chair (finance@uuprairie.org) or Nancy Wunderlin, Administrator (admin@uuprairie.org).

BIG REMINDER: Please Complete the Skills and Interests Survey

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Margit Moses, Nominating Committee

Three years ago, the Nominating Committee created a Skills and Interests Survey for Prairie's members and friends. Your responses have been very helpful for committees to use to find people who are interested in and can help with the work they do.

In 2024, we updated the survey, adding questions that we thought would help us better understand how you could help Prairie to grow, and how Prairie could help you to grow! We are using that 2024 survey again this year.

We are asking all of our members and friends to fill out the survey with your current interests. Here is the link for the Skills and Interests Survey:

<https://prairie.breezechms.com/form/8a9b4533>

Please let one of the Nominating Committee members know if you have any questions: Heidi Hughes, Barbara Chatterton, and Margit Moses.



*When snow falls ever so softly,
I hear her every word.
There is something in this gentle yet
very real force of nature
that calls my every sense to
attention.*

Mary Sue Reutebuch

Interweave Call for Donations

KD Thompson, Interweave Coordinator

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Cruel laws banning best-practice gender-affirming care have passed in 26 states across the country – thankfully, not yet in Wisconsin. Thousands of transgender youth and their families are being forced to identify new healthcare providers, travel extreme distances, and take on significant expenses just to get the care they need.

Beginning now and continuing through the end of March, Interweave (Prairie's group for LGBTQ+ folks and allies) is collecting funds to donate to the Trans Youth Emergency Project which helps families navigate care, offering logistical and financial support. You can read more about their work here:

<https://southernequality.org/tyep>.

To donate, click "Give" on Prairie's website and select Interweave from the drop-down menu. At the end of March, we will update the Prairie community on how much we donate.



Photo by Ehimetalor Akhere Unuabona on unsplash.com