

Prairie Fire

April
2025

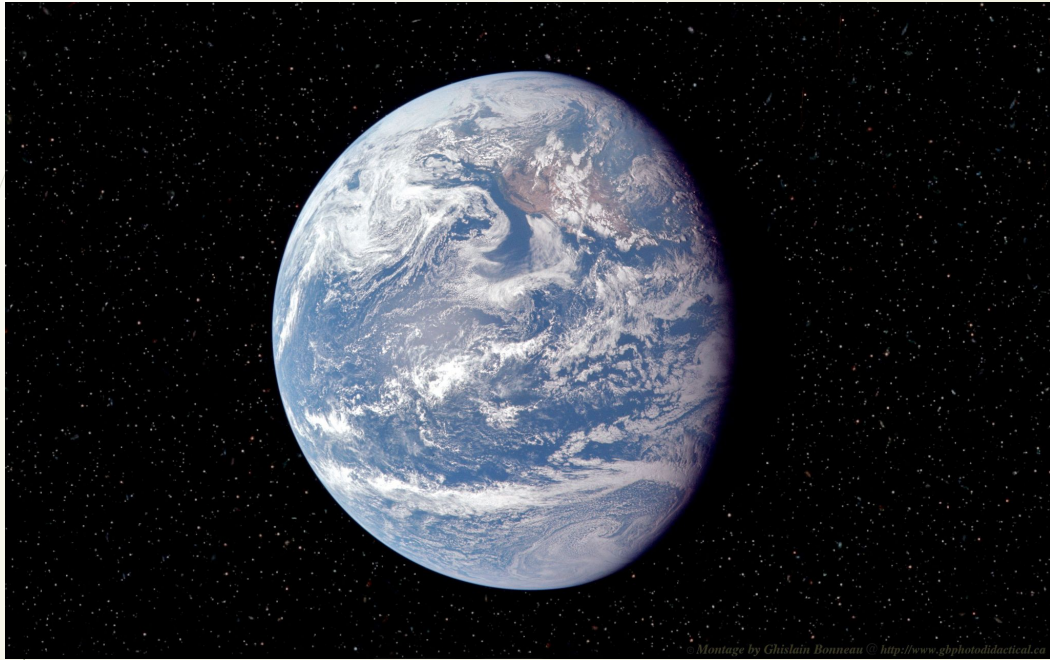


Photo from NASA

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

Published March 24, 2025

April 2025 Calendar

Please see www.uuprairie.org for detailed descriptions.

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Saturday 5

- 10a Women of Wonder (WOW)

Sunday 6

- 10a "Poetry Share" by Prairie
- 10a RE: Cook&Learn - Christian Easter
- 11:30a Potluck Sunday
- 12p Humanist Union

Sunday 13

- 10a "Lullabies: The Wisdom and Science of Soothing" by Mary Sue Reutebuch
- 10a RE: Age group classes, including OWL
- 11:30a PUUPs (Prairie UU Parents)
- 11:30a Visitor Orientation

Thursday 17

- 7p Prairie Guys Group

Saturday 19

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

Sunday 20

- 10a "Celebrating the 3 R's: Rebirth, Renewal, and Resilience" by Mary Sue Reutebuch
- 10a RE: Pagan Easter traditions
- 11:30a Interweave

Thursday 24

- 6p Prairie Evening Potluck

Sunday 27

- 10a "Dane County Humane Society" by Olivia Haseley
- 10a No RE classes-Intergenerational service
- 11:30a Prairie's Journey Circle

Office Hours

Pastoral Minister Mary Sue Reutebuch
Most Tues and Thurs & 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



Photo from [worshipweb\[at\]uua.org](mailto:worshipweb[at]uua.org)

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.

All Voices Guest Column

Molly Plunkett, At-large Board Member

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I have been a member of Prairie for longer than I can actually remember, at least 30 years. We knew about Prairie because of Mike and Norma Briggs who had been long time neighbors.



Raised in Catholicism (think 12 years of parochial schools), I was drawn to Unitarianism as a liberal faith with little dogma. I wanted to expose my then young children to a faith community that offered more than the Golden Rule for good living. I also liked the coffee served after a service and the chance to chat with interesting people. I started attending First Unitarian because I loved the Frank Lloyd Wright building but soon switched to the more informal Prairie.

Many of the folks who we first knew and loved 30 years ago at Prairie are no longer with us but there was and remains a spirit of vitality and energy that draws us in.

Since joining Prairie, I have been a chair and co-chair of the Social Action Committee and now a continuing member of the committee. I have been an RE teacher for elementary and middle school kids. Last year I joined the Board of Trustees. This year I am on the Financial Reserve Study Committee.

I feel like I have learned a lot from being part of Prairie, from personal connections, speakers and services, our ministers, and from the roles that I have had the opportunity to play. I am grateful that there is a range of opinions on most subjects and room for courteous (usually) disagreements. I like that we are a free thinking bunch and not closely directed by the UUA with whose direction I do not agree on some issues.

My view is that to keep a community that we love going, we all have to pitch in time and money. I am grateful to all the folks that do just that.

I have been inspired by the views of Gamaliel Network and its local Madison chapter MOSES: that churches can organize and apply muscle on social and political issues. Organizing and resisting will be critical under our present national administration.

When Prairie finalizes a structure and process around use of its financial reserves, I would very much like to see us get behind a BIG social project like Heart Room, which partially subsidizes families facing homelessness for a three-year period.

Ministry Moments Shared

Mary Sue Reutebuch, Pastoral Minister



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This past month I have had the privilege of meeting with several in our Prairie UU family. One of the recurring conversations has circled around the fear of what is happening in our world today. We are fearful for: the people of Gaza and Ukraine, our immigrant neighbors and friends, our LGBTQ+ communities, the environment, gun violence, the division of power within our country, medical costs, the economy, and the list goes on. What we know for sure is that fear can drain our energy and often leaves us feeling spiritually and psychologically depleted. Fear, if not faced, can lead to anxiety, depression, and a deep sense of loneliness.

However, fear is not all bad. I was recently reminded by a friend that historically fear has been a motivator for change and there are Unitarian Universalists teachers to lean on for wisdom.

Author and political activist Francis Moore Lappé says that she was forced to confront fear through unwelcomed but very real personal challenges. In her book, *You Have the Power: Choosing Courage in a Culture of Fear*, she tells the story of how, in a brief period, she faced the loss of marriage, economic safety, and health. Lappé does not romanticize fear but explains how, through these struggles, she grew in ways she could never have predicted.

The Rev. Dr. Forrest Church, former minister of the Unitarian Church of All Souls in New York City and author of *Freedom from Fear: Finding the Courage to Love, Act, and Be*, reminds us that if fear is given a lot of power in our lives, it can prevent us

from living life to its fullest. We must first recognize it and then foster the courage necessary to defeat it.



One common thread with Lappé and Church is the power of friends and community. We are not meant to face the fears alone. Perhaps as Unitarian Universalists we do not look to a God that takes away our fears but rather to a community that helps us face them. It is my hope for each of you that you will find courage through kinship and personal fortitude through the gift of community.

Photo by OF on unsplash.com

What's Going on in Religious Exploration?

Karen Deaton, Director of Religious Exploration



What's been happening in RE

I hope you didn't miss the play, *Who Is my Neighbor?* performed during our service on March 9. Written by Robin Proud, starring our young people with a few adults in supporting roles, this was a timely reflection on the story of the Good Samaritan. The "Magical Norwegian Forest Kitties" class (7 to 12 years old) took lead roles, built sets, and created costumes.

We're halfway through our OWL program for 4th through 6th grade students, providing accurate and comprehensive information about human sexuality as they approach and move through puberty. Casey Steinau, Matt Wise, and I are co-facilitators. We find this work to be gratifying and important. Please let me know if you are open to becoming a facilitator. Prairie pays for the training.

Coming up in RE

On April 6, all-ages Cook&Learn will focus on the Christian Easter story. We want to provide a UU framing for Christian touchstones such as the teachings of Jesus and the story of his crucifixion and resurrection.

April 13 will be our only "regular" RE Sunday in April with age-group classes (including OWL).

On April 20, we will celebrate pagan Ostara traditions with our annual Easter party, including an egg hunt and prizes. *I am now accepting donations of new and gently used books, craft supplies, toys, and other trinkets as prizes.* There will be a donation box in the foyer.

April 27 will be an intergenerational service with a presenter from the Dane County Humane Society.

On May 4, Cook&Learn will focus on Passover and the Exodus story as a window into Jewish history and culture.

Would you like to help with any of these events?
Talk to me on Sunday morning or email [dre\[at\]juuprairie.org](mailto:dre@juuprairie.org).



2025 Prairie Auction Results

Nancy Wunderlin, Administrator & Chris Porter, Finance Chair

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Prairie's auction in 2025. Photo by Nancy Wunderlin

A huge thank you to everyone who participated in this year's auction! Whether you donated items, placed bids, or helped spread the word, your support made this event a fantastic success.

Thanks to your generosity, we had 87 amazing items donated and raised \$15,460—far surpassing our budget goal of \$11,000! These funds will go a long way in supporting Prairie UU and our shared mission.

We are especially grateful to our wonderful auctioneer, Orange Schroeder, for making the auction so engaging. A big thank you as well to Ann Sawyer, Susanne Oliver, and Renee Deschard for providing beautiful music.

We also appreciate the many greeters, helpers, announcers, and behind-the-scenes volunteers who kept things running smoothly, including: Barbara Chatterton, Suzanne Gernandt, John Wunderlin, Heidi Hughes, Casey Steinau, Ruth Ellen Saul, Daniel Tokarczyk, Karleen Tyksinski, Deesa Pence, and Barb Park.

A few auction items are still available and some events have open spots—stay tuned for more details!

Nominating Committee News

Karleen Tyksinski, Nominating Committee

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Recently, Prairie's Auction Committee worked together to make the 2025 auction very successful. Those committee members worked hard and long so that Prairie would profit from the outcome. In her thank you to all Prairie members, Chris Porter said, "Your enthusiasm and generosity truly make our community special."

That statement is so true. It truly is the dedication of members in our community doing their part that makes Prairie so special. And guess what? There are always roles available that need a volunteer and we have to count on people in our membership to fill those roles. With that being said, let me tell you what roles are presently available and encourage you to see if you might fit that role.

Treasurer of the Board of Trustees

Chris Unger is stepping down as Treasurer so we now need someone to step into this role. The Treasurer maintains accounting software, pays all bills, and produces financial statements. The Treasurer works closely with the Finance Chair, reconciling the bank account and preparing the budget. The job includes reviewing contracts and agreements and preparing and submitting employee timesheets to our payroll company. If you would like more information, or if you can see yourself in this role, please contact Chris Unger or a member of the Nominating Committee.

Secretary of the Board of Trustees

Dan Proud is stepping down as Secretary of the Board of Trustees. The Secretary is responsible for ensuring accurate documentation of board meetings, maintaining records, and facilitating effective communication within the society's governance structure. There is an expected time commitment to this role, as minutes of all meetings must be recorded and reported. If you feel that you would fit this role, or if you would like more information about it, Dan Proud or the Nominating Committee can help you.

Nominating Committee

Heidi Hughes and Margit Moses will be stepping down from their roles in the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee looks for fitting candidates for all open roles and talks to those people, informing them about the duties and responsibilities of the position. This committee seeks candidates but also encourages and welcomes members interested in the role.

Nominating, cont.

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At-Large Board Member

Susan Herr-Hoyman is stepping down from her role as an At-Large Board Member. Board members are expected to attend meetings and assist the President in setting goals and making strategic choices. A board member may occasionally be asked to represent the board on certain projects, or to head up an ad hoc committee when the need arises. The board functions as Prairie's governing body and strives to be collaborative and inclusive in its approach.

These are the five positions that need to be filled by members. Please think about whether one of these positions would be something you could do. The current Nominating Committee consists of Heidi Hughes, Margit Moses, Barbara Chatterton, and Karleen Tyksinski. We encourage you to speak to any one of us if you are interested in filling in one of the above roles.

Humanist Union - Coffee!

Beth Zurkowski, Humanist Union

All are invited to the Humanist Union's April 6 gathering with guest speaker Caitilyn Allen. Her topic is, "Coffee Stories: Capitalism, Colonialism, Climate Change, and a Killer Fungus."

According to Allen, many of us enjoy our daily coffee without understanding how the bean of an East African shrub became one of humanity's favorite drugs and a profitable export commodity. This talk will reveal the unexpected (and sometimes scandalous!) history of coffee, weaving together economic, political, and biological elements. The topic is all-too-current because climate change is giving a boost to coffee's longtime biological enemies and threatening your morning java.

Caitilyn Allen is Professor Emeritus in the department of Plant Pathology at UW-Madison. An undergraduate job on an unprofitable organic farm ignited her interest in plant diseases. In 1995 she became the founding director of UW's Women in Science and Engineering (or WISE) dorm. Alongside some fundamental biology, she has studied and taught about farming in the global south, especially the fascinating ways in which microbes have exploited large-scale plantation agriculture.



Photo by Rodrigo Flores on unsplash.com

UUSC's Global Advocacy

Anne Pryor, Prairie Fire Editor

“Global Advocacy Newsletter” is a new quarterly publication from the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC). The focus is on the UUSC’s global advocacy work with grassroots partners. Through these partnerships, the UUSC aims to leverage the UN and international law to advance human rights around the world. Grassroots partners featured in the first issue of the newsletter include Pacific Island Students Fighting Climate Change and the Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK (BROUK).

The rationale for launching the newsletter is, “Now is not the time to shrink but to defend human rights and be even more creative, strategic, and bold in fighting for a future where we can all thrive.” Mayuri Anupindi, Global Advocacy Strategist for the UUSC, explains that the UUSC has been working at the United Nations for the past several decades to advance human rights and had collaborated closely with the [UU@UNO](#) until their closure in 2024. “We remain committed to representing Unitarian Universalist values at the UN and invite supporters to join us in this journey.”

If you would like to subscribe to the Global Advocacy Newsletter, contact them at [info\[at\]juusc.org](mailto:info@juusc.org).



**WISCONSIN
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
STATE ACTION NETWORK**

The Wisconsin Unitarian Universalist State Action Network (WUUSAN) listed the following upcoming events in their March 2025 newsletter:

MADISON ACTION DAY, April 10, Madison Masonic Center

This will be a dynamic day of advocacy, learning, and action in the heart of Wisconsin's capital! This event is a unique opportunity to engage directly with policymakers, connect with a community of passionate changemakers, and advocate for policies that matter most to you.

WISCONSIN GRASSROOTS FESTIVAL, May 10, McFarland High School

The theme of this 16th annual gathering is, “We Are the Guardrails Now!”

WUUSAN ANNUAL MEETING, May 17, location TBD & online