



PRAIRIE FIRE

... As the prairie stretches out until it becomes one with the sky, let us reach out to touch and be one with the natural world and with one another. *From Prairie's Bond Of Union*
Tuesday, September 23, 1997
The Prairie Fire is the newsletter of Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society and is published semi-monthly.
e-mail version available <http://www.execpc.com/~prairie/>

President: Barb Park (608) 273-8775 bpark1@facstaff.wisc.edu
heibercobb@mailbag.com

Editor: Kate Heiber-Cobb (608) 250-6512

GREETINGS FROM NEW DRE

My name is Robin Carre and I am excited to be the new Director of Religious Education at Prairie. I moved to Madison from Chicago in June '97 with my wife, who is a second-year Family Practice Resident at the UW and my son Jonah, who is now two years old. In Chicago I pursued a Ph.D. in Modern European History while working in recreational and athletic programs with children from K through High School. I look forward to meeting and talking with many of you at Upham Woods and throughout the year. I would like to give special thanks to Randy Converse, Anne Pryor and Carl Wacker for helping me to get started in these first few weeks.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The '97-'98 RE program kicked off on September 7th with a welcome back party and Spirit Circle hosted by Randy "Peace Dragon" Converse. New DRE Robin Carre was introduced, and the start of the new year was symbolized with a ritual foot-washing with corn meal led by Kerry Beheler-Amass. On September 14th the first RE classes were held. This year's curriculum is called "In Our Hands" and stresses the themes of Peace and Social Justice.

DENOMINATIONA AFFAIRS

Social Actions on a National Scale:

Did you know that the U.U.A. maintained a lobbying arm? The Washington Office for Faith in Action authors and signs on to letters to elected officials and endorses statements in coalition with secular and other religious groups in order to help implement the resolutions which are voted on at the General Assemblies. This office also files amicus curiae briefs with the court. In the year ending May 1996 (the 96-97 figures are not yet available), eleven such briefs were filed on such subjects as gay rights, right to die, and school prayer. In the year ending in June '97, ninety-four statements and letters were sent to government officials. A list and description of these U.U.A. actions is available from Pat Watkins.

Racial Justice:

In keeping with the U.U. first principle which calls upon U.U.'s to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every human being, the General Assembly of 1992, which met in Calgary, Alberta, resolved to affirm and support the vision of a racially diverse and multicultural

In the Prairie Fire: Pg. 1: RE info, DAC info; Pg 2: DAC, Our Society; Pg 3: Upcoming Pro-grams, Prairie Calendar. **Next Deadline: 10/5.**

U.U. In addition, it also instructed the Trustees to develop and implement a process to realize this vision. This resulted in the Racial and Cultural Diversity Task Force comprised of congregations, organizations and staff, which developed a process entitled Jubilee World. One of the results of work with the J.W. process has been the realization that an examination of our own conscious and unconscious racism must take place as a condition of becoming multi-cultural and multi-racial. Thus, the 1997 GA calls upon U.U.'s to work first toward being anti-racist by conducting "Unlearning Racism" workshops, participating in anti-racist training, examining basic structures, assumptions and functions which foster racism, forming racial justice committees, and engaging in analysis and action to eradicate racism in our lives, our congregations and our community. Prairie UU Society began this process last year with a Sunday service on "white privilege". We will continue it in a workshop at Upham Woods using the U.U.A. Anti-Racist Assessment, and other exercises and discussions from the U.U.A. curricula "Journey Toward Wholeness". Please plan to attend.

Madison Urban Ministry:

The next meeting in the MUM series "Beyond Violence: A Shared Dialogue on Judgement, Guilt and Forgiveness", will take place on Tuesday, October 14th, 6-8 PM at the Lake Edge United Church of Christ, 4200 Buckeye Road. Professor Joe Elder will be guest speaker, with Jean Ferraca serving as moderator, followed by small group discussion and exercise groups. \$5.00 (which can be paid at the door) includes a light meal. Call 256-0906 at least 3 days in advance to reserve your place. The September meeting had only one representative from Prairie. We would like to see a larger turnout, as our participation is in partial fulfillment of our response to the '97 U.U.A. resolution on "Build-ing Tolerance through Interfaith Cooperation".

Welcoming Congregation:

We took orders for 12 of the Welcoming Congregation T-shirts, which should arrive in time for us to wear them at Upham Woods. At that time, we will take additional orders from those who missed out. Colors and samples will be on our backs.

OUR SOCIETY

Pledge Drive Kick-off Lunch

Sunday, Oct. 19; 12-12:45 PM

Mark your calendars, check your budgets, bring your pens, and come to the second annual Pledge Drive Kick-off Lunch! Pizza - Brownies - Proposed Prairie Budget - and Pledges for 1998!

This is your chance to learn about goals and needs of our society and how your finances are a part of it.

Your giving keeps Prairie alive and able to serve.

Join us!

Social Action Committee Update

We've been busy! Here, briefly, is what the committee has been doing and which actions we're contemplating.

We're gratified by Prairie's continuing commitment to provide staff and monthly breakfast for the men's homeless shelter (temporarily at Saint Raphael's Cathedral). Some of you may not be aware that Shaarei Shamayim members are now covering the evening shift, while Prairie works the breakfast shift the next day. We would like occasionally to have mixed crews in the future so that we can truly work together and get to know each other as individuals.

Judging by the materials donated so far, we anticipate an eclectic and large selection for our book sale at Upham Woods. We are still accepting donations. You can leave them in the drop box at Prairie or call Rob Steinhofner at 221-9417 or Mark Wehrly at 232-1433 for pickup. Bucky Books will be available at Upham Woods again this year. You can count on a letter-writing table too, for timely issues.

We're eager to work towards some of the goals of the UUA Resolution on Religious Tolerance. The SAC is considering joint events with First Baptist or Shaarei Shamayim: a building or grounds project; book sales or other fundraising activities; and potlucks. (Potlucks would probably be co-organized by the Denominational Affairs Committee.)

The SAC and the DAC are considering bringing Prairie into the Madison Urban Ministry. We may send representatives to a series of MUM workshops on peace and justice.

The SAC is looking forward to working together with RE kids on a service project or projects relating to their Peace and Social Justice curriculum. We are excited at the potential for energy and commitment in that group.

We will continue to provide opportunities for writing letters that may influence issues important to you.

We are still looking for ways for Prairie to be more of a presence in the Allied Drive community. (The new Learning Center at the community center can use AM and PM volunteers.) We would like to coordinate Prairie's donations to the Food Pantry at the community center so that we can respond more directly to specific needs.

As you can see, we like to keep a lot of irons in the fire! If you would like to be part of our work in a big way or small, contact someone on the committee or come to our next meeting. It's at 6:30 PM, Sept. 30th at Prairie. Hope to see you then. Paula Pachciarz, committee member

Long Range Planning

Prairie 2002

Bring your ideas to the Long Range Planning Committee at Upham Woods, Sat. Oct. 11th Prairie 2002: Objectives and services for members and community. Needs and wants of members and friends of Prairie as a congregation.

Book Discussion at Upham Woods

A book discussion of the book In the Shelter of Each Other by Mary Pipher will take place at Upham Woods. Be sure to read it before you come!

QUOTE

"The power that makes grass grow, fruit ripen, and guides the bird in flight is in us all."

-Anizia Yeziarska

ARTISTIC ADULTS! TALENTED TEENS! GIFTED GRADESCHOOLERS! PRECIOUS PRESCHOOLERS!!!!

Talent Night at Upham Woods is an annual treat for all who attend, performers and audience alike. Prepare your presentation, and bring your act and any props or costumes or musical instruments along, to share with the group at the Upham Woods retreat on Sat. evening, Oct. 11th. Questions? Call Rick Owens, 845-3884.

Prairie Playreaders

The Prairie Playreaders is one of the several social groups available to Prairie friends and Members. Participation requires no commitment and neither expertise nor experience in theatre. We meet once a month at the home of a volunteer Prairie host, who chooses the play, assigns the parts, and provides refreshments.

We read and discuss the play (and have a lovely social evening). We sometimes have theater parties. At our final meeting in the Spring, we go out to a Friday fish dinner at a local restaurant (which any member of friend of Prairie can attend), and then adjourn to a member's home for dessert and to read a short, usually one-act, play.

We met for an organizational potluck luncheon on Sat., Aug. 30th and selected our dates for the coming year. Please post these on your calendars, and plan to join us. We would very much appreciate your keeping these dates in mind when planning other Prairie events.

Sat., Sept. 27th: Jean Matos, 324 S. Mills St.

255-2209; Sat., Oct. 25: Paula Pachciarz/Carl

Wacker, 4709 Sherwood Rd., 273-4906; Sat., Nov.

22: Theater Party: Strollers production of PICNIC,

by William Inge; Sat., Dec. 6: Susan Hagstrom, 916

Shorewood Blvd., 238-4970; Sat., Jan. 10: Rachel

Siegfried/Mona Birong, 5209 Tolman Terr., 271-

2173; Sat. Feb. 14: Al/Aileen Nettleton, 645

Sheldon St., 238-6053; Sat., Mar 14: Pat Watkins;

230 N.Meadow Ln. 233-5795; Sat., April 25:

Rosemary Dorney/Tim Fast, 4205 Odana Rd., 238-

4382; Fri, May 16: Annual Fish Dinner.

Prairie Men's Group To Meet

The reinvigorated men's group will begin meeting on the first and third Wednesdays. Our next meeting is Wed., Oct. 1st at 7 PM at Rick Ruecking's, 6002 Lake St., McFarland. All men are invited to participate in any one or all meetings. Please note that ongoing meetings will be as indicated, NOT concurrent to women's group meetings as previously announced.

REMINDER

Don't forget to sign up for Circle Dinners, Activity Groups, and Hugging Partners. Clip-boards are on the small table in the meeting room.

Volunteer Assignments

Hospitality Sign-ups

Greeting Visitors:

Sept. 28: **Still Need Someone**

Oct. 5: Marilyn Ruecking

Oct. 12: **Upham Woods**

Coffee Set-up:

Sept. 28: **Still Need Someone**

Oct. 5: Kathy Helm/Gary Giorgi

Oct. 12: **Upham Woods**

Coffee Clean-up

Sept. 28: **Still Need Someone**

Oct. 5: **Still Need Someone**

Oct. 12: **Upham Woods**

Taping of Programs:

Sept. 28: Gail Coover

Oct. 5: Gary Giorgi

Oct. 12: **Upham Woods (No one)**

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

September 28

Issues In Public Education

The first speaker in a two part series on issues in public education will be Madison School Board member Ray Allen. Mr. Allen will discuss some of the issues the board will address as the district prepares for the 21st Century. This series will be led by Barbara Golden.

October 5

The Homeless and The Hungry

Have you ever been homeless? Do you know a homeless person? Chances are your answer is "no". Yet the problem of homelessness is growing in both our country and our community. How can we help? On October 5 Gail Loder of the Madison Interfaith

Hospitality Network Core Group will discuss how congregations are net-working together in many parts of the country to provide, on a rotating basis, overnight accommodations, meals, and compassionate assistance for families suffering through the crisis of home-lessness.

October 12

Upham Woods Retreat/Service

October 19

#2 of Interethnic Community & Identity

Gail Coover will present the second part of this series.

PRAIRIE CALENDAR

Sunday, September 28

10:00 AM; "Issues in Public Education". First part in a two part series. Speaker is Madison School Board Member Ray Allen.

**RE: Orientation Coffee for 3-5 grade parents after the Service.

Tuesday, September 30

6:30 PM; Social Action Comm. Mtg. At Prairie

Wednesday, October 1

7 PM; Men's Group at Rick Ruecking's home.

See previous note for details.

Sunday, October 5

10:00 AM; "The Homeless and the Hungry" Gail Loder of the Madison Interfaith Hospitality Core Group will be discussing how congregations are networking to help.

**RE: Orientation Coffee for 6-8 grade parents after the Service.

Friday, Oct. 10 - Sunday, Oct. 12

Upham Woods Retreat.

Sunday, Oct. 19

9:00 AM: Choir Rehearsal

10:00 AM; #2 of "Interethnic Community and Identity" presented by Gail Coover.

After Service: Women's Group finger potluck.

**RE: Orientation coffee for 9-12 grade parents after the service.