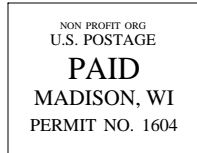


Prairie UU Society ꞑ 2010 Whenona Drive ꞑ Madison WI 53711
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PRAIRIE FIRE

... 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* Thursday, December 11, 1997
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Denominational Affairs

Central Midwest District Annual Meeting:

This mini, mini General Assembly-like meeting will be held in Madison and hosted by the First U.U. Society on April 24-26, 1998. The call has already gone out for volunteers to help at the meeting, and for families who will provide home hospitality. If you are able to volunteer or host a delegate, please let Pat Watkins know, and she will pass the names along to First Society. Call 233-5795.

WHA Underwriting: a great big thank you to those of you who contributed your WPR pledge or donation money to Prairie for the underwriting project. You will be happy to know that, to date, we have received \$460, and since many of you pay your pledges on a monthly basis rather than in one lump sum, we should have additional funds coming in as the year progresses. We have made a wonderful beginning. The details have already been confirmed with the station, and our first announcement was aired on December 7th at 12:59 PM.

Guests At Your Table boxes, which support the human rights initiatives of the U.U. Service Committee, were given out to each family on November 16th. Please place them on your dining room or kitchen table, and drop some change (.50 cents per meal is suggested) into the

box each time you sit down to eat. Boxes and donations will be collected on Sunday, December 14th.

Chalice Lighters: You have seen the Chalice Lighter logo on the name tags of many of our Members. It indicates that they have made a personal difference in enabling congregations in our own Central Midwest District to meet some of their needs. As a Chalice Lighter, you pledge to answer three calls per year with a \$10 donation. A "call" is the announcement of the selection of a growth project for a specific congregation in our district. The cash received by a congregation can only be used to initiate a new congregation, to acquire meeting space for a congregation, to secure a minister, religious educator or other professional staff, or provide for an outreach or public relations program. To be a part of the church-to-church program, you only need to register. You will be sent information by the CMD office about the three "calls" as they occur, and will receive an envelope for returning your \$10 donation. Rachel Siegfried is the current Chalice Lighter liaison for our congregation. Please contact her for answers to any questions you may have, for a copy of the Chalice Lighter brochure or to register. The Prairie registration drive for the 1998 Chalice Lighter program began on Sunday, December 7th and will continue.

Our Society

THANKS

Thanks to all of you who have given emotional support and offers of help to my family and me since learning that I have advanced cancer.

Thanks in particular to Rosemarie Lester and Warren Hagstrom, who have jointly taken over the responsibilities of program committee chair. Beyond that, we have no yet identified needs for help, but that day may come.

Mike Sheehy

Christmas Carols and Holiday Brunch

For some years now, we've had a relaxed morning of newspaper reading for that down-time service between the holidays. This year, let's try something else on December 28th. Bring your favorite Christmas carols or related music, instruments big and small (yes, Metje, spoons are invited...) and we'll have a holiday sing-a-long. The children are invited to tell about their Christmas celebrations, what they liked best, etc.. We'll finish early, say 10:45 AM, and then those who wish will gather for a nice holiday brunch at...?. Call me at 255-7039 by December 21st with suggestions and I'll make reservations.

Rosemarie Lester

An Editorial from Pat Watkins

Most Unitarians I have met pride themselves on being good citizens, and I might be inclined to wager that there is not one adult in our congregation who fails to vote, feeling that voting is a major responsibility of the good citizen. Membership in Prairie also entails that responsibility. Thus, it was a major disappointment that fewer than one-third of our membership turned out for the Parish meeting on November 16th. Our Parish meetings are democracy in action, a time during which every member of the Society has the opportunity to shape its near and long range future. But, very few of us seem to care. This past meeting was a extremely important one: your finance committee had worked long and hard to shape a budget which Prairie could live with for the next year. Some drastic cuts were made to that budget. Almost 50% was slashed from the money which is owed, and which we have always taken great pride in contributing as

our "fair" share, to the UUA. After making much ado over the past few months about our involvement, due to the 1997/98 USA Resolution on Interfaith Tolerance, in the Madison Urban Ministry, we were forced to eliminate our \$50 contribution; we also eliminated the planned \$50 membership in the UU United Nations Office. Attendees unanimously agreed, including this writer, that our other expenses took precedence over these items. But, it is sad that so few of us had a say in this. At one point during the budget discussion, two of our members had to leave for another appointment, and we were forced to stop the discussion, run out into the lobby and ask these two people to return just long enough to cast the vote; as their farewell was also a farewell to our quorum. If you are curious about the outcome of the By-law amendment, the explanation of which had taken up so much space in a recent Prairie Fire, it and any other Society business could not be conducted without a quorum, and thus had to be postponed until the April Parish Meeting. We urge you to participate in the business of the Society at that time.

RE News

December's Spirit Circle focused on the Sun and it's importance in a variety of mythological and religious traditions. December is the month of festivals of light in the Northern Hemisphere, which celebrate the lengthening of the day after the Winter Solstice.

The High School Class has been exploring the topic of conflict over the past several weeks. The 3,4,5 Class is thinking about the things in life they value, and the K,1,2 group is dealing with the issue of caring. The RE program goes on winter hiatus after Nifty Gifty; the first class of the New Year is January 4th, and will begin with a Spirit Circle led by Rick Ruecking. Happy New Year Everyone!

The RE Program raised \$49.40 for UNICEF this Fall. Thanks to everyone who participated.

Festival of Lights

FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE

(Musings after watching a "Biography" video of Carl Sagan)

I hope to go to heaven when I die.

It's really not too far up in the sky.

When I arrive I'll shout, "Praise the Lord!"

And God will greet me, "George, welcome aboard!"

But watching the "Biography" video left me aghast.

Carl Sagan was intoning "The universe is vast.

The earth's galaxy has billions of stars.

And there are billions of galaxies far beyond Mars".

So where is heaven out there in the blue?

Please let me know for I haven't a clue.

Is it a trillion miles away, a billion year ride?

Who'll be my navigator, who'll be my guide?

Will a band of angels be coming after me?

Sweet chariot, will I hop a ride on thee?

Or will an Apollo space ship transport my soul?

And what if it disappears in a huge black hole?

Where in the cosmos will St. Peter be?

Will he hand me a harp out in infinity?

Way out in space a gazillion miles from here.

Will I meet my Creator? Gosh, but where?

-George Calden-

The tides flow out from the Inner Sea at Christmastime:

They find their way to many shores

With gifts of remembrance, thoughts of love--

Though the world be weary and the days afraid

The heart renews it's life and the mind takes hope.

- Howard Thurman, an Afro-American, was dean of Boston University School of Theology in the first half of this century.

Volunteer Schedule

December 14:

Greeting Visitors: **Need Volunteer**

Coffee Set-up: **Need Volunteer**

Coffee Clean-up: **Need Volunteers**

Taping: Bob Park

December 21:

Greeting Visitors: **Need Volunteer**

Coffee Set-up: **Need Volunteer**

Coffee Clean-up: Jan Howe & Al Nettleton

Taping: Bob Park

Photo Directory Shoot- Jan. 23rd & 24th

Prairie is getting a new, color photo directory made and we hope you are pictured. On January 23 and 24, Prairie will host a photo shoot for friends and members. Our Society did this ten years ago with good results and the Olan Mills folks are back with an improved, computer-aided, one visit process.

For having your portrait professionally taken, participants will receive a Prairie photo directory, a complementary 8 X 10" color portrait, and the opportunity to purchase additional photos. Our goal is to have over 90% participation and we are counting on you to make that happen.

On coming Sundays, we will be registering photo shoot times and asking for volunteers on-site and layout help. You may also call Rick Ruecking at 838-8540 to schedule times or get questions answered. The photo shoot will be Friday, Jan 23 from 3 - 9:30 PM and Saturday, Jan. 24 from 10 AM - 5 PM.

Christmas Letters

If you are in the habit of writing a Christmas letter to update family and friends on your life, maybe you would like to share that letter with Prairie friends also. There will be a folder on the back table where you can put your letter. And if you are reading this as a prodigal Prairie friend, think about mailing your Christmas letter to Prairie. We'd like to hear from you.

Missing "Welcoming" T-shirt

If anyone knows where a black XXL, welcoming t-shirt "Affirming the inherent worth and dignity of every person" is, please call Nancy

Schraufnagel at 273-3195 , Pat Watkins or Mike Briggs.

New Hours for the Administrator (Kate)

Due to another job conflict my hours on Tuesday morning will now be worked on Monday morning. Thursday morning will remain the same. Also, please note that the gift store at the Concourse Hotel (Signature Gifts) is carrying a large selection of Seventh Heaven (me) jewelry, so check it out. By The Light of the Moon (next to Mimosa) also carries a large selection. My jewelry is made with various materials, which includes, silver, copper, nugold, wire, glass beads, recycled and tumbled glass, beach glass, and feathers. Check it out if you get to the downtown area. Happy Holidays!

Upcoming Programs

December 14

"El Nino and Wisconsin Weather"

Meteorologist Matthew Menne will be speaking on El Nino and how it affects us.

December 21

Intergenerational Solstice and Symbol Tree Celebration

Our traditional symbol tree will be decorated at this service. You are welcome to come and share some event that has happened in your life and place a symbol of that event on the tree. There will also be songs and stories and other surprises.

December 28

Christmas & Holiday Brunch

Bring your favorite Christmas carols or related music, instruments big and small (yes, Metje, spoons are invited...) and we'll have a holiday sing-a-long. The children are invited to tell about their Christmas celebrations, what they liked best, etc.. We'll finish early, say 10:45 AM, and then those who wish will gather for a nice holiday brunch.

January 4

Program led by Denominational Affairs Committee. Topic to be announced.

Prairie Calendar

Sunday, December 14

No Choir Rehearsal

10:00 AM; "El Nino & Wisconsin Weather";

presented by Matthew Menne.

-Nifty Gifty

-Prairie Bus Trip to Chicago for Renoir Exhibit.

Sunday, December 21

No Choir Rehearsal

10:00 AM; "Intergenerational Solstice & Symbol Tree Celebration".

11:45 AM; Prairie's Women's Group

Sunday, December 28

No Choir Rehearsal

10:00 AM; "Christmas & Holiday Brunch"

Sunday, January 4

No Choir Rehearsal

10:00 AM; "Denominational Affairs Committee".

Wednesday, January 7

6:30 PM; Spanish Speaker's Potluck at Prairie.

Questions? Call 238-4832.

Tuesday, January 20

6:45 PM; GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network) meets at Madison Public Library Central. The topic is "Forming Alliances in the Schools."

Friday, January 23

3-9:30 PM; Prairie Directory Photographs being taken by Olan Mills at Prairie.

Saturday, January 24

10:00 AM- 5:00 PM; Prairie Directory Photographs taken by Olan Mills at Prairie.

*RE's Wild Wintering

Next Prairie Fire Deadline is Dec. 21st.

Celebrate the Light

