



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 Bond of Union)

November 26, 2004

Prairie Fire is the semi-monthly newsletter of Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society. The two most recent issues may be seen at www.prairie.madison.uua.org

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PRAIRIE CALENDAR

Sunday, November 28

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

☞ 10:00 a.m. "Harvest Treasures," an intergenerational service

11:45 a.m. Prairie Book Club discusses *Peace Like a River* by Leif Enger.

Thursday, December 2

☞ 6:00 p.m. WOW women's group at Prairie.

Sunday, December 5

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

☞ 10:00 a.m. "Judaism and Islam: Commonalities and Conflict Resolution," last in a series on Islam by Bob Lawrence

Saturday, December 11

7:30 p.m. Prairie playreaders at the Caldens', 4606 Waukesha St.

Sunday, December 12

9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal

☞ 10:00 a.m. "What Can We Learn from the Jesus Myth?" presented by Warren Hagstrom
10:00 a.m. Nifty Gifty program for kids

Sunday, December 19

☞ 6:00 p.m. WOW women's group at Prairie.

Tuesday, December 21

2:00 p.m. Prairie Elders meet. Details TBA.

☞ = Details follow in this issue.

NEXT PRAIRIE FIRE DEADLINE: DECEMBER 5

DETAILS OF COMING EVENTS

Sunday, November 28

For the "Harvest Treasures" Thanksgiving Intergenerational Service, celebrate the color and bounty of the harvest by bringing a harvest-related item that is a feast for the eyes. Fill our meeting room with interesting items especially meaningful to you. These could include late fall garden produce, fruit, nuts, dried flowers, leaves, artwork, photographs, figurines. Briefly tell why your item is special or simply come and enjoy the visual delights. Children will have first priority in making presentations.

Sunday, December 5

The subtitle of the program is: "Are there enough commonalities among the traditions of Judaism and Islam to form a basis for solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?"

Speaker Bob Lawrence will suggest that the similarities of ideas of social justice and values of these two Abrahamic religions are sufficient to allow for solution of this conflict, which does not center around religious differences. The program will include a role-playing exercise.

Sunday, December 12

"Great are the myths—I too believe in them"
—Walt Whitman

This program, "What Can We Learn from the Jesus Myth," won't be debunking, only a little. Warren Hagstrom, the speaker, thinks it mistaken to treat the Gospel story of Jesus as narrative history,

accounts of particular people in particular times and places. Understanding the story as myth, we become enabled to take it apart and use it creatively. Since the myth inspired people like Michelangelo, Bach, and Thomas Jefferson, it has sometimes (not always!) been great. There will be time for discussion, and appropriate music for the season.

Friday, November 26, marks the birth of two revered figures in the Jain and Sikh religions. In Jainism, this date has the full moon and falls in the first month of the calendar, making it a propitious time to celebrate the births of revered and scholarly persons. The most famous of these for the Jains is the 15th-century reformer, Lonka Saha, who opposed temple worship and the use of images, leading to the founding of the Sthanakavasi sect, which emphasizes scholarship. The founder of the Sikh faith was Guru Nanak, the first of the Ten Gurus, who was born on this date in 1469 CE. He was an accomplished poet and author of 974 hymns found in the Sikh scriptures, the Guru Granth Sahib.

OUR SOCIETY

PRAIRIE WOW MEETS DECEMBER 2

The next meeting of the Prairie women's group is Thursday, December 2, at 6:00 p.m. at Prairie. Bring substantial food to share.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

NIFTY GIFTY NEEDS HELPERS

Calling all crafty Prairie members! We are looking for ideas for Nifty Gifty projects for December 12. We are also very in need of volunteers to staff each project table and assist children with creating their gifts! Please contact Kathy Converse or Melissa Gjestvang-Lucky if you can help out!

We also need 5-6 inch square gift boxes and gift bags for Nifty Gifty! Please leave them downstairs on the counter if you are able, or leave them on the bench at the top of the stairs and I will pick them up!

Melissa Gjestvang-Lucky

DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS

UUSC HOLIDAY CARDS ARE ON SALE

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee cards are available from UUSC at: www.uusc.org/store or:

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
130 Prospect Street
Cambridge, MA 02139-1845

WINTER WITH UUs IN SOUTH FLORIDA

S.W.I.M., the Southeast Unitarian Universalist Winter Institute in Miami, is all about having fun in the warm Miami sunshine! This annual retreat, for all generations, runs every year from December 26 through January 1. For more information, see www.swimuu.org (S.W.I.M. is a member in good standing of CU2C2, the Council of Unitarian Universalist Camps & Conferences, an affiliate of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA).)

MEMBERSHIP

Please note this update:

Richard and Julia Bonser
6666 Odana Rd.
Madison, WI 53719

PRAIRIE OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR HOURS

Mondays 8–10 p.m.; Saturdays 10 a.m.–12 noon

SHAAREI SHAMAYIM CALENDAR

Saturdays 8:45 a.m.–1:15 p.m.

Prairie Liaison: Celeste Robins 249–5933

PRAIRIE WEB SITES

Prairie UU Society:
<http://prairie.madison.uua.org/>

Prairie News Group:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairienews/>

Prairie Views Group:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prairieviews/>

Social Action:
<http://socialaction.homestead.htm>

LETTERS

CONGRATULATIONS TO PRAIRIE FOR AWARD



Dear friend,

I am writing to express the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's deep appreciation for the generous support of you and your congregation for our work. Through membership support and involvement, the Prairie UU Society, Madison, WI, has helped us continue to defend basic human rights in the United States and in places around the world....

You will soon receive your congregation's banner in recognition of its Creating Justice Banner Society honor for fiscal year 2004....

Because so many of your congregants were UUSC members last year, it has been honored by becoming part of the Creating Justice Banner Society. *Because this is the first time that your congregation has been honored this way, you are receiving a banner celebrating your esteemed level of commitment to justice. Should you receive this honor again in future years, you will receive streamers to attach to your banner....*

You will see recognition of your congregation in the January/February issue of the *UU World* magazine, the UUSC 2004 Annual Report, and the fall 2004 Service Committee News. I hope you will display your award as a tangible reminder and celebration of your important role in advancing justice worldwide....

Sincerely yours,
Dr. Charlie Clements, M.D., President and CEO

[*Editor's Note: In fiscal year 2004, 25 Prairie members, or 26.3%, were UUSC members (25% qualifies for the Creating Justice Banner Society), and we raised \$582.55 for Guest at Your Table, \$60.00 for UUSC Sunday, and \$139.20 in other gifts.*]

SOCIAL ACTION

INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK

Did you know that IHN has five programs? They are Shelter, Housing Stabilization, the Second Chance Apartment Project, Neighbor-to-Neighbor,

and the Tenant Advocacy Group (TAG). IHN serves about 60 families, or about 200 people, each year. Over 90 percent of families who find housing through IHN retain that housing for six months or longer, allowing them to focus on other goals.

"Peach" graduated from shelter this year and has been participating in the housing stabilization program for 10 months. She has a good, full-time job paying \$12 per hour and has been making payments on her past debts. Her two children are both doing well in school. "Joe" participated in both soccer and basketball at his middle school. "Lee" is applying for jobs and hoping to go to college after graduation. Peach recently told us that her next goal is to work towards owning a home for her family. Her case manager will be helping her make a plan for home ownership.

Rachel Krinsky, MSW, IHN Executive Director

ALLIED EMERGENCY PANTRY

Following the November 14 program on Allied Partners, bags were given out to collect items for the emergency pantry. Suggested items for bags, which you can leave at Prairie:

canned tuna	coconut milk	rice
canned salmon	peanut butter	cereal
macaroni & cheese	powdered milk	flour
spaghetti, sauce	meals in a can	sugar
canned veggies (esp. corn)		oil
Goya brand products (e.g., beans, greens, black-eyed peas)		

SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Visit UUSC's online store at www.uusc.org/store to find gifts for your loved ones this holiday season. From UUSC chalice jewelry to fair trade coffee, tea, cocoa and chocolate, we've got the perfect gift for the UU or social activist in your life.

Or give the gift of UUSC membership, to help strengthen UUSC's work, and reaffirm our shared belief in the inherent worth and dignity of all people. See www.uusc.org/info/vsmemgift.html Or, consider a donation in memory of a loved one. See: www.uusc.org/info/vsmemorial.html.

UUSC wishes you happy holidays.

*Rachel Binderman, volunteerservices@uusc.org
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee*

RETURNING PRISONER SIMULATIONS

The Madison-Area Urban Ministry (MUM) received the 2004 Whitney M. Young, Jr. Award from the Urban League in recognition of restorative justice work on prisoner reentry. Part of this effort has been its returning prisoner simulations. The last session this year will be Tuesday, November 30, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Our Lady Queen of Peace Church, 401 S. Owen Drive.

Each simulation includes the video "Today's Prisoners, Tomorrow's Neighbors," followed by role-playing. Advance registration with MUM is required. Contact MUM at 256-0906 or mum@emum.org. A donation of \$15 (adults) or \$8 (teens) is requested.

OTHER NEWS

FREE FILM IN COMMUNITY FORUMS SERIES

A series of free film screenings and discussions concludes on Thursday, December 9 at 6:30 p.m. with "Aging Out," an account of risks that young people face on their journey from foster care to independent living. The screening, part of a series of community forums on race and diversity presented by Wisconsin Public Television and the Urban League of Greater Madison, is located at Catholic Multicultural Center, 1862 Beld St., off South Park St. For more information, see www.wpt.org or www.ulgm.org, or call 251-8550.

THANKSGIVING BLOOD DONORS NEEDED

Blood supplies are particularly vulnerable during the holiday season because of the pace and pressure of the season for the donor pool. The American Red Cross is asking people to consider donating blood during the Thanksgiving weekend. The traditional Thanksgiving feast is iron-rich and can boost iron levels prior to donation, helping maintain donors' energy levels.

To encourage donations, the West and East Donor Centers will have raffles for Red Cross prizes on November 19, 20, 26, and 27. The centers are closed on Thanksgiving Day. Please call 227-1357 to make an appointment. (Prairie participates along with First Unitarian and James Reeb UU, in the Red Cross One-a-Week Club.)

GRASSROOTS LEADERSHIP COLLEGE INFORMATIONAL MEETING

The Grassroots Leadership College will hold an informational meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, December 1, at the Catholic Multicultural Center, 1862 Beld St. (St. Martin House). This meeting is for all people interested in building their skills in neighborhood and community leadership through joining the spring semester as developing leaders or coaches. Applications will be available at the event, at www.grassrootsleadershipcollege.org, or by calling 441-0085. Childcare is available.

CONFERENCE ON SAME-GENDER MARRIAGE PLANNED

Christians for Equality in Wisconsin announces a statewide conference on same-gender marriage on Saturday, December 4, 2004, 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Wauwatosa Presbyterian Church, 2366 N. 80th St. The conference is intended to raise awareness of proposed legislation in Wisconsin:

"The Legislature will be considering an amendment to the state constitution defining marriage as being between a man and a woman and prohibiting recognition of 'a legal status identical or substantially similar to that of marriage for unmarried individuals,' e.g., domestic partnerships and civil unions. This measure could threaten existing rights and benefits of same-gender couples."

Non-Christian UUs should note that one aim of this group is to present a liberal alternative to the voice of the radical right that claims to represent "The Christian Perspective." For more information, see <http://www.marriage-equality-wi.org>.

Jennifer Thomson, United Unitarian & Universalist Society, Mukwonago, Wisconsin

WOMEN'S WINTER CONFERENCE

WomanSpirit 2005 Winter Conference, "Choosing with Purpose—Living with Conscience—Women in Community," will take place on Friday, January 21, through Sunday, January 23, at the Springfield Hilton in Springfield, Illinois. Anna Blythe Lappe, coauthor of *Hope's Edge: the Next Diet for a Small Planet*, is the keynote speaker. This conference is presented by the Women and Religion Committee, Central Midwest District, and Women of the Central Illinois Planning Committee. Check the website: www.womenandreligion.org.