

Prairie Fire

February 2015

Prairie Calendar

(See descriptions of programs below)



Sun. February 1	10:00 am Service— SMART Recovery — Dr. Henry Steinberger
Sun. February 1	11:45 am— Humanist Union
Sat. February 7	5:00—7:00 am— Men's Shelter Breakfast
Sat. February 7	9:00 am— WOW@Prairie
Sat. February 7	11:00 am— Memorial Service for Mona Birong
Sun. February 8	10:00 am Service— "What's Love Got To Do With It?" — Reverend Sandra Ingham
Sun. February 8	5:30 pm— Men's Group
Sun. February 15	10:00 am Service— "Our Place in the Cosmos" — John Wunderlin
Sun. February 15	11:30 am — Soup Sunday
Sun. February 15	11:45— Book Club
Sun. February 22	10:00 am Service— "Those Troubling Transcendentalists" — Reverend Sandra Ingham
Mon. February 23	Evening— Spanish Speakers Potluck at Prairie (call Rosemary for a ride 608-238-4382
Tues. February 24	1:00—3:00 pm— Prairie Elders at Prairie
Sat. March 7	5:00—7:00 am— Men's Shelter Breakfast

Feb. 1st, **The Humanist Union** will have an hour with clinical psychologist Dr. Henry Steinberger, Prairie's morning service speaker, to discuss SMART Recovery (Self Management and Recovery Training). The secular and scientifically-based approach to addiction recovery provides an alternative to the religious based approach of Alcoholics Anonymous. Dr. Steinberger endorses science and secularism over spiritualist, though he works with people no matter what their beliefs.

Feb. 1st., **WOW@Prairie: Women of Wonder** meets every 1st Saturday of the month at Prairie. Bring a breakfast/brunch dish to share. Contact Anne Urbanski, 221-4053 or anneu53714@gmail.com.

Feb. 7 **Men's Shelter Breakfast: Prairie & Reeb:** Prairie has a long-standing tradition of helping to provide a scrambled egg breakfast for the guys at the men's drop-in shelter once a month. The prep and cooking goes fast and the hot meal

is much appreciated by the guys at the shelter, which is located at Grace Episcopal on the Capitol Square. Prairie and James Reeb Societies work together to provide the meal. Each society usually sends two volunteers each, but it's flexible—sometimes a family will do the breakfast, sometimes another small group from either church wishes to provide this service. Our next shift is Saturday, February 7, from 5:00 to about 7:00 am. If you are interested in helping with either breakfast, please contact Paula Pachciarz. New volunteers would be working with experienced ones from either Prairie or the James Reeb Society. Paula Packciarz (608) 206-1770 or pjpchz@gmail.com.

Feb. 15 Book Club

We will be discussing two books on February 15 because of scheduling difficulties in January. They are:

Bucolic Plague by Jose Kilmer-Purcell drag queen sequel book (I Am Not Myself These Days), suggested by Barb Park .“I adore the Beekman boys’ story. Their unlikely story of love, the land, and a herd of goats is hilariously honest. If these two can go from Manhattan to a goat farm in upstate New York, then I can’t help feeling there is hope for us all.” —Alice Waters 336 pages

and

The Rambunctious Garden: Saving Nature in a Post-Wild World by Emma Marris, suggested by John & Mary Frantz *Rambunctious Garden* is short on gloom and long on interesting theories and fascinating narratives, all of which bring home the idea that we must give up our romantic notions of pristine wilderness and replace them with the concept of a global, half-wild rambunctious garden planet, tended by us. 224 pages Goodreads review

The selection and date after that are as follows.

March 15, 2015 - ***Americanah*** Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, suggested by Pam Gates A story of love and race centered around a young man and woman from Nigeria who face difficult choices and challenges in the countries they come to call home. Fearless, gripping, at once darkly funny and tender, spanning three continents and numerous lives, *Americanah* is a richly told story set in today’s globalized world. 477 pages Goodreads review

Feb. 22 “Those Troubling Transcendentalists” by Reverend Sandra Ingham. In addition to being a very long, difficult-to-spell word, what exactly does transcendentalism mean? And why should you care about this once-revolutionary idea? Or is it possible that it is still a revolutionary idea? And why were the

Transcendentalists of the mid-1800's in this country troubling? Are they still causing trouble? Join me this Sunday for a look back at one of the most important and controversial parts of our Unitarian and Universalist history.

Feb. 23 **Prairie Elders at PRAIRIE—**"Where do I go when I need to leave my home in the community?" We seniors have many choices now-a-days. A big one is where next to live when we don't want, or can't, manage living totally on our own. Our options, and when to make that crucial decision, will be today's topic. Feel free to bring a snack, but it is not necessary. Chat starts at 1:00 pm with the discussion starting at 1:30 pm.

RE Circle of Friends—Holly Tellander, Director of Religious Education

So much happening downstairs! The two lower classes just went on an extremely informative field trip to the southern Wisconsin Second Harvest Food Bank. We had a great time and learned a lot about hunger in our area.



Do you have a great idea for social justice for Prairie students to consider? Please speak with Holly Tellander. Great ideas are always appreciated! A big goal in RE this year is to help students get inspired about incorporating social justice into their daily lives!

MYSTERY FRIENDS - Sign-ups for Prairie's popular letter exchange program begin February 15th. There will be sign-up sheets outside the meeting room on February 15th and February 22nd. Mystery friends will be assigned the following week with the first letters due on March 1st. Letters will be turned in to Holly Tellander for the consecutive Sundays, including on March 22nd when we will hold our celebratory revealing luncheon after service. For more information see Prairie's RE Facebook page or speak with Holly Tellander.

Message from the President—Gary Gates

I've been giving a lot of thought to Prairie's future. In the few years I have been here, I have come to love the warm and caring community that welcomed and comforted me as I sought a spiritual home.

As President, I feel that one of my responsibilities is to look ahead, to ensure that Prairie continues to thrive and provide others with a spiritual home. Where will we be and what impact will we have had on the world around us five or ten years from now?

Trying to foresee the future is in many ways a waste of time. We cannot foresee the future. Any plans we make and any expectations we have will be superseded by events we did not expect.

We can, however, be sure that we will have many new members, and that many of our present members will no longer be here. New members will have new ideas and new priorities. Yet we must think about what we would like in the future for it will be the concerns that the Prairie community is willing to advocate and work for which will create the atmosphere that in turn will attract the new members who will continue to strive for a better world.

I think the key is not to try to foresee the future, but rather to pose and discuss the important questions about who we want to be and what we want to do. To start our exploration, I offer the following possible questions for your consideration. I would appreciate hearing from you what other questions you think we should consider.

1. Why is Prairie not racially or culturally diverse? What can (should) be done to change this?

2. What role do we wish to play in correcting the inequities created by our “justice” system?
3. Do we make all newcomers feel truly welcome, including political conservatives? Is this an issue we should be concerned about?
4. What role can we play in mitigating and preventing damage to the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part?

Again I ask that you consider what you think are the important questions that we need to ponder. I will compile the feedback you give me and try to figure out the best way to get discussion going.

Some things to note:

2015 Prairie Retreat—

Mark your calendars! This year, our annual retreat will take place the weekend of May 1st to May 3rd. It will once again be at Bethel Horizons Retreat Center, which is located in Dodgeville, Wisconsin. This will be a time for relaxation, reading, games, hiking, and a variety of programs to choose from for folks of all ages. Child care will be provided from 9 to 5 on Saturday.

Memorial Service—

On Saturday, February 7, there will be a memorial service at Prairie at 11:00 am for Mona Birong, age 91. Mona was formerly a member of Prairie.

Musings from the Minister—Reverend Sandra Ingham

The ANSWER is: (a) to build and sustain a warm, nurturing community where people support each other through thick and thin; (b) to spread the word or the "Good News" about who we are and what we believe; (c) to grow (in numbers, in relationship with each other, personally); (d) to have fun and enjoy each others company; (e) to take our strengths and sense of fairness and justice out into the wider world so that we might help mend a broken world?

The QUESTION is: What is the purpose of a church/congregation/society/fellowship/faith tradition?? (Use whatever word you need to use here that allows you to stay “on topic”!)

Growing up in a church that strongly believed in social justice and the power of a spiritual community to help achieve that and then attending a seminary where

social justice and the power of a spiritual community to help achieve that and then attending a seminary where social justicd work was a part of the curriculum, I have always assumed that one of the main reasons—if not THE main reason—we “do” church/fellowship/meeting house/faith community is (e) above.

Much to my surprise and bewilderment, I have found in recent conversations at Prairie that this is not necessarily true. Some folks have told me that they are here for the community. There is definitely nothing wrong with that—Prairie does community really well. Prairie is a warm and nurturing place where people do a lot for each other through the good times and the hard times. But that should just be the beginning of why we are here.

So, my real question to you is this: Now that you have mastered the art of building and sustaining a community (well, almost, anyway), are you ready to ratchet it up, ready for a new challenge -- the challenge of working together as a religious or sacred or spiritual community to build a more just and fair world? Unitarian Universalists have a long tradition of being in the forefront of social justice work. How can Prairie best carry on this tradition?**I**

Oh, the answer -- to the question at the beginning of my column is ALL OF THE ABOVE, a through e! Rev. Sandy

It takes a village to bring us Sunday Morning Services—Patty Stockdale, Vice President

In our over-committed lives, each week we make time to come join our family and friends at Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society. Sunday services are the focus for many of us each Sunday morning. And many people are essential in bringing the morning together.

Arriving at the corner of Whenona Drive and Crawford Street we walk up to enter the building and witness the handy work of the Housing and Property Committee shoveling the snow, cutting the grass, and maintaining the building. Once inside the doors, we find the smiling face of a Sunday morning greeter, often Rose Smith or Heidi Hughes, welcoming us with a cheery “Good Morning”. These warm and kind faces are the members and volunteers of our Membership Committee.

Come before 10 am when services begin! You can join in with the many people, young and old, milling about in the foyer sharing stories and bits of information about the past week or week to come. Sip tea or coffee, prepared by the Membership Committee. The building is clean inside because of Prairie’s wonderful custodian Raju and the kitchen is watched over by some very meticulous volunteers to keep it in the ready for monthly Soup Sundays, potlucks, and birthday and anni-

versary celebrations.

The doors to the meeting room have not quite opened as the choir is practicing its morning hymns and choral songs for this or future services. Barb Park is our choir director and is looking forward to moving the morning practice next door to our recent acquisition, 2006 Whenona Drive, expected to be ready this Spring.

Once the doors are opened, 15 minutes or so before the service, we come in to see the chairs placed in rows or circles for the day's presentation. Most chairs hold orders of service and hymnals, set out by members of the Program Committee. The Program Committee is one of Prairie's important committees that plans our weekly speaker. Our minister Sandy Ingham is often the speaker and provides both inspiring and challenging topics to discuss and contemplate. Many others stand and speak at the podium to the Sunday morning audiences, as well.

Each service requires the volunteer help of presiders who welcome us and guide us through the service, worship assistants who carry the mikes around for questions and comments and facilitate the passing of the offering basket. Technical assistance is provided by the Communications Committee to manage the sound or run the computer for visual presentations; Bob Park also records the service for later listening, for those who were not able to attend.

During the service, the speaker or other volunteer reads the Story for All Ages to the children who gather around in the front. When the story ends, the congregation sings the children and youth out to their classes taught by teachers from the Religious Education Committee.

Music is an important part of the morning service. In addition to the choir, there are talented and willing musicians who play instrumental music for the prelude, offertory, and postlude. And then others who accompany the congregation when we sing the morning's hymns. Mary Frantz coordinates the music and welcomes all musicians of various ages and levels of skill. Prairie members and friends like to sing!

Following the service, there are periodic events. Monthly, we have Soup Sundays coordinated by the Hospitality Committee headed by Barb Chatterton Frye. She recruits volunteers to bring soups and salads that the congregation can eat for a mere \$5. Soup Sundays have become a successful Prairie fundraiser. Other Sundays after service there may be a book group discussion, coordinated by Mary Mullen. Or other activities may include a Religious Education event or a parish meeting.

Please consider volunteering for and participating in one or more of Prairie's committees or groups. A full list is located on Prairie's website, <http://uuprairie.org/aboutus/#com>, or call Patty Stockdale for contact information, 608-298-0843

Visit Prairie's website (see below) for further information.

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