

Prairie Fire

March 2015

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Prairie Calendar

(See descriptions of programs below)

Sun	March 1	10:00 am service— SMART Recovery — By Dr. Henry Steinberger
Sun	March 1	11:45 am— Humanist Union
Sun	March 1	5:00 pm— Men's Group at Prairie
Sun	March 7	5:00—7:00 am— Men's Shelter Breakfast
Sat	March 7	9:00 am— WOW@Prairie
Sun	March 8	10:00 a.m. service— Equal in Faith: Why Religious Discrimination Against Women Affects us All — By Johanna Hatch
Sun	March 8	12:01 am Time to Spring Forward!
Sun	March 15	10:00 a.m service—"Take Two"— Second Part of Transcendentalism Series By Rev. Sandra Ingham
Sun	March 15	11:30 am— Soup Sunday
Sun	March 22	10:00 am service— Thinking Like the Universe — Why it Matters to us so much now — By Rev. Penny Andrews
Mon	March 23	Evening— Spanish Speakers Potluck at Prairie (call Rosemary for a ride 608-238-4382)
Tues	March 24	1:30-3:30 pm— Prairie Elders at Prairie
Sun	March 29	10:00 am service—"Betrayal"—By Rev. Sandra Ingham
Sat	April 4	5:00-7:00 am— Men's Shelter Breakfast
Sun	April 5	10:00 am service—"Joyful, Joyful"—By Rev. Sandra Ingham
Fri	May 1	Prairie Retreat Weekend —May 1-3 at Bethel Horizons

March 1—**SMART Recovery** by Dr. Henry Steinberger. Due to the snow cancellation on Feb.1st, we had to reschedule this presentation. Justice demands that we offer people choices when it comes to health and treatment options. One size does not fit all. SMART Recovery (Self Management and Recovery Training) provides assistance to individuals seeking abstinence from addictive behaviors. The approach used is secular and scientifically-based using non-confrontational motivational, behavioral and cognitive methods. Meeting participants learn recovery methods derived from evidence-based addiction treatments.

March 1—**The Humanist Union** On March 1st, in a program originally scheduled for Feb. 1st but canceled due to the snowstorm, 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 "higher power" based approach of Alcoholics Anonymous. Dr. Steinberger endorses science and secularism over spiritualist, though he works with people no matter what their beliefs.

March 8—**Equal in Faith: Why Religious Discrimination Against Women Affects Us All** by Johanna Hatch. In honor of International Women's Day, Johanna Hatch will speak about the interfaith Equal in Faith campaign against religious discrimination against women. Led by Catholic, LDS, Muslim, and Jewish women, this global campaign brings to light how discrimination and inequality in religious communities impacts women's equality in society at large. Johanna will also discuss the necessity of progressive religious communities as allies and advocates for gender justice.

March 15—**"Take Two"** by Rev. Sandra Ingham. This is the second installment of a series about Transcendentalism. On this Sunday, I will try to leave behind the abstract, obtuse consideration of this important part of our history and bring you some "action figures". I will explore the lives of a few Transcendentalists who put their beliefs into practice. Some of these folks you may have heard of; others will be unknown to you. I promise that they will all be interesting characters, as well as relevant to life in the twenty-first century.

March 22—**Thinking Like the Universe—Why it matters to us so much now** by Rev. Penny Andrews. This service will explore Deep History as understood by Science and what it can show us today as we live into a world rife with challenges. We will also explore the distinction Ken Wilber makes between the words Kosmos and Cosmos—and the invitation it creates in our consciousness of interconnectedness.

March 24—**Prairie Elders**. Topic: Thinking of spring gardening...flowers trees, vegetables, lawns. Where are the best places to buy your plants? What are the best places to buy your plants? What are your garden inspirations? What to bring: If convenient, bring a few snacks. If not convenient, don't worry about it,

March 29—”**Betrayal**”— by Rev. Sandra Ingham—Someone once said that there are only two human stories: love and betrayal. We have looked at love and compassion a lot during the past few months. Today we will consider betrayal and where it fits into the broader topic of evil. For Christians, this Sunday is known as Palm Sunday, the beginning of Holy week and the events leading up to the betrayal of Jesus. What meaning might these events have for those of us who are not Christian?

April 5—”**Joyful, Joyful**”by Rev. Sandra Ingham—How can we possible be joyful in a world as crazy and sad and scary as the one in which we live? How is joy maintained in the midst of darkness and grief, pain and sorrow? How do you cultivate joy? What moments in your life would you classify as joyful? How do you rediscover joy after having it trampled upon or losing it because of the path your life has temporarily or permanently taken? I hope that some of you will come prepared to share your answers to those last two questions.

May 1-3—**Prairie 2015 Retreat**—The program schedule is beginning to take shape. We already have some programs on the docket: John Wunderlin, together with the Iowa County Astronomy Club, will share the night sky on Friday, May 1, with some telescopes and Patty Stockdale will show a DVD “Jens Jensen: The Living Green”. If you have any ideas for presenting a program, please let me know: plong373@gmail.com.

From Penny Eiler

On Jan 11th Robin Proud did a program on studies that show reading fiction makes people more compassionate. The program titled "A Dose of Compassion" will be on the Prairie web-site. As a part of the presentation Robin asked people to share fiction books that were eye opening for them. This list is the books Prairie members suggested.

Title	Author
One Thousand White Women The Journals of May Dod	Jim Fergus
Empire of the summer moon :	
Quanah Parker and the rise and fall of the Comanches, the most powerful Indian tribe in American history	Samuel C. Gwynne
Fifty Shades of Grey	E.L. James
Freedom	Jonathan Franzen
Enrique's Journey	Sonia Nazario
Orphan Train	library has several versions
A Child Called "it": one child's courage to survive	David J. Pelzer
The Lord of the Rings	J.R.R. Tolkin
The Forest People	Colin Turnbull
Madam Bovary	Gustave Flaubert
Children are Artists	Daniel M. Mendelowitz
The Blind Bull	George Guion Williams
From Here to Eternity	James Jones
The New Jim Crow	Michelle Alexander
Escape From Freedom	Eriich Fromm
Black Like Me	John Howard Griffin
Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion	David Hume

Being Liberal in an Illiberal Age :	Jack Mendelsohn
Why I Am a Unitarian Universalist	Nicole Krauss
The History of Love	Frances Hodgson Burnett
The Secret Garden	Norman Maclean & Barry Moser
A River Runs Through It	Mark Twain
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn	Stephen Hawking
A Brief History of Time	Beatrix Potter
Peter Rabbit	Johanna Spyri
Heidi	Beatrix Potter
Jeremy Fisher	Rudyard Kipling
The Jungle Book	Grace Livingston Hill
The Enchanted Barn	Lalita Tademy
Citizens Creek	

Contributors to this list include: Metje Butler, Gary Gates, Anne Lundin, Ruth Calden, and Mary Mullen.

Message from the President—Gary Gates

Last month I said that I felt one of my responsibilities as President was thinking about Prairie's future. Actually this is the responsibility of every Prairie member. We are all benefiting from this warm and caring community, and in turn we should be trying to ensure that it is available for others in the future.

To give everyone a chance to join the discussion, I propose that we have a couple of sessions at our Spring Retreat devoted to the questions that have been offered for exploration.

The questions suggested to date are:

- 1) Why is Prairie not racially or culturally diverse? What can (or 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 existence of which we are all a part?
- 5) Should our services be streamed over the Internet, so people can "attend" without actually attending the service?
- 6) What should our relationship be with the neighborhoods around us?
- 7) Is our primary purpose simply supporting each other and welcoming others who want what we have or does honoring our principles call for bringing our message of love and acceptance of to a wider audience?
- 8) What can we do to offer a more inviting atmosphere for younger families or singles.

I would like to receive even more questions from parish members and look forward to lively discussions at our Retreat about how Prairie should approach the future. I hope everyone will

The preschool class has planted a few bulbs and a real lawn! They must be ready for some warmer temperatures. They have been baking cookies and working on getting along. There is always a lot of laughing coming out of that classroom!

The Super Heroes (2nd-4th) class is always busy creating something new. They have completed the section of their curriculum on UU superheroes and have learned about so many amazing people. We hope they are out there talking about these amazing characters!

The middle schoolers (5th-8th) are always full of energy! We can hear their enthusiasm ringing through the halls on any given Sunday. They are looking forward to moving to the new house for more space to create everything their minds can conjure.

High Schoolers are still deep in discussion each week. They are working on a service to share everything they learned from the poll they conducted a few weeks back. It promises to be very enlightening!

As always, we'd love to see you downstairs. Come on down and check out our interactive bulletin boards and make a contribution. We can always use donations of pre-packaged string cheese as well as single serve applesauce containers. We've got big outdoor plans come spring time – there has been talk of a labyrinth and a garden. If you are interested in participating in either, come on down and let us know!

Also – We are still collecting gently used snow gear in sizes 3T-adult. We'd love to have a stash of gear for students to use in the event that they would like to head outdoors. It can be difficult for parents to haul snow gear in on Sunday mornings. As the weather (hopefully) begins to warm up in the coming months, keep your eyes out at St. Vinnies or Goodwill for gear to go on sale and snatch it up for the RE gang!

As always, thanks for your support!

MOSES: Expanding Our Voices—Anne Lundin (Madisons Organizing in Strength, Equality, and Solidarity)

Prairie UU is one of the sponsors of MOSES, an ecumenical community organization focused on reforming Dane County's criminal justice system. They hold monthly meetings—the first Saturday of every month at First Congregational church, starting at 9:30 (meet and greet) and then begins at 10:00 am.

I went last month and hope to return again and become active in this amazing organization. I have had some experience teaching in the jail in Atlanta and in working with librarians in establishing a jail library and kid-connect program with picture books. I sense already that I have much to learn about the incarceration conditions here in Madison: too many people incarcerated for issues related to addiction and poverty; intolerable use of solitary confinement; and racial disparities throughout the system.

MOSES is impressive and inspiring because there is such a coalition of dedicated people working as advocates and activists. The group is well organized, and the time in meetings is part reporting, part training, part socializing and becoming a community. All are welcome to join. It's a friendly group.

The next meeting is Saturday, March 7th, 9:30 at First Congregational church. Molly Plunkett and Pam Gates are our two official representatives, and the more the merrier.

Musings from the Minister—Reverend Sandra Ingham

A few days ago, I heard one of the strangest questions I have ever heard. It came from a reporter who asked a politician, a governor of a certain state we are all familiar with, whether or not that politician thought the President of the United States is a Christian. At first, I thought that I had misheard the question. Who would ask such a stupid thing? And why would they? Did the questioner miss the civics class in junior high or middle school? Had the questioner never heard of the seminal idea of separation of church and state?

Did this person not grasp the concept that this is not supposed to be an exclusively Christian nation? At least, in theory, our country is not a Christian country or a Jewish one or a Muslim one. Did the reporter forget that small detail we call the First Amendment to the Constitution? You know, the one that states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof;..." "

The correct response to the reporter should have been something like this. Why are you asking such an absurd question? Are you an American citizen? If the answer is yes, and I presume it is, then I refer you to the Constitution of the United States, in hopes that it will refresh your memory about one of the most important things upon which this country is founded.

Other correct answers could have been any or all of the following. (1) It is none of my business what the president's personal beliefs about religion and theology, faith and the unknown are. (2) Well, he acts Christian, though I don't believe that you have to aspire to any faith tradition to be a caring, compassionate individual. (3) Ditto for being an ethical person. (4) Oh, I didn't realize that you had to be a Christian to be president of this great social experiment that we call the United States of America.

As you probably can tell, I am more than a little concerned about both the question and the answer from this real-life exchange. We have Unitarian Universalist Christians in our congregations. That is a good thing. I respect them. I am happy to have them be a part of our diversity. We try to welcome the Christians and the Buddhists and the unbelievers and the pagans and the pantheists and the humanists -- you get my drift. I hope we continue to make everyone feel at home here at Prairie, whether or not we agree with their beliefs. And, I trust that we will all continue to work together to respect and maintain the separation of church and state -- a huge, miraculous gift which was given to us to cherish, hold and pass on to succeeding generations.

Visit Prairie's website for further information: <http://www.uuprairie.org>