

# Prairie Fire

**August 2015**

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## Prairie Calendar

(See descriptions of programs below)

- Sat August 1** 9:00 a.m.—**WOW**—at Prairie
- Sun August 2** 10:00 a.m. service—**The Choice**—by Dean Hinmon—Sometimes In life we all make a choice, either consciously or unconsciously, between two opposites. We decide if we are living in a world of love where all of us on the planet are one big support system or if we are living in a dog-eat-dog world of fear and hate. Put simply, we choose to live in either a world of love or a world of fear—a world that's all about WE or all about ME.
- Sun August 2** 11:45 a.m.—**Humanists to discuss Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind**—with Marcia Johnson—lunch  
Followed by the meeting at the Prairie Annex
- Sun August 2** 5:00 p.m.—**AFIK-The Men's Group**—at Prairie.
- Fri August 7** 5:00 p.m.—**Prairie Game Night**
- Sat August 8** 5:00-7:00 a.m.—**Men's Shelter Breakfast**
- Sun August 9** 10:00 a.m. service—**Women and Personhood**—by Johanna Hatch.
- Sun August 9** 11:45 a.m.—**Board Meeting**—at Prairie
- Sat August 15** 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.—**RE Clean-up Day**
- Sun August 16** 10:00 a.m.—service--**Ever-Changing Answers to Ever-Changing Questions** by Rev. Scott Gerard Prinster
- Sun August 16** 11:45 a.m.-- **Book Club discusses The Book Thief August 16**
- Sun August 23** 10:00 a.m.—service—**Coming Out** by Rev. Sandra Ingham
- Mon August 24** **Spanish Speakers** will meet at Prairie. There will be a pot luck Dinner. Call Rosemary Dorney (238-4382) or Donna Murdoch (238-3802) if you need a ride.
- Tues August 25** 1:30-3:30 p.m.—**Prairie Elders**—at Prairie—Contacts: Call Rosemary Dorney (238-4382) or Donna Murdoch (238-3802) if you need a ride
- Sun August 30** 10:00 a.m. service—**Justified Anger**—by Kaleem Caire.
- Fri Sept. 4** 5:00 p.m.—**Board Game Night**
- Sat Sept 5** 9:00 a.m.—**WOW**—at Prairie
- Sun Sept 6** 10:00 a.m.—service
- Sun Sept 6** 11:45 a.m.—**Humanist Meeting**—at Prairie
- Sun Sept 6** 5:30 p.m.—**Men's Group**—at Prairie
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August 1--Prairie's women's group meets the first Saturday morning of each month for breakfast and conversation. The August meeting will be Saturday, August 1, beginning at 9:00 a.m. at the Prairie meeting house. This month we will be doing a small craft project, making hand fans for use during services and other meetings. All women associated with Prairie are invited to attend, and newcomers are especially welcome! Please bring breakfast food or drink to share. Anne Urbanski for Prairie Women of Wonder (WOW)

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August 2--At the Humanist Union's monthly meeting on Aug. 2nd Marcia Johnson will lead a discussion of the book [\*Sapiens-A Brief History of Humankind\*](#) by Yuval Noah Harari. If you haven't read the book, you can read a review online such as the [one in The Guardian](#). We'll start with potluck lunch about 11:45 am followed by our program from 12:30 to 1:30 pm. Both will be in the Prairie Annex

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August 9—Debates on reproductive rights often center on questions of fetal personhood. Beliefs and laws that privilege fetal personhood reduce women to a status of conditional personhood, always at risk of losing their legal status if they become pregnant. Using Unitarian Universalism's first principle (the inherent worth and dignity of every person) as a starting point, we will examine cases such as Las 17 of El Salvador, Savita Halppanavar of Ireland, and Wisconsin's recent law restricting abortion at twenty weeks to re-center the conversation about personhood on women.

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August 16--Why has the idea of evolution been such a controversial topic in American religion? Despite its being such a disputed idea, we'll explore how fundamental it is to the world around us, and how vital it is to a healthy search for meaning and purpose. Join us as we explore how our commitment to intellectual integrity can bring together this most dangerous idea with the values and traditions of liberal religion! The Rev. Scott Prinster is currently finishing his dissertation at the University of Wisconsin-Madison on the historical relationship between religion and science in the United States. He has served congregations in Michigan and Wisconsin as well as teaching English for two years at the Unitarian seminary in Transylvania. Before attending seminary, his background was in physics, and he worked as a NASA contractor for the space program.

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August 16— The Prairie Book Club will meet on Sunday, August 16 to discuss "the extraordinary *New York Times* #1 Bestseller" ***The Book Thief*** by Markus Zusak. This book has won many awards. Narrated by Death, it takes place in Germany in 1939, and follows a young girl whose life is greatly affected by those times. You can't go wrong with this book, and although it is 550 pages long, you will get through it in record time because you won't be able to put it down. To get a book immediately, contact Mary Mullen who has picked up 7 copies at the library. The Book Club meets right after the Sunday service. If it's a Soup Sunday, we eat right along with everyone else and then meet. If it isn't, we bring our own potluck food.

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AUGUST 23 -- "Coming Out", Rev. Sandra Ingham. Coming out of despair, that is. In mid-July, I talked about sitting with our despair over the state of the world and

the necessity of experiencing positive disintegration. What happens after that? Going through a period of positive disintegration will not destroy us. Instead, it can challenge us with new possibilities, releasing a kind of collective energy that might give us creative space in which to come to terms with our despair. Perhaps there will be a breeze on this Sunday that will help us... say what?? See the Musings from the Minister Column for more information and clarification.

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### **MUSINGS FROM THE MINISTER....**

Recently, I was chatting with some folks who were getting ready for a wedding -- an outdoor mid-July wedding, on a weekend when the forecast was for particularly hot and humid weather. Weather being inevitable and doing what it will, there wasn't much I could say to reduce their anxiety. I only managed, "Maybe there will be a breeze." I thought the exact same thing a few days later when I was in the middle of a very long walk on a very hot and humid day, "Maybe there will be a breeze." And there was, not one breeze, but several!

I realized there is a parallel here when trying to work through the so-called dark emotions, such as despair. Even though despair work is on a much larger, more important scale, it feels similar to working our way through heat and humidity, as well as muck and mayhem. I suggested that in our culture, we don't talk about despair, let alone intentionally sitting with it.

On that Sunday in July, I purposely did not include a congregational response time during the service. Sometimes it doesn't feel right to me to have the response time during the service. Sometimes it is good to let thoughts and feelings settle, to let ideas simmer on the back burners of our minds. That does not mean that I am opposed to discussion of whatever the Sunday topic is. However, there are other ways to do this. Getting coffee and gathering around in a circle with people -- right then and there, immediately after the service -- has worked well for me with other congregations. Another way to have a longer, more thoughtful discussion of Sunday morning topics is to do it during the week. Yet another option would be to offer what some Unitarian Universalist congregations call "Adult R.E."

And, on most Sundays, I will include a congregational response time.... my plan for this August Sunday is to allow for a longer-than-usual-time.

I am reminded now that I need to remind all of you that if you want to give me feedback, please do so. I welcome your comments, your constructive criticism, your compliments, as appropriate. If you are having difficulty reaching me or if you are not comfortable talking to me directly, at least not initially, then please remember that we have a Committee on Ministry to whom you can speak. The three members of that Committee are Heidi Hughes, Kate Liu and Rick Ruecking.

I hope that our collective thoughts and our sharing of feelings after sitting with despair for awhile will seem like a breeze on a hot day. See you Sunday! Rev. Sandy

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### **Message from the President—Gary Gates**

Your strength is your weakness; your weakness is your strength.

For years I have used this maxim to moderate my tendency to cause problems for myself. One of my strengths is self-reliance, but self-reliance has negative effects when I am unwilling to ask for or receive help from others. Negative effects include not getting a job done as well as it could have been done, but, even more important, an unwillingness to ask for help leaves others feeling unappreciated. When I see something that needs doing, I tend to just do it without discussing it with others. Then I may find myself feeling frustrated that others aren't helping.

How does this relate to Unitarian-Universalism and Prairie?

We also have strengths. UUs have strong opinions. We don't just follow the crowd. This often leaves us unable to communicate or relate effectively with people who have other beliefs, even those in our own congregation. I have felt sometimes that there is no word I can use to describe our faith that someone won't object to. (Does anybody object to my use of the word faith?)

Prairie is a small, close-knit congregation that in many ways is like a good family. This can lead to a satisfaction with the way things are and no sense of urgency to reach out and get involved in the wider community. Some newer members have observed that they love Prairie but feel like they aren't "part of the family".

As we move forward, let us take pride in our strengths, but let us also remember to reach out to and value others and not leave them feeling that our strengths have excluded them.

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**Help Make a RE-freshing Change!** Big changes are coming to the RE space because of the new room available in the house. Holly's DRE office will stay, but the storage area will move from the closet to a room off of the common area, and the nursery will be moving to a room with a real door! Many hands are needed to make the transition easier and to prepare the space for the coming RE year. Please join us Saturday, August 15, from 9-1. We will provide snacks and beverages, and pizza!, along with our sincere appreciation for your help. Hope to see you on Saturday.  
The RE Committee

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### **Make Music Madison a Great Success at Prairie June 21**

You couldn't have asked for a nicer day for the 9 hours of outdoor free music at Prairie than the solstice on June 21. The weather was sunny all day, music began at 9:45 am and didn't stop until 7:15, there were ample volunteers, and every group had a chance to accept some remuneration for their time.

During the Prairie Sunday service time, 9 individuals or groups performed, for a total of about 2 dozen different musicians. Then throughout the rest of the day 15 more individuals or groups treated our ears and eyes to their musical talent.

The audience swelled to 71 at one point. Some 48 people were present shortly after Prairie's service began and 56 were there by 10:25. Other high points were 65 at 11:30 am for Helen Avakian & Dave Irwin playing fingerstyle guitar, 71 at 12:15 pm for Guitars for Vets, 52 at 1:00 pm for Dark of the Moon Contra-band, and 39 at 4:35 pm for the Raging Grannies. The audience never sank below 16 and was usually at least in the 20s and 30s.

Due to the efforts of Gary Gates and others who made the rounds with the busking buckets, \$471.70 was taken in during the day. Prairie got the lion's share. Well, what do you expect when the baskets are passed and people are accustomed to giving in church and also several groups turned over what was collected for them? Performing individuals and groups got anywhere from \$4.00 to \$62.00. Some other income will go to Make Music Madison and to the Dunn's Marsh Neighborhood Association which co-sponsored the venue and also sold bottled water.

Heart-felt thanks for a successful day go to the many Prairie volunteers. Rick Ruecking and Mary Mullen spent 3 hours on Friday putting up signs to direct people to Prairie. Erin Bosch and Mary took them down at the end of the day in just 45 minutes. Volunteers with lengthy service during the day were Gary and Pam Gates, Paula Pachciarz, Bill Parmenter and Penny Eiler, Al Nettleton, Dan Proud, Erin Bosch and Mary Mullen. People not already named who helped set up or take down include Kathy & Randy Converse, Carl Wacker, and Caron Beaudoin. I hope I didn't miss anyone.

The co-sponsor, Dunn's Marsh Neighborhood Association, did a lot to promote the day by putting information and the schedule on their Facebook page and in a flyer delivered door-to-door to nearly 600 households in the neighborhood. At least a dozen neighbors gave up to 3 hours each delivering the flyer. In addition, two of the DMNA Neighborhood Council members worked for hours during the concert: Yannette Cole sold bottled water and did other jobs on site most of the day, while Mary Mullen served as MC for a while and also was a general organizer throughout the day.

Look what we can do when we all work together!

**Prairie Musicians, Make Music Madison at Prairie, June 21, 2015**



John Wunderlin's horn quartet (John, far right)



The Prairie Choir with Barb Park directing



Ruth Calden, Rosemarie  
Lester



Carl Wacker accompanies Paula  
Pachciarz.



Marcia Johnson



Carl Wacker, Mary Mullen, and Dan Proud lead a  
singalong.



Lynn Currie & Anne  
Urbanski



Daniel Haug

## **Have You Visited Another Church This Summer or in the Past Few Years?**

Often it is very enlightening to visit another church whether a sister Unitarian Universalist church or a church of a different denomination. The building might be entirely different from ours. The minister or speaker might have some inspiring words. The service might have different elements or the same elements as ours but delivered in a different way.

The Program Committee is planning a service for September 20 during which those of us who have visited other congregations may share the positive things we've experienced or learned from these forays outside of Prairie. Are you one who has done this? If so, contact Program Chair Penny Eiler or Program Committee member Mary Mullen. Help us put together another fascinating Sunday service.

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## **Prairie History Committee Needs Your Photos and More!**

Four long-time Prairie members have been sifting through ***Prairie Fires*** and other Prairie memorabilia since our 2014 annual Prairie Retreat. Our aim is to gather personal stories about members' involvement in Prairie, create organized archives from all the documents available to us, and to publish a Prairie history book to commemorate Prairie's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. That 50-year marker would be in mid-September 2017. That's the anniversary of Prairie's first Sunday morning service, although an alternate beginning date was the purchase of land for Prairie's use early in 1966 in what's become Elver Park.

A baker's dozen of you have already participated in this history project by

**writing the story of how you came to Prairie or by sharing your stories orally in an interview.** Thanks so much. That's one way even more of you can help this project along and make for an fascinating book. We may use your entire story verbatim, select choice quotes from it, or refer to its content in this book. But regardless of whether we can print your whole memoir in the book, your story will become a valued part of Prairie's archives that will be available in full in Prairie's library.

**BUT, we are now also asking you to hunt among your own personal archives for any outstanding photos that portray Prairie's history.** Do you have photos of Circle Dinners you've participated in? How about pictures from our retreats at Camp Upham Woods, Pine Lake, or Bethel Horizons? Do you have some prize photos of Prairie services, our many musicians, play readers, Spanish Speaker's potlucks, Women's or Men's groups, kids' RE, anything at all? These photos can be as recent as yesterday or as distant as when they began decades ago. Movies or videos are welcome too. We plan to include a DVD in the book!

**We'd also welcome getting a few additional members for our committee.** Active, and I emphasize ACTIVE, members of the committee are Ruth Calden, Barbara Park, Rosemary Dorney, and Mary Mullen. We generally meet once a month to report our progress and assign ourselves new tasks, and as of this month we even have a tentative table of contents for the book.



Prairie History Committee members in an informal selfie, 7/3/15. Pictured are Rosemary Dorney, Barbara Park, Mary Mullen, and Ruth Calden.

If you have photos or other memorabilia or can spare some time to become a committee member, please contact Mary Mullen, (608) 298-0843 or <mmullen4337(at)charter.net> or any of the other active committee members.

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### **Remodeling Task Force—Rachel Long**

As a member of the remodeling task force, I am so pleased to let you know (if you missed the announcements) that the annex is ready for us to use! We got our occupancy permit which means you can use the annex for circle dinners, committee meetings, or rent it for a private party. The Prairie Choir is already practicing there, and the Humanist Union had their July meeting there. The kitchen is fairly well supplied (though Barb Chatterton has asked for just a few more donated items,) and there are lots of folding tables and chairs. Check it out!

A giant THANK YOU to the many of us who helped bring it all together - the remodeling task force, the landscaping task force, cleaners, decorators, donors of money, furniture and supplies, and more. It took all of Prairie to make a big project like this come together. Let's give ourselves a big hug of appreciation!

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**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) 293-0843. Visit Prairie's website for further information.**



