

Prairie Fire

January 2016

Editor: Phyllis Long plong373@gmail.com

Pub. Date: 12/27/15



Prairie Calendar

(See descriptions of programs below)

- Sat Jan 2** 5:00 a.m. **Men's Shelter Breakfast**
- Sat Jan 2** 9:00 a.m. **Prairie WOW** meets
- Sun Jan 3** 8:45 a.m. **Choir rehearsal** in the Annex
- Sun Jan 3** 10:00 a.m. **All Sing Sunday.** This will be an all music service of your requests for your favorite hymns/songs. What a great way to start the new year with a song!
- Sun Jan 3** 5:30-7:00 p.m. **Prairie Men's Group** meets. There will be a potluck followed by discussion
- Sun Jan 10** 8:45 a.m. **Choir rehearsal** in the Annex
- Sun Jan 10** 10:00 a.m. **The Seven Unitarian Universalist Principles: How they define our Community**—presented by Kathy Converse
- Sun Jan 10** 11:45 a.m. **Humanist Union** meets
- Mon Jan 11** 6:00 p.m. **Finance Committee** meets in the Annex
- Mon Jan 11** 7:00 p.m. **Program Committee** meets in the Meeting Hall
- Sun Jan 17** 8:45 a.m. **Choir rehearsal** in the Annex
- Sun Jan 17** 10:00 a.m. **Cloud Cover**—presented by Rev. Sandra Ingham
- Sun Jan 17** 11:45 a.m. **Soup Sunday**
- Sun Jan 24** 8:45 a.m. **Choir rehearsal** in the Annex
- Sun Jan 24** 10:00 a.m. **Welcome to the Neighborhood: A look at Fred Rogers' life**—Presented by Randy Converse
- Sun Jan 24** January 24—31 is **Interfaith Hospitality Network Week**
- Sun Jan 24** 11:45 a.m. **Book Club** meets
- Tues Jan 26** **Prairie Elders** meets
- Sun Jan 31** 8:45 a.m. **Choir rehearsal** in the Annex
- Sun Jan 31** 10:00 a.m. **Screen Saver**—presented by Rev. Sandra Ingham
- Fri Feb 5** 6:00 p.m. **Board Game Night**
- Sat Feb 6** 9:00 a.m. **Prairie WOW** meets

January 10—Unitarian Universalism began in 1961 with the merger of two older religious denominations that shared a philosophy of religious tolerance and questioning. If we define Religion as a cause, principle, or system of beliefs held to with ardor and faith, then Unitarian Universalism is a religion based on an open minded quest for meaning in life and efforts to practice shared values. A comprehensive statement of our common beliefs is contained in the Principles and Purposes of the UU Association. We are embarking on a set of Sunday services to study these seven principles. Each Sunday a group of us assemble here at Prairie UU. As religious liberals, we strive to be open minded, free from dogma and authority but strong in our belief in the basic goodness of humanity. As a liberal religious community, what are we seeking and what are we finding? What is the belief or glue that holds our community together?

January 17—I talked about that great *cloud of witnesses* that is always with us. I am referring to all those souls who came before us and have shaped who we are. On that November Sunday, I told you a few stories about some of our lesser-known Unitarian ancestors who are in that cloud. We are, however, Unitarian **UNIVERSALISTS**, and should always strive to give equal time to both sides of our heritage. So, on this Sunday, I will tell you some stories about Universalists you might not know...Universalists who helped bend the arc of the universe a little more towards peace and justice, to paraphrase Martin Luther King, Jr., at this time of the year when we honor him.

January 24—Fred Rogers was without question a well known TV personality who received numerous awards for his dedication to children via television. Probably most people do not know his extensive personal history. He was a political and civil rights activist, puppeteer, education, author, composer, songwriter, and Presbyterian minister. The Rev. Gary Kowalski described Fred Rogers as chaplain not only to a generation of pre-schoolers, but to many of their parents as well. Randy Converse will present a history of Fred Rogers' accomplishments, important words, and we will enjoy some of his delightful humor, music and TV friends.

January 24-31—One of Prairie's social action commitments is being a buddy church for Midvale Lutheran as they house homeless families as part of the Interfaith Hospitality Network, which is part of *The Road Home*. Please consider volunteering to serve dinner or various other jobs to help Prairie honor its commitment to this wonderful organization. You can call Erin Bosch for more information about IHN (238-6285) or you can go to this webside to find info on the volunteer jobs and a link to the signup grid:

<http://www.midvalelutheran.org/share/our-community/road-home>

January 31—We seem to be spending more and more time looking at screens. Maybe we need to be saved from our screens...or at the very least, think carefully about what the trade-offs are when we give so much of our time to peering at screens. Who would be saving what from whom if we did this? What does all this screen time mean for humanity in the long run? For example, if there is an app for everything, are we depriving our brains of the exercise those brains need to stay sharp and focused? Or this...if children don't play outside anymore because they are too occupied with screens, will these children care about the natural environment? As adults, will they be able to make long-range, informed decisions about how to take care of Mother Earth? We won't have time to do much more than begin the conversation on just one Sunday morning, but that's a start.

Musings from the Minister—Sandra Ingham

Congregations have until February 1, 2016, to vote on four Congregational Study/Action Issues, to determine which one will be added to the 2016 General Assembly agenda for four years of study, reflection and action. The four are: A National Conversation on Race; Climate Change and Environmental Justice; The Corruption of Our Democracy; Ending Gun Violence in America. YOU ARE ENCOURAGED TO READ ABOUT THESE STUDY/ACTION ISSUES BY GOING TO uua.org/statements/current. We will try to have a brief congregational meeting in mid-January to vote on which one we would like to have the Unitarian Universalist Association place on the 2016 General Assembly Agenda.

Message from the President—Gary Gates

At its December meeting, the Board had an intensive discussion about a motion passed at the parish meeting authorizing the Board to implement changes to donate part of the offertory collection to a charity or social cause. Great concern was expressed about the very narrow margin (one vote) by which this motion passed.

We felt that, as a community, we needed a broad consensus about the direction we wanted to go.

The Board finally agreed to try out the new approach for three months and then have the whole congregation vote at the May parish meeting on whether to continue the new approach.

We authorized Molly Plunkett, the Social Action Committee chair, to present a detailed proposal for how this would work and to have this proposal published in this Prairie Fire, with the three-month trial period to begin in February or as soon thereafter as she felt ready to implement it.

If you have comments or suggestions on this matter, please give them to Molly or me.

Thanks to everyone for their input at the November parish meeting. Your comments helped us come up with what we feel is a solid approach. Hopefully we will have a broader consensus in May.

From Molly Plunkett—Trial Sunday Offertory Proposal

The following proposal is tentatively planned to be implemented beginning in February.

We will tweak the plan after feedback from the membership. A three month trial is planned with a review at the May Prairie meeting.

PLEASE GIVE FEEDBACK TO MOLLY PLUNKETT AT plunkettma@gmail.com or call 608-233-6167.

1. Each Sunday offertory collection will be split 50-50 between Prairie's general budget and a designated charity or social action activity.
2. The charities or activities to receive 50% of the offertory will be selected by the Social Action Committee in consultation with the Program Committee.
3. Prairie members and attendees are encouraged to offer suggestions to the Social Action Committee about worthy charities or activities.
4. The Social Action Committee will use available resources to determine that the designated charity or activity is serving a real need in an efficient manner. There is a preference by the Social Action committee to benefit local groups and UU sponsored actions.
5. A schedule of designated charities or activities will be announced several weeks ahead in order to give Prairie members a chance to offer any positive or negative comments on the selections. When confirmed the charity recipient will be placed on the Prairie calendar. The Social Action Committee will have final authority to either go ahead with the original schedule or to revise it.
5. Each designated charity or activity will receive 50% of the collection during an entire month. So over the 3 month trial, three organizations will be gifted.
6. A printed form to record contributions will be provided in the meeting house entry for tax purposes. The contributor will fill in their name and the amount given.
7. This giving proposal will be evaluated by the Board and discussed at May Prairie Meeting to determine whether and how it will continue.
8. The Social Action Committee may authorize its chair to take any of the actions noted above for the committee without having to convene the whole committee.

Circle of Friends—Holly Tellander, Dir. Religious Education

NEW DRE EMAIL

Please update your email contacts to reflect a change in the Prairie DRE email. Previously I have used my personal email address, but a new one has been created. The new address is prairie_uu_dre@outlook.com

RE GOOGLE CALENDAR

To meet the changing technological needs of our program I have created a Google Calendar for our families and anyone else interested in keeping updated with our downstairs activities. The calendar is public. If you already use Google Calendar you can just add the RE Calendar to your current calendars, you can also just view the calendar in your browser if you prefer. If you'd like more information on how to access the calendar, please contact Holly Tellander at the new email address: prairie_uu_dre@outlook.com

MONTHLY THEMES

January's theme is Letting Go. At this, the beginning of another year, we'd like to take time to reflect on those things that may no longer serve us. What are some things that you can let go of in 2016? Keep an eye out for a new installment – a monthly Thematic Parent Resource Guide. These will be available the first Sunday in January. The guide will be filled with information, thought provoking questions, discussion starters and activity ideas to help your family engage with the theme all month long.

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 24th – PAD (Principle Action Day) & Lunch – Featured Speaker: A UU Panel!

Unitarian Universalists come from many varied religious and theological backgrounds. Join us on this day for a chance to participate in a question and answer period. Bring all your questions on what it means to call yourself UU.

ITEMS WANTED

We are still looking for donations of warm mittens, gloves, hats and snow pants. Our classes will be working in the backyard this year through the winter. **If your kids have outgrown last year's gear consider donating it to Prairie!** Having these items available to borrow at Prairie will make outdoor time possible even when those items are not brought from home.

As always, thank you for your support! Happy New Year!

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 contact Karen Deaton for more information:

wisconsinkaren@gmail.org