

# Prairie Fire

September 2016

Editor: Phyllis Long [plong373@gmail.com](mailto:plong373@gmail.com)

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## Prairie Calendar

(See descriptions of programs below)

- Sat Sept 3** 5:00 a.m. **Men's Shelter Breakfast**
- Sat Sept 3** 9:00 a.m. **Prairie WOW** meets
- Sun Sept 4** 10:00 a.m. **In-Gathering Sunday**—A service of celebration and gratitude to begin the new year at Prairie. We will share our hopes and dreams, joys and concerns for this upcoming church/fellowship year. We will also welcome new members. And, we will participate in a calling of the four directions ritual. *Please Note: You will be invited to place small items in the weaving frames that will be up front, so bring such items if you wish to do so (small things that represent your wishes for what we will weave together in our new year).*
- Sun Sept 4** 11:45 a.m. **Humanist Union** meets
- Sun Sept 11** 10:00 a.m. **A Free and Responsible Search for Truth and Meaning** by Matt Tedesco. This is another in our series on the 7 UU principles. Matt agreed to tackle this one for us. It promises to be another thought provoking presentation by Matt.
- Sun Sept 11** 11:45 a.m. **Prairie Board** meets
- Mon Sept 12** 6:00 p.m. **Finance Committee** meets
- Mon Sept 12** 7:00 p.m. **Program Committee** meets
- Sun Sept 18** 10:00 a.m. **In the Beginning**—The seeds of Unitarian thought sprouted in many places, including Poland, Italy, England, Lithuania, Holland, Hungary, Romania. In Romania, King John Sigismund of Transylvania issued the first-ever proclamation of religious tolerance (in 1568), known as the Edict of Torda. I will give you some reasons why we should care about this here in the year 2016 and share a little about my recent journey to Transylvania. I am hoping that you will catch some of my enthusiasm for our roots, for the Unitarians in this area of the world and for our partner churches.
- Sun Sept 18** 11:30 a.m. **Soup Sunday**
- Sun Sept 18** **RE Committee** meets
- Sun Sept 18** 11:45 a.m. **A Little Life**—A novel by Hanya Yanagihara is this month's Book Club selection. Brace yourself for the most astonishing, challenging, upsetting, and profoundly moving book in many a season. An epic about love and friendship in the twenty-first century that goes into some of the darkest places fiction has ever traveled and yet somehow improbably breaks through into the light. Amazon review, 640 pages. Suggested by Mary Mullen. (We may decide to read half the book for September and the rest for the October 16 meeting. Stay tuned.)
- Sun Sept 25** 10:00 a.m. **Respect**—by an ARC Community Services member. Project RESPECT is a women's center that provides advocacy, case management, counseling, crisis intervention, transitional housing and peer support group services for women with prostitution histories that have changed or want to change their lives. We provide a safe and non-judgmental place to meet and talk with other women with similar histories. We assist women to have increased options available to them and reach their goals. Women served include: survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, childhood sexual abuse, women with chemical dependency and vocational issues.

**Tues Sept 27** 1:30 p.m. **The Prairie Elders** will meet at 1:30, Tuesday, September 27, in the Prairie Annex, 2006 Whenona Drive. The July topic will be "Down-ballot elections." Elders meets in the Annex the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month to chat and enjoy shared snacks, with coffee and tea provided. All retired or older Prairie folks are welcome. For more information, contact Al Nettleton (238-6053) or Penny Eiler (852-8750).

**Sat Oct 1** 9:00 a.m. **Prairie WOW** meets

**Sun Oct 2** 10:00 a.m. **Service**

**Sun Oct 2** 11:45 a.m. **Humanist Union** meets

**Sat Oct 8** 5:00 a.m. **Men's Shelter Breakfast**

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## **MUSINGS FROM THE MINISTER**

On a Sunday morning in August, I talked about reverence -- not reverence as some sort of religious dogma, but reverence as a way of life, a way of being. When I use the word reverence, I mean "profound respect mingled with love and awe", a dictionary definition to which I would add, a profound respect *for life* mingled with love and awe.

I quoted Reverend Rebecca Parker who said, "Reverence for life has to be learned. It is not just a feeling: it is a way of life." That statement intrigues me. Can reverence for life be learned? Doesn't that imply that we can change human nature? I do actually believe that we can -- no, we must -- change human nature.

Most of us would probably agree that the world is becoming more and more secular. I am not saying that this secularization is a good or a bad thing. However, I believe that it has created a vacuum and that concerns me -- what rushes in to fill the vacuum. Within this vacuum, where and how do ethics fit? And what is the place of reverence in our ethical system?

Reverence is waking up each morning profoundly grateful, full of a respect mingled with love and awe. Reverence is a profound respect for others. Reverence is grieving for all of the needless, tragic deaths of black men by the police in this country. Reverence is also grieving when the police are ambushed and tragically killed for no reason. Reverence is found in the faces of the Transylvania people waving to us Americans as we left their village, after having traveled so long and so far to meet these brothers and sisters of ours. Reverence is empathy.

Can we be rational and reasonable *and* reverent all at the same time? Yes, I think that we are capable of embodying all three elements. Because reverence is for all of us: atheists, humanists, agnostics, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, Hindus, pagans, Wiccans, pantheists, our Transylvanian Unitarian cousins -- all of us. Put reverence with reason and rationality and you get a very special blend of compassion.

May you approach the change from summer to autumn with reverence... Rev. Sandy

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

I heard a story the other day that made me think of Prairie. I thought I should probably share it, so here goes.

The organs of the body were having a debate about which of them should be in charge. The brain said it was obvious that it should be in charge, since it made decisions and told the body what to do.

The circulatory system said no, it should be in charge, because it was vital to bring oxygen and nutrients to the body and the body couldn't function without it.

The stomach said it should be in charge, because it provided the essential nutrients in the first place.

The lungs said they should be in charge, because nothing could be done without the oxygen they provided.

One after another, each of the organs presented its case as to why it should be the one in charge.

Finally the sphincter spoke up and said it should be in charge, because it got rid of the bodily wastes.

All of the other organs laughed and ridiculed the sphincter, which got very angry, squeezed up tight, and wouldn't let anything pass. After several days, all the other organs were screaming in agony. They relented and said that the sphincter could be in charge.

The moral of this story?

No matter how good an organization is, some asshole is always in charge.

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## **Circle of Friends—Holly Tellander, Director RE**

### **Prairie RE August Happenings**

#### **2016/2017 Classes**

Summer is dwindling away and our new RE year is fast approaching! Hopefully everyone is out squeezing lots of fun into what is left of your holiday!

Please plan to join us on Sunday, September 4<sup>th</sup> for our annual Ingathering Service. This year we will not be sharing water, but will instead be sharing our hopes and dreams for the coming year. This is an intergenerational service and students will stay upstairs for the entirety. We will have small quiet projects available for those who would like to keep their hands busy. Come prepared to share your hopes and dreams or even your worries about the coming year in this service.

Our first day of RE class will be Sunday, September 11<sup>th</sup>.

### **Curriculum:**

#### **Nursery – PreK**

For our youngest learners we focus on building a trusting community. We want our children to feel safe and secure during their time at Prairie while at the same time having lots of fun! Our childcare workers strive to introduce UU values through play and problem solving.

#### **KINDERGARTEN - 1ST GRADE**

Teachers: Randy Converse, Nancy Wunderlin & Cheryl Robinson

**"Prairie Play"** - Join us for our version of the popular UU curriculum 'Spirit Play'. This story based, Montessori-style program will highlight our innate desire to make sense of the world around us through stories that come from our various sources and traditions. Students will feel empowered to 'do their work' each day in a center-based environment as they engage with big questions. Teachers will facilitate wondering in the context of strengthening both interpersonal and intra-personal skills.

### **2ND & 3RD GRADE**

Teachers: Paula Pachciarz, Maya Hayslett, Rebecca Strome, Linda Sheehy, Barbara Chatterton

**"Harry & UU"** - This wildly popular social action curriculum is based on J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series (though students and teachers do not need to be familiar with the stories to fully participate). The class forms Dumbledore's Army and fights seven real-world Horcruxes, such as Illiteracy, Hunger, Poverty, Animal Cruelty and more! Students will achieve tangible results on real problems facing the world. Students will create wands, participate in potions class, and even play Quidditch as they work together to make the world a better place.

### **4TH & 5TH GRADE**

Teachers: Karen Deaton, Carl Wacker, Deesa Pence, Rick Ruecking

**"Jedi Academy"** - The force is strong with this curriculum. Students will work on self-development and mindfulness training exercises in this exciting program. Padawans will be rewarded for their introspection and dedication to development in the the five training categories of Skill, Senses, Courage, Insight and Spirit. The focus is on a development of mindfulness, peace and justice. Though based on the mythic "Star Wars Saga", students and teachers do not need to know the stories to fully participate.

### **6TH - 8TH GRADE**

Teachers: Robin Proud & Molly Plunkett

Our middle school students will experience a student-led social justice project and discussion course. In this class students will collaborate with teachers to determine a social justice issue and develop a plan to impact this issue through their combined efforts. What will each class look like? Well this is up to the interests and interpretation of our students. Baking, crafting, discussions and more - all to make an impact on our society and put our UU principles into action!

### **9TH - 12TH GRADE**

Teachers: Rachel Long & Barb Park

Our high school students will participate in a rich discussion course titled Compass Points (Author: Gaia Brown and Michelle Richards) Compass Points will lead its participants to discover what they believe about life's big questions; acquire enough background in Unitarian Universalist history, polity and theology that they can know and express what Unitarian Universalism stands for; and understand that religious liberty is a hard-won legacy that continues to need protection.

### **PAD WORKSHOPS**

This year we will be continuing our thematic workshop model on the last Sunday of most months (see the RE calendar, Facebook page, emails and newsletter for specific dates). Our Workshop Theme for 2016/2017 is "Service". On these Sundays we will have guest speakers as representatives from different community organizations who will come to speak with us about a particular social justice issue. Afterwards students will stay for a multi-generational lunch and project time. Please keep an eye on our Facebook page (Prairie UU Religious Education Program) for updated information about speakers and service projects. Workshop days run until 1:30 p.m. when parents and caregivers return to

pick up the students. As a congregational outreach opportunity, we hope many of our members will see this as an opportunity to spend an afternoon volunteering with our youth!

**Coming up – Mark your calendars!**

**September 11th<sup>th</sup>** – First day of RE class

**September 17<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. “Float Back To RE!” -**

Join us on the Pontoon Porch as we gather to enjoy a cruise around Lake Monona. Cost is \$5 per person and registration is MANDATORY. Registration is still open – but only to RE students, families and teachers until September — at that point if there are still open spots they will be offered to the larger congregation.

September 25<sup>th</sup> - Our first Workshop Sunday & extended Principal Action Day afterwards – Voting Rights! We will have a visit from the Dane County Clerks office to talk about voting rights and participate in a mock election! After lunch we will canvass the neighborhood to pass out information to Dunn’s Marsh residents about voting requirements and take names of residents who might need a ride on election day to coordinate with the larger Prairie congregation. (Volunteers needed! Please contact Holly Tellander if you would like to volunteer from 11:30 – 1:30 p.m.)

\*\* Prairie RE is looking for another childcare worker. If you know of someone who is looking for a part-time job on Sunday mornings from 9:00 – 11:30 please ask them to contact Holly Tellander at [prairie\\_uu\\_dre@outlook.com](mailto:prairie_uu_dre@outlook.com)

Our website is always being updated and if you haven’t done so yet, please ‘Like’ Prairie’s RE Facebook page: [Prairie UU Religious Education Program](#).

See you soon in RE!



As always, thanks for your support!



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**Circle Dinner Organizer Needed**

Are you looking for a short-term volunteer job at Prairie? Have you enjoyed your Circle Dinner experiences in the past and would like to be instrumental in helping others have that good experience?

Have we got the job for you!

The Membership Committee typically puts together the circles in the fall. That can be a busy time for us so we are wondering if there is someone who is not on the committee who would like to be the organizer. This would involve encouraging people to sign up for the circles and then deciding what folks should be in each circle dinner group. This can be a fun task. Then you would identify a convener for each circle and notify everyone. The committee will answer any questions you might have on how to go about this. Rick Ruecking was the organizer last year, so he would be the best person to talk to if you are interested, but you can also talk to anyone else on the committee (Erin Bosch, Heidi Hughes, Dan Proud).

## **CARING COMMITTEE UPDATES**

Prairie's Caring Committee purpose is to provide you with some support from other Prairie members when needed. Some examples are: when you are in the hospital; when you are recovering from a surgery or illness; if there is a death in your family; or if you just need someone to talk to about an issue in your life (however, we do not consider the Caring Committee a substitute for professional counseling). We respect your wishes for how you wish Prairie to be involved, and we will respect confidentiality. Members of the Caring Committee have divided up our membership so that each of us is a contact person for a specific group of individual members. You may call or talk to your Caring Committee Member if you have a need for our services.

Aileen Nettleton has been Chairperson of this Committee for many years. This year, Aileen and Cheryl Robinson are functioning as co-Chairs. Cheryl was a Chair of this Committee in another UU Fellowship for several years. Other Members of this Committee are Erin Bosch, Dean Schroeder and Pam Gates.

This Committee is currently seeking a small group of volunteers from Prairie who may be interested in being available on a "once in a while" basis to be called on (by Caring Committee Members) to provide services like preparing a meal, providing a ride to medical appointments, or to pick up a few grocery or pharmacy supplies. This would be especially helpful to the Committee when a member is going through a prolonged need for these types of assistance. If you are interested in helping other members in this way, please let Aileen or Cheryl know.

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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 contact Karen Deaton for more information at:***

***[wisconsinkaren@gmail.com](mailto:wisconsinkaren@gmail.com)***

