

Prairie Fire

December 2017

Editor: Phyllis Long plong373@gmail.com

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Rev. Sandra Ingham, minister—minister@uuprairie.org

Dan Klock, administrator—admin@uuprairie.org

Holly Tellander, DRE—prairie_uu_dre@outlook.com

Gary Gates, president—gig.gts@gmail.com

Karen Deaton, vice president—wisconsinkaren@gmail.com

Kathy Converse, treasurer—conversekrtm@gmail.com

Cindy O'Neill, board secretary—

Prairie Calendar

(See descriptions of programs below)

Fri Dec 1 6:00 pm—**Board Game Night**

Sat Dec 2 5:00 am—**Men's Shelter Breakfast**

9:00 am—**Prairie WOW**—in the Annex

Sun Dec 3 8:45 am—**Choir Rehearsal**—in the Annex

10:00 am—**What Better Time?**—What better time to tap into your inner Buddhist than during the not-so-Buddhist holiday season? Join Rev. Sandy on this Sunday morning to consider how practicing loving kindness, being in the moment, letting go of clinging, embracing change, and adopting a “don't worry, be happy” mantra can lead to peace and contentment during the madness of the holiday season. Okay, it is not quite that simple, but it is always useful to remember that we have options in life. Buddhism is one of those options.

11:45 am—**Humanist Union to Hear Tree Stories**—If you wondered about some of the slides on screen as Kathy Converse presented her August 20 program at Prairie on “The Hidden Life of Trees,” you'll have a chance to ask her about them at the Humanist Union meeting on Sunday, December 3. Barb and Bob Park will add some slides to Kathy's of trees about which they have a story to tell. Join us for our potluck at 11:45 am and “Tree Stories” 12:30 to 1:30 pm, in the meeting hall.

Mon Dec 4 6:30 pm—**Program Committee**—in the Annex

Sun Dec 10 8:45 am—**Choir Rehearsal**—in the Annex

10:00 am—**The Fork in the Road**—Prairie's Program Committee will invite four or five people to share significant moments in their life journeys. These might have been moments when everything changed, even though the person wasn't necessarily aware of the import of the moment. These could be moments when a decision was made that set the person on an entirely different path than they thought they were on. We hope to have enough time during the service for others to recall such fork-in-the-road moments from their own lives.

10:00 am—**5th-6th Grade OWL**—in the Annex

11:30 am—**Prairie Board**—in the Annex



11:45 am—**Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis**—by J.D. Vance, a New York Times Best Seller and the 2017-2018 Go Big Read for the UW-Madison, suggested by Mary Mullen. It is about the Appalachian values <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Appalachian_culture> of his upbringing and their relation to the social problems of his hometown. Book Club will have a potluck lunch followed by a discussion of the book.

Mon Dec 11 6:30 pm—**Spanish Speakers Potluck**—will meet at the home of Emma Pachon. Please bring a dish to pass if convenient. If not, come anyway! Contact Rosemary Dorney and 298-0843 for more information.

Sun Dec 17 8:45 am—**Choir Rehearsal**—in the Annex

10:00 am—**The Symbol Tree**—Prairie's traditional way of decorating our holiday tree. Members bring items to symbolize significant events from the past year. We share with our community the item's meaning for us and place them on the tree.

11:45 am—**Soup Sunday**

Sun Dec 24 8:45 am—**Choir Rehearsal**—in the Annex

10:00 am—**Rainbows and Tarantulas**—What could these possibly have to do with Christmas Eve? Rev. Sandy will weave parts of the Christmas story into her reflections on this day-before-Christmas, as well as rainbows and tarantulas. Open-table fellowship and antiwar sentiment will factor into our Christmas Eve get-together, as well...we will undoubtedly add a dash of humanism, too. And, of course, there will be carols and some traditional Unitarian Universalist holiday stories! Come join me in celebrating this joyous time of the year!

Sun Dec 31 8:45 am—**Choir Rehearsal**—in the Annex

10:00 am—**Kwanzaa**

Musings from the Minister—Sandra Ingham

A computer problem delayed my getting this column to Phyllis, our wonderful newsletter editor, on the due date. Phyllis graciously gave me an extra day. During that time, I changed my mind about what I wanted to say in this monthly column. I had planned to continue the discussion I began in my November column about dismantling white supremacy and why white folks need to step back, shut up and trust our sisters and brothers of color to lead the way.

We then had two services in November about this. We didn't solve anything—we didn't expect to, but we at least began a conversation that I hope we will continue for months, if not years, to come. I would like to suggest an adult religious education discussion group that would be primarily about racism and misogyny, but could also encompass other oppressions. If you are interested in being a part of these conversations, please let me know. I also hope that many of you from the Prairie community will consider joining me for discussion groups and workshops that address these issues at both First Unitarian Society and at James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation.

However, those opportunities will be happening in the new year. Right now, we are caught up in that strange holiday time of year—I say strange because “the holiday season” seems to consume us in this culture from Halloween through New Year's Day. We could see this time period as an opportunity to reflect upon where we have been and where we are going—both as individuals and as an organization. That is how and why I

was inspired to write a “second column” about gifts. It being December, here is my wish list for all of you...

I wish for you **silence** because it is important to just be quiet from time to time and soak up as much silence as you possibly can, wherever you can find it, if only for a few minutes. I wish for you **solitude**. I know that solitude is not easy to create, especially for parents of young children. Be creative and try to find some solitude, if only for a few moments (bathrooms can be useful here!), once in awhile. You might be surprised at how much a little bit of solitude can un-muddle a muddled mind.

I wish for you **sharing**, not only because ‘tis the season, but also because the act of giving, generously and sincerely, is healing for the giver. I wish for you **sweetness** to counteract life’s bitterness and hard-to-swallow moments. I wish for you **sympathy**, the kind of sympathy that leads to empathy, understanding, and the ability to walk in another’s shoes. I wish for you **surprises**, not unpleasant ones, though...surprises that bring joy and laughter into your life, if only for the length of a television commercial...because few of us have enough laughter in our lives.

And, last, but certainly not least, I wish for you **serenity**, which the dictionary tells me is “the quality or state of being serene”. Thus, what I really wish for you is that you have serene moments, when you are clear and free of storms” and are able to experience “utter calm and unruffled repose”! Good luck with that!

Happy Holidays to Each and Every One of You...Rev. Sandy

Circle of Friends—Holly Tellander, Director RE

Thanks to all who teach!

November was another great month for learning and making new friends in RE! I’d like to take this opportunity to thank the following folks who came down and shared their time and talents with RE!

If you are wondering whether volunteering your time in RE is a good fit for you, maybe try talking to one of these folks to get their perspective!

November RE Heroes!

Al Nettleton

Gary Gates

Judy Skog

Heidi Hughes

Carl Wacker

Randy Converse

Susan Hagstrom

Brigid Walsh

Paula Pachciarz



Coming up in December!

December's Theme: Justice **AKA** "Stay Woke"

December's Core Belief: Justice work is my responsibility as a citizen of the world. (UU second and sixth principles)

December's Core Questions: Where do I see injustice? What can I do?

Rationale: The term 'Stay Woke' has a longer history than you might think, but refers to the level of social awareness you cultivate within your life. It meshes perfectly with recent conversations we have had at Prairie as well as the challenge of our particular times. Merriam-Webster has a great explanation here: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/woke-meaning-origin>

The holiday season is a great time to cultivate awareness of our inherent privilege (racial, class, gender, etc). It is a time for, above all else, coming together to promote peace and unity.

I am including a "Stay Woke Holiday Edition" Bingo Card here for any to use. Hang it on your fridge and use it to STAY WOKE this holiday season. My hope is that the card's activities allow for a broad range of age-appropriate discussions and experiences and give you and your family extra support in incorporating your UU values into the busy holiday season. As always, I welcome your feedback on the helpfulness or usefulness of shared resources!

THE MONTH AHEAD – MARK THOSE CALENDARS:

December 3rd Choices:

Kitchen/Outdoor Classroom: Johanna Hatch joins us again to bring us lots of opportunities to appreciate the solstice! Treats for us and treats for our animal friends, along with a cozy story!

Field Trip: The Allied Bank food drive needs our help! We will travel to the food bank to sort donations and offer assistance as needed. We'll leave right at 10:00 a.m. and return by 11:15. Parents and older students of any age are more than welcome to attend and help out as well!

December 10th: NIFTY GIFTY! It's Nifty Gifty time again! Come and make gifts to give to loved ones! Students will leave with 3-6 gifts, already wrapped and ready to gift to a special someone. Plan to arrive by 9:30 to get plenty of time for creating. We'll 'wrap up' around 11:30. If you are interested in donating cider or treats for hungry makers, please let Holly Tellander know ASAP. We are also looking for adult volunteers to help with crafting!

December 17th: Symbol Tree! It's a Prairie Holiday Tradition! Come to our annual Symbol Tree Inter-Generational service and remember to bring a small item to hang on our tree. This is a time for sharing special memories, accomplishments, experiences or challenges from the year that we are about to leave behind. Items are chosen because they hold special significance to remember or commemorate the events or thoughts you'd like to share. We'll take turns at the microphone sharing with our community and then hanging our items on the tree. It's a sweet way to come together in the hustle and bustle of the holidays

December 24th & 31st - No childcare/workshops in RE. We'll see you on JANUARY 8TH!

Class ideas for the new year – need volunteers! Come with ideas only – I am here to support you each step of the way!

Ethics for kids! – Supporting kids as they wrestle with tricky questions and encouraging them to apply the principles of ethics and respectful communication when they disagree!

A Way With Words – A study of the poetic words and songs from different faith traditions (The Lord's Prayer, The Bhagavad Gita, etc. – Words of wisdom from each of the six sources analyzed)

Shark Tank (3 R's Version)! – Challenge students to create a solution to a given problem using only recycled, reused, repurposed materials & allow them to present their ideas to a panel!

Certified Nature Sanctuary – Coach kids as they go through the process of getting the backyard certified as a Nature Sanctuary!

Thanks everyone, you all make Prairie RE an amazing place to be and to learn!

“One of the greatest gifts you can give is your TIME!” ~ Anonymous

JUSTICE (STAY WOKE) HOLIDAY BINGO

Read 5 books from the Social Justice Books list for kids at <https://socialjusticebooks.org/booklists/>

Sign up for an extra volunteer commitment

Decrease your holiday gift budget by 10% & donate the extra

Have a family discussion about everyone's favorite way to practice mindfulness

Watch a holiday movie & discuss the different privilege levels of various characters

For every box delivered this holiday season, fill the empty box with items to donate & donate them!

Watch a holiday movie and dismantle some racial stereotypes

Attend a seasonal/holiday celebration of a culture different than yours

Find 3 positive news stories about women of different races who are being recognized in STEM fields

myfreebingocards.com

For the last several years, Dan and Robin Proud have hosted a carol singing open house around the Winter Solstice at their house. We have had a great time! More and more people have been attending each year, so much so that we have outgrown the space of the Prouds' living room and are moving to the fellowship hall at Prairie this year.

All Prairie members, friends, and guests are invited to this open house of carol singing on Friday, December 22nd from 5 pm to 9 pm. We will provide songbooks and sheet music. Members of the Choral Arts Society Chorale, Cambrian Singers, Madison Maennerchor, and Guitars for Vets will be joining in the singing:

5 to 6 pm Traditional carols

6 to 7 pm Welsh carols

7 to 8 pm Family-friendly, contemporary and non-sacred songs (with guitar, ukulele, and harp accompaniment)

8 to 9 pm German carols

Refreshments will be provided and you are welcome to bring snacks or beverages if you wish.

Contact Dan or Robin (212-3793 or 236-2229) for more information.

For the past six years I have been the Program Coordinator for the Prairie Retreat. This role is very satisfying, and I am proud of the great programs our members have offered over the years to make our retreats so successful.

I am ready to pass the baton. Who, among you, will step up and coordinate the programming for our next Prairie Retreat in October of 2018? I have past programs and other materials covering a number of years of programming, which I would be happy to turn over to a new person, and help any way I can. Please contact a member of the Prairie Board if you want to be that person.

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 Andy Garst for more information at:

garst.andrew@gmail.com