

Prairie Fire

January 2018

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Prairie Calendar

(See descriptions of programs below)

Fri Jan 5 6:00 pm—**Board Game Night**

Sat Jan 6 5:00 am—**Men's Shelter Breakfast**

9:00 am—**Prairie WOW**—in the Annex

Sun Jan 7 8:45 am—**Choir Rehearsal**—in the Annex

10:00 am—**New Year's ReVolutions**—Someone used this phrase—New Year's Revolutions—at the last Dane County UU's for Social Justice meeting. I borrowed it because it is so clever and witty and even charming; in other words, I really liked the change of just that one letter in a word that we use so frequently this time of year. I am surprised that I have never thought to replace the word resolutions with revolutions. It seems so obvious and way more challenging to do so at the beginning of a new year. This morning we will explore what it might mean to focus on revolutions rather than resolutions. Perhaps they could be the same thing? What will you do in this brand-new year of 2018 to resist, to be part of the revolutions that are happening in our country?—Rev. Sandy

11:45 am—**Humanist Union**—meets in the Annex

Mon Jan 8 6:30 pm—**Program Committee**—meets in the Annex

Tues Jan 9 2:30 pm—**History Committee**—meets

Sun Jan 14 8:45 am—**Choir Rehearsal**—in the Annex

10:00 am—**Service**

Sun Jan 21 8:45 am—**Choir Rehearsal**—in the Annex

10:00 am—**The Measure of Greatness**—Much has been written over the past five decades about Martin Luther King, Jr. There is no doubt that he was a great man, an amazing human being. What constitutes greatness in a person? King, we now realize, had his share of flaws—he was, after all, “only human”. Is there a checklist that we can consult to help us determine which flaws can be overlooked and which ones might just compromise a person to the extent that she or he really can't lay

claim to greatness? How well-rounded does a person have to be in order for history to place that person in the “greatness” category? These are some of the general questions we might consider on this Sunday morning. You may also learn some particular things about Martin Luther King, Jr. that you did not know.—Rev. Sandy

11:45 am—**Soup Sunday**

12:00 noon—**To Dance with the White Dog**—by Terry Kay, suggested by Chris Porter. This is a story of love, grief, and coming to terms with death, which has also been made into a movie. It is the story of elderly Sam Peek, who is mourning the death of his beloved wife when a mysterious white dog appears. After Soup Sunday lunch, the Book Club will meet in the Annex to discuss the book.

Sun Jan 28 8:45 am—**Choir Rehearsal**—in the Annex

10:00 am—**Service**

Musings from the Minister—Sandra Ingham

More than once when I was a child, I heard an adult, usually one of my grandparents, say, “The years go by faster and faster each year, the older you get.” I still hear this, though not from my grandparents, of course; they have been among the dearly departed for some time. I hear the lament about time going by so quickly from people of all ages now, even from young people of high school age.

There are theories about why this is so—why the years seem to go by so rapidly. The whole concept of time, as humans view it, is odd and arbitrary when you think about it—at least the concept of time in western culture. Time can go by very quickly, yes, but it also can do the opposite, especially in retrospect. Who hasn’t had the experience of thinking something happened years ago, when it actually happened only months ago? I have found this is not unusual where the deaths of famous people or certain tragic events are concerned, not people or events from my personal life, but those from the public realm.

While it seems hard to believe that 2017 is ending, at the same time, in many ways, it often seemed to me as if the year would never end. It has been so difficult to watch the Trump administration over the past year as it works to destroy many things that progressives have struggled long and hard to implement. Witnessing this dismantling of so much that I hold dear in the realm of social justice has been wrenching, to put it mildly.

In mid-December, I wrote a check for an expense that is due monthly—nothing unusual about this, *except* that I dated it December 16, 2018. (No, I was not trying to keep the check from being cashed until later.) I am pretty certain that I have never post-dated a check that way before. And, I don’t ever want to wish time away; life is way too short for that. But, I am not unhappy to see the demise of the year 2017.

Let’s hope that 2018 is better. And, let’s do as much as we possibly can to make that happen. A few days before Christmas, I had a random conversation with a custodian at Walgreen’s, of all places. We were talking about the depressing things that had happened in 2017 because of the Trump presidency. That turned into a lament about how humans

are not taking care of Mother Earth. I said something about “common sense”, to which this amazing man said “sense isn’t common.” I had to think about that.

Then he “made my day” when I said, “Happy Holidays, whichever one or ones you celebrate.” He replied “I celebrate life.” So I am going for small revolutions in 2018, as opposed to resolutions, though they could be the same thing. Random connections like this are important. Two-minute relationships can be valuable. However long or short a connection with another person lasts, I believe that relationships are the key to successful resistance to a despotic, misogynistic, racist administration. HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OF YOU!—Rev. Sandy

Message from the President—Gary Gates

Andy Garst will be Prairie’s President by the time you read this column. I resigned because I feel Prairie needs a new approach to the challenges of the future.

Also, I will be 80 next year and would like to take some time to enjoy my youth before it is gone.

Andy brings to the job a much greater ability than I have with modern technology, plus an enthusiasm for the challenges that I no longer feel. I will be available to Andy as needed to smooth the transition.

I want to thank all of you for allowing me to experience the honor of being Prairie’s President. It has been a very worthwhile experience. I intend to continue to be actively involved in keeping Prairie the wonderful community that I enjoyed on my first day here.

SAVE THE DATES...Did you know that representatives from the three Unitarian Universalist congregations in Madison—Prairie, James Reeb, and First Unitarian—have been meeting regularly to discuss ways to work together on social justice issues and to more efficiently support each other’s efforts in this area? We call ourselves “Dane County UU’s for Social Justice” (at least for now). Here are two upcoming events that you might be interested in attending. First Unitarian Society, [900 University Bay Drive](#), has First Friday Films monthly. These are family-friendly event and Prairie is always most cordially invited. The movie “Whale Rider” will be featured on **Friday, January 5th**; the time frame is 6:00-9:00. (For more information, go to [fusmadison.org](#), click on the Community tab, then go to Event Calendar under that. Or call 233-9774.) We Prairie folks also have a standing invitation to the Sustainable Saturday Night dinners at James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Church, [2146 E. Johnson](#). These take place the last Saturday of the month; the next one is **Saturday, January 27th**, from 5:30 to 8:30. These are potluck events. (Call 242-8887 or go to [jruuc.org](#) for more information.)

INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK HOST WEEK IS DECEMBER 31 TO JANUARY 7. This will be our last week of helping Midvale Lutheran as they host homeless families. So let's make it a good one. The full story is below. To volunteer for this last host week, go to this link and click on the sign-up: <http://midvalelutheran.org/serve-share/road-home>.

In 1999, Midvale Lutheran joined several other churches to form an overflow shelter network to house homeless families who could not be housed at existing shelters. It was named the Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN). Prairie became a buddy church to Midvale Lutheran, meaning we provided volunteers to help staff the weeks they hosted. As time went on, IHN expanded its scope and added other services. An umbrella organization was formed, called The Road Home.

Over the past few years, the City of Madison has made an effort to bring various agencies and homeless services advocacy groups together to expand the availability of housing individuals and families without turning any away for most months of the year and more housing is becoming available.

Recently, the Road Home Board of Directors voted to end the church-based shelter program, while continuing to serve 150 families per year in finding and staying in stable housing through its focus on providing housing and case management services with a proven record of success.

Prairie can be proud of our history of involvement with this wonderful organization. Going forward, we will look for other ways to help and those opportunities will be publicized.

Meanwhile, please do consider responding to Paula's pleas to serve breakfast at the Grace Episcopal homeless shelter. And in the future, there might also be opportunities for hands-on help if anyone ever requests sanctuary in Madison (but we do hope this does not ever have to happen), as we have become a buddy church in the sanctuary movement.

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 Gary Gates for more information at:

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