

Prairie Fire



June 2018

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Prairie Calendar

(See descriptions of programs below)

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

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

9:00 am—**Prairie WOW**

Sun Jun 3 10:00 am—**Transition Sunday**

11:45 am—**Humanist Union**—will not have a June meeting

Mon Jun 4 7:00 pm—**Program Committee**—meets in the Annex

Sun Jun 10 10:00 am—**Sea Change (See Change?)**—A combination of record snowfall in Madison in mid-April, ninety degree temperatures in late May, and a “personal best” 70 degree temperature change in one day brought my attention sharply back to Planet Earth. It isn't as if I don't think about climate change and what we humans are doing to Mother Earth—or worse, that I have turned into a climate-change-denier. No, the problem is that it is such a huge problem, one that most of humanity doesn't seem to want to confront. Time for our little slice of humanity here at Prairie to remedy that and do some catching up on what's happening in the critical fight to save the world from our selves. This Sunday Rev. Sandy will try to strike a balance between despair and hope as we ponder what is probably the most pressing problem the world faces.

11:45 am—**Board Meeting**—in the Annex

Sun Jun 17 10:00 am—**Service: Summer Reads**

11:30 am—**Soup Sunday**

11:45 am—**Bill Bryson At Home**—is the June selection of the Book Club. Bill Bryson and his family live in a Victorian parsonage in a part of England where nothing of any great significance has happened since the Romans decamped. Yet one day, he began to consider how very little he knew about the ordinary things of life as he found it in that comfortable home. Book Club meets in the Annex after Soup Sunday. Come join us! Everyone is invited. You do not have to have read the book.

Sun Jun 24 10:00 am—**Service by Kathy Converse**

Fri Jul 1 6:00 pm—**Board Game Night**
Sat Jul 2 5:00 am—**Men's Shelter Breakfast**
9:00 am—**Prairie WOW**

Musings From The Minister

Following up on my May “Prairie Fire” column and on my minister’s report from the May 20 annual spring parish meeting, I give you more thoughts on growth. Growth in congregations is more than just numbers. It is important to keep in mind that growth can also mean growth in activism within the larger community or interpersonal growth or individual growth or all of these.

Five years ago at the spring parish meeting on May 19, 2013, when considering whether or not to purchase the house next door to Prairie’s building (what we now call the Annex), you passed this resolution: “RESOLVED, that Prairie UU will set a *goal to grow membership to 125 members in 5 years...*” We did not reach that goal. In fact, at the moment, we have dropped a little below 100 members.

Some of this is due to the normal ups and downs in membership that all organizations experience. Some of our decline in membership is because of other natural occurrences: people move; people die; people lose interest; people “burn out”. But if we are trying to be open and honest about growth—which I hope we want to do—then it is time to consider other hindrances to Prairie’s growth. Three such obstacles come to mind.

- 1) *The culture of this specific community*—this Prairie community. Recently the question of identity and growth came up in a meeting. I realized that I had not paid sufficient attention to the identity question. During this discussion, someone thoughtfully pointed out the fact that Prairie is proud of what it is and that part of what it is is having the freedom to say whatever one wants to say, whenever one wants to say it. Another thought tossed into the discussion was the definition of Prairie as iconoclastic. Is it possible that these attributes can sometimes have negative results and deter visitors and newcomers from returning? What is Prairie’s culture? What do you want it to be?
- 2) *The culture of the larger community*—the increasing secularization of society. As a humanist, I do not consider this to be necessarily a bad thing. What it means to us, though, is that fewer and fewer people go to church. To get people to come through our doors, we have to go against the grain of societal norms and convince people that church can be a positive, uplifting, fulfilling experience. Cultural pressure and expectations are very different from what they were even ten years ago. As Unitarian Universalists, we have an advantage in this area. We offer a community of faith without creeds and doctrines. We offer the opportunity to be freethinkers who care about life and awe and mystery and wonder, within a framework of many different beliefs and non-beliefs.
- 3) *The culture created by social media*—the decline of traditional newspapers has created a vacuum that social media has rushed in to fill. Again, this is not necessarily a bad thing, but it has completely changed the world of advertising, especially for any institution that doesn’t have “big bucks”. Instead of designing one advertisement or public service announcement for a newspaper or radio station, we are now confronted with the various aspects of social media. Do we use websites, blogs, twitter, Facebook? What form should we use to get our message out to the general public? Mass marketing has become niche marketing. How do we market our message/

I think that we should renew our goal of reaching 125 members within the next five years—or perhaps, more realistically, 120. To get to that goal, I think that we need to have a lot of discussion—in groups, in one-on-one interactions, at Board meetings, on Sunday mornings after the service. Prairie has lots of potential. You are amazing people. If you are going to grow, though, you need to think long and hard about how to reconcile change with the very real concern of how to retain your identity. I don't believe that it has to be an either/or situation. I believe that we should aim for a both/and solution. For that to happen, you will need to figure out what your identity is. You will need to have a relevant mission statement. Can we see obstacles to growth not as obstacles, but as *challenges* to growth?

Do you *really* want to grow? Until someone tells me otherwise, I am assuming that you do. So...let those creative juices flow. Let's have lots of conversations about how we get our message "out there"...and let's keep that 125-member goal from about five years ago in mind...and *GO FOR IT!* May each of you have a wonderful, thoughtful summer!

Rev. Sandy

Circle of Friends—Holly Tellander, Director RE

Prairie Fire Summer 2018

Thanks to everyone who made 2017-2018 a great year in RE!

Our theme for the summer is "Sustainable Summer"—each Sunday we'll have fun activities planned that will allow students to interact with each other while at the same time interacting with our 7th principle in fun and creative ways.

Be sure to join us at our Transition Service on Sunday, June 3rd, to honor our graduating seniors, Jesse Garst & Katherine Liu, and Aidan Small, who will be moving from junior high to high school!

We'll have a special look back at all the fun we've had this year as well.

And, pick up our special summer activity packet to keep your family thinking SUSTAINABILITY all summer long!

Keep an eye on the calendar for specific Sunday offerings!

Have a great summer everyone!



From The President—Andy Garst

Dear Parish Members,

I want to share with you the highlights of the May 20, 2018 Parish meeting. First we reviewed the minutes from the Fall Parish Meeting. Mary Mullen asked for a few corrections to the minutes, after which the Parish voted and approved the minutes.

Patty Stockdale presented the Finance Report. Prairie is tracking our budget quite well. We are 1/3 of the way through the year, collected income is above 1/3 of budget, and expenses are below. One area of slight concern is that the offerings have been below budget. Since these collections are split between Prairie and social action, both are affected. Personally, I am more concerned about a drop in our social action giving than Prairie's cut of the offerings, though the finance committee may feel differently.

Following the Finance Report, our minister Sandy Ingham delivered the Minister's Report. I encourage you all to read Sandy's "Musings from the Minister" article in the May 16 Special Edition of the Prairie Fire, even if you were at the Parish meeting, to learn more about Sandy's thoughts on growth and the congregation's identify. The newsletter can be found on Prairie's website.

Barb Park then stepped forward to introduce the slate of candidates for the Board and the nominating committee. After no one stepped forward to add their name for consideration for any of the spots, the Parish approved the slate.

For the Board:

President: Rachel Long
Vice President: Chris Porter
Treasurer: Kathy Converse
Secretary: Phyllis Long
Trustee: John Wunderlin
Trustee: Anne Prior
Youth Trustee: Rachel Hughes

For the nominating committee:

Ron Frye
Rebecca Strome
Kate Liu
Robin Proud

Next, Rachel Long discussed where Prairie is in its remodeling. Prairie approved an additional \$10,000 to proceed with the planning process. Rachel also laid out three scenarios for the timeline. 1) start construction as soon as we can. 2) wait 'till summer of 2019, and 3) do it in pieces. She asked for a general sense of which way the Parish leans. Though unofficial, it looked like option 2) was preferred. There are ongoing discussions about how/where we could meet during construction. The remodel committee and the architect will research scheduling of contractors and how the various schedules affect the cost.

Then Pam Gates got up to give an informational talk about WUUSSAN (Wisconsin UU State Social Action Network). This is an effort by UU congregations in Wisconsin to create a network in hopes of increasing our influence on social policies.

And finally, graciously, we adjourned.

But before I let you go, I want to thank all the people that volunteer on all the committees, especially the nominating committee and the Board. I want to also thank our staff: Sandy, Holly, Dan and John.

- I also want to thank you for allowing me to serve as your president. I'm sure you, like me, have complete confidence in Rachel Long as our next president.

Your outgoing president, Andrew (Andy) Garst

Announcements

Mark The Date: June 28, from 7-9, for a book presentation at First Unitarian Society, **900 University Bay Drive**. The book is *We Rise to Resist: Voices from a New Era in Women's Political Action*. "I'm not giving up and neither should you" became the mantra for women everywhere who were deeply disappointed in the outcome of the 2016 presidential election. One result were the marches by huge numbers of angry people on January 21, 2017, motivated by the fact that a misogynist had been elected President of the United States. Another result is *We Rise to Resist*. Thirty-six resisters have contributed essays and interviews to this work, including a former Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice, an award-winning female theologian, a New Mexico assistant Attorney General and a naturalized Muslim-American. And, Prairie's own Rev. Sandy had the honor of writing the last essay in the book to wrap it all up. Please join her on June 28th to celebrate the publication of this inspiring collection!!!

Get your **ELEVATOR SPEECHES** ready to deliver on **SUNDAY, July 22nd!!** That is the date of our Annual Joint Service with the Free Congregation of Sauk County (FCSC). This is usually a participatory service for Prairie and FCSC folks—meaning we will need four to six people to volunteer to give the Elevator Speech on that Sunday. Don't know what the Elevator Speech is? Ask Rev. Sandy or Robin Proud or anyone on the Program Committee. More information will be available in the July issue of the "Prairie Fire" newsletter. In the meantime, **save the July 22nd date** for this very special annual event—after the service, there is always a fabulous potluck in the beautiful, historic FCSC building in Sauk City.

Rev. Sandy will be in Kansas City, Kansas, the week of June 17th for the annual meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association, followed by General Assembly, our association's annual meeting. The best way to reach Sandy during that time is via phone or text. (920-217-2236). **Mark your calendars now for next year's General Assembly** which will be in Spokane, Washington, the third week in June.

Choir done for the Season

The choir is taking a break for the summer. We have an annual picnic at the home of Barb and Bob Park on June 3rd around 11:45. Anyone who has sung this year, along with their families, is invited. People bring a salad or dessert and Barb provides grilled chicken brats and veggie burgers.

The Choir will resume in early September. We already have some music picked out. One piece will be accompanied by flute and harp and our musicians are already working on the music. Sadly, we will miss Anne Urbanski since her move to New Mexico. She was our ever present tenor. (We need tenors!)

We always love to have new voices join us. The choir rehearses every Sunday morning from September to May or June at 8:45. We welcome everyone who can carry a tune. You don't have to have a great voice or have had previous choral experience. Think about joining us next September. If you are interested, talk to Barb Park.

Make Music Madison

Make Music Madison, which happens every year on June 21, will not be happening at Prairie this year. However, several Prairie members are involved with WIDE-LP, the low power radio station hosted by Ken and Judy Skog in their garage. The radio station is a Make Music Madison venue again this year, with the Skog's front deck serving as the stage. The music will be broadcast live on 99.1 FM from noon to 2 pm. This year a 3rd hour has been added from 2 to 3 pm, but this hour will not be broadcast, and will happen only as weather and audience interest dictate. The 3rd hour performers include Mary Mullen & Carol Steinhart and Dan Proud & friends. If you are free that hour, hope you can join the front lawn audience, at **626 Orchard Drive**.

The full schedule of June 21 music at the Skogs (with photos from last year) is online at <http://madisonwi.us/WIDE-LP/photos/MakeMusicMadison/>.

WIDE-LP Radio Supported by Prairie

At their May 13th meeting the Prairie Board voted to have Prairie become a local area supporter of WIDE-LP, the low power noncommercial radio station which has been broadcasting recordings of Prairie Sunday morning speakers since 2009. As a result, a description of Prairie has been added to the station's Sponsor page at

<http://radiosponsors.madisonwi.us>, with links to Prairie's website and Facebook, Twitter and podcast pages.

The station board members, listed below, would like to thank Prairie for its financial support.

- Bob Park
- Barb Park
- Patty Stockdale
- Ken Skog
- Eric Howland
- Tom Kozlovsky

We would also like to thank the individual Prairie members who have generously contributed to support the station.

The station broadcasts to west Madison 24/7 at 99.1 on the FM dial from the garage of Ken and Judy Skog on Orchard Drive. Good indoor radios using antenna wires can pick up the station up to roughly 3 miles from the Skogs. Reception on car radios is possible

at greater distances. Prairie's Sunday speakers can currently be heard on the air on Thursdays at 10 am and 5 pm as part of the station's *Voices for Religious Pluralism* series. The schedule is posted at <http://madisonwi.us/WIDE-LP/wh/index/htm#thur>. The same audio recordings can be listened to online at <http://uuprairie.org/audio/>.

History Committee to get Proof Copies of History Book

On Thursday, May 17, Prairie History Committee Chair Mary Mullen sent for proof copies of Volume 1 of the Prairie history book. We should have 2 copies of the book—in black & white—for proofing by the end of the month. Of course there will be many typos to correct despite our best efforts beforehand to find them all.

The Committee is VERY eager to see how the results look in printed form, and, if you ask, we might share a peek at the book. Volume 1 contains chapters on our history chronologically, our symbols, traditions, musical groups, values and beliefs, divisive issues, and our role in the community.

We are currently working on Volume 2 which will contain chapters on “Nuts and Bolts” (bylaws, fundraising and the like), favorite services, bios written by and about various members over the years, and “Kids,” as well as the appendices and index.

The History Committee is comprised of Ruth Calden, Rosemary Dorney, Barbara Park, and chair Mary Mullen. It has been meeting since December 2014, at first monthly, then bi-weekly, every week just before the 9/17/17 50th anniversary celebration, and now again bi-weekly. As of 5/29/18 we will have met 67 times!

by Mary Mullen

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:

gig.gts@gmail.com

