

Prairie Fire

October 2018

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Prairie Calendar

(See descriptions of programs below)

Thurs Oct 4 7:00 pm—**Program Committee**—meets in the Annex

Fri Oct 5 6:00 pm—**Board Game Night**—meets in the Meeting House

Sat Oct 6 5:00 am—**Men's Shelter Breakfast**—at Grace Episcopal

9:00 am—**Prairie WOW**—meets in the Annex

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

10:00 am—**Service**

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

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

10:00 am—**Service**

11:30 am—**Board Meeting**—meets in the Annex

Fri Oct 19 5:00 pm—**Prairie Retreat**—begins at Bethel Horizons. Activities begin Friday at 5:00 pm with check-in, a finger-food potluck, and games. Saturday will start bright and early with a full day of activities, three meals, and a talent show! Sunday will start with brunch followed by the Key-Log Fire and Service. Kathy Converse is this year's program coordinator.

Sat Oct 20 8:00 am—**Retreat Continues**

Sun Oct 21 Noon—**Retreat Ends**—(There will be an alternative service at Prairie)

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

10:00 am—**Service**

Musings From The Minister

On a recent Sunday, I did something that I had not done before—in the middle of my reflections, I inadvertently turned two pages over, instead of one. Now, I am not at all “tied to the text”. By the time I have researched as necessary, done as much reading as I have time to do, written my notes, and put all of that into a more or less coherent form that I present to you, I pretty much know what I am going to say. Nevertheless, on this particular Sunday morning, I had a moment of confusion and puzzlement when I glanced down at my text, assuming that was where I should be.

You could say that I am easily confused. I think we all are. Life in these times *is* confusing. We are constantly bombarded with so much information—perhaps too much information. So here I am, about to give you a little more information...

On that Sunday when I realized that I had left out parts of what I wanted to say, my subject was what Unitarian Universalism gives to us, what we gain from being a member of a UU congregation. I was pondering these subjects because of some comments I had recently overheard about Unitarian Universalism. One such comment, the one that you did not hear anything about on the Sunday to which I am referring, was that we should not claim to be *unique*, despite our amazing history. Why? Because when we say we are unique, we are implying that we are special and better than others.

That sent me running to the dictionary. The first two definitions of unique are “being the only one” and “being without a like or equal”. The third definition is “unusual”. According to my source, the word special is not equated with the word unique any more. However, the word unusual has become the usual definite of unique, the default meaning. So, one of the most commonly used definitions of unique is simply unusual. And we are that!

Being unique in this sense is something to be proud of, something that I hope that the children going through our religious education program will understand by the time they are finished with what we offer them in our programming. Our history *is* unique. Our impact in the world has been and continues to be unique, especially considering how small of an association we are. And, there is nothing wrong with naming and recognizing those people from our heritage—both sides of our heritage—who have made significant contributions to making the world a better place, to trying to bend that arc of justice and freedom into a more level playing field, always widening the circle of privilege.

And consider how unique it is—not only unusual, but also rare—to have a faith tradition that demands we be free thinkers, that challenges us to question authority, to not blindly follow the ways of the world without considerable thought. How blessed are we to be the heirs of these two unique institutions—Unitarianism and Universalism—and to be the keepers of those traditions, maintaining them during our lifetimes and then joyfully passing them along to coming generations.

Happy Autumn!!

Rev. Sandy

Message from the President—Rachel Long

Many of you made it to our Parish Meeting 9/23/18 in which we discussed the proposal from our remodeling committee. The project they are recommending has a much higher cost than we expected or planned for, and there was a lot of excellent discussion about how our congregation should respond. I so appreciated the kindness and respect shown for one another at the meeting. We seemed to really be listening and thinking, not just advocating for our positions. We are truly making progress toward our goal of beloved community!

Please participate in the upcoming discussions at the retreat on Saturday 10/20/18 on our mission and our program. Even if you aren't staying overnight, you can still come Saturday during the day for our combination of discussion, fellowship, and play. We will certainly have more discussion to come on these important topics. As you consider both the remodeling project and your annual pledge, please bear in mind the purpose of all this. And what is that purpose! As I said at the Parish Meeting, for me the purpose of church is to help me become my better self. Talks at Prairie inspire and nudge me to live up to my principles, and the community supports me in that goal. And besides, it's fun and the people are great. But is that enough? I want my church to be a force for good in other people's lives too, people who haven't even heard of us yet. That's one of the reasons I want us to grow. But what do you think? Let's think about it together.

Rachel Long

President, Prairie UU Society



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 Chris Porter for more information at:

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