



# PRAIRIE LAKES

## UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

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### MAY CALENDAR 2012

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**Sunday, May 6, 10:00 a.m.:** Lay-led intergenerational service, Nicole Roost, "Spring Celebration and Flower Communion" (each participant invited to bring a flower)

**Sunday, May 13, 10:00 a.m.:** Service with ministerial student, Jim Jaeger.

**Sunday, May 20, 10:00 a.m.:** Lay-led service with Jill Stiemsma; ANNUAL MEETING.

**Sunday, May 27, 10:00 a.m.:** Service with minister and PLUUF member, Chris Poortenga.

**Tuesday, May 29, midnight:** Newsletter deadline.

**Sunday, June 3, 10:00 a.m.:** Lay-led service with Beverly Butcher, "Feng Shui".

### MODERATOR'S MESSAGE

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Greetings everyone,

At the end of April, Nicole Roost, Marjorie Kenyon-Cler and I traveled to Chicago to the Central Midwest District meeting, whose theme was leadership and spirituality. We managed to never stop talking, had a nice visit with Mary Brandt at her new place, went to the business meeting, heard Rev. Marilyn Sewell speak on what is a good leader, and each of us went to a couple of interesting workshops.

One of mine was on theme-based ministry and perhaps we can adapt some of the ideas for us. They chose a theme for a whole month and said, "We are a people of [courage, gratitude, justice, wonder, exploration etc.] If there are some themes that you would find inspirational and interesting in your own spiritual journey, let me know. We probably would not do a whole month as it would be hard to organize all the different people doing the services, but it might give them ideas also.

Jean Johnson

*Upcoming Services / Moderator's Message*



## WORSHIP SERVICES

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### Worship Service Notes

This Sunday, May 6, Director of Religious Education Nicole Roost will lead us in an intergenerational celebration of spring. The Unitarian Universalist tradition of a spring “flower communion” will be included, so participants are invited to bring an individual flower per person. The Flower Communion service originated at the Prague Congregation of Liberal Religious Fellowship founded in 1922 by Norbert Capek and his wife Maja. The beauty and significance of the Flower Communion Service has led to its annual observance in many UU churches and fellowships. Individual flowers are gathered into a communal vase, and as part of the service, participants will be invited to take one flower,

*“just as it comes without making any distinction where it came from and whom it represents, to confess that we accept each other as brothers and sisters without regard to class, race, or other distinction, acknowledging everybody as our friend who is human and wants to be good.”* -- Norbert Capek, Liberal Religious Fellowship, Prague, June 1923.

On May 13th, we will welcome ministerial student, Jim Jaeger, back to the Fellowship. Jim is a student in the Modified Residency Program of Meadville Lombard Theological School (Unitarian Universalist, Chicago), and describes himself as a Religious Humanist and Religious Naturalist. Jim’s home is in Madison, where he is an elder law attorney, a member of the 1st Unitarian Society, and night chaplain at Meriter Hospital.

PLUUF member Jill Stiemsma spent six months teaching English in El Salvador recently. During her service on May 20th, she’ll focus on how the struggles between the traditional church and the more liberal church impact overall security in the country.

Minister and PLUUF member Chris Poortenga will lead the service on May 27th. The service will offer an opportunity to explore your feelings on the topic of social justice and the effect this topic has had on those of us who are gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered. The music will be very eclectic, and the sermon will be a meditative walk through the colors of the rainbow flag. Hope to see you for this opportunity of personal and community growth.

– Chris

## FINANCE REPORT

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The end of the 2011-12 church fiscal year is June 30. If you haven’t yet made a contribution of record (i.e. identifiable by check or note) this year, this would be a great time to do so! If you have made a pledge, this is a good time to check on the status of your contributions so you can fulfill your pledge by the end of the church year. (If you need information about your contributions/pledge, please contact Marjorie Kenyon-Cler – she will be glad to run a current statement for you!)

### TREASURER’S REPORT AS OF APRIL 30, 2012

**Treasurer’s Report:** Income \$44,014; Expenses \$35,319; Net \$9,595

**Current Year Total Giving:**

Pledge, offering and other contributions from members, friends and visitors to the Operating budget, Vision and Restricted Funds: Budgeted \$ 45,770 Received from 36 Donors of record: \$41,315 (90%)

**Stewardship: Member/Friend Pledge Support:**

Member/Friend Pledges to Operating Expenses

Goal: \$ 45,270      24 Pledges made to date: \$ 38,443      ( 85%)

Member/Friend Pledges to Vision Fund

Goal: 2,000      Pledges made to date: 2,310      (115%)



# DISTRICT ASSEMBLY REPORT

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## Regionalization

One of the key discussions at this year's Central Midwest District annual assembly was about "regionalization" of congregational services, consolidating smaller districts to larger regions. In our case, the CMwD would merge with the Heartland District to the east and Prairie Star District to the west to become the "MidAmerica Region." CMwD currently serves 80 congregations in Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri, Michigan, and Indiana. Prairie Star serves 70 in Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin, and Heartland serves 53 in Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, and Ohio. Why is this happening? CMwD District Executive Ian Evison cites these primary reasons:

- (1) Changing congregations and a changing world require a changed way of working (and leadership structures)
- (2) Restricted resources -- maintaining three separate administrative/program structures is not sustainable.
- (3) Technology -- the explosion of technology offers an opportunity to serve those living in this new world.

The goal is to complete the merger in the summer of July 2013. One of the efforts already showing progress is a joint website reflecting this new configuration. For more information, you can go to [www.midamericauu.org](http://www.midamericauu.org).

## Presenters

The Rev. William Schulz was the featured Friday evening speaker. Schulz was head of the UUA for eight years, Executive Director of Amnesty International USA for 12 years, and recently became the president and CEO of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC). He described a new "College of Social Justice" initiative being pursued jointly with the UUA. These two organizations are completely independent in governance, funding, and membership (approximately one out of five UUs are also members of the UUSC), but are now seeking greater collaborative efforts to bring social justice opportunities (faith in action) to a larger number of UUs.

The theme of the Rev. Dr. Marilyn Sewell's keynote speech on Saturday, was "Leadership Development with a UU Spiritual Core." Sewell served the First Unitarian Church in Portland, Oregon for 17 years before her retirement in 2009. She is the editor of four Beacon Press anthologies, including the award-winning *Cries of the Spirit*. She is the subject of a documentary film, "Raw Faith," directed by Peter Wiedensmith, which won the PBS Human Spirit Award at its premiere at the Nashville Film Festival in 2010.

Jean Johnson, Nicole Roost and Marjorie Kenyon-Cler attended the 2012 Central Midwest District Assembly April 27-28 in Oak Brook IL, represented the Prairie Lakes UU Fellowship as its delegates at the business portion of the assembly, and attended a total of six workshops.

## BOARD MEETING

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### Board Meeting

The primary focus of the April Board meeting was to finalize materials for the upcoming annual meeting, including the agenda and slate, and budget, goals, and Vision and Mission proposals. Other discussions included use of the Fellowship House apartment, facility needs, the Ripon Compassion Project, selection of a 20% Project recipient for May/June, and review of the Fellowship calendar.



*District Report/Board Meeting*



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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### This Month in Religious Education

*May looks like an exciting month from where I am sitting! I don't know about everyone else but we are already getting busy with outdoor sports, school field trips, planning the summer events and just playing outside in general. Our summer fills up fast!!*

*As you may or may not know, May is our last month of scheduled Religious Education classes. There will still be activities this summer (games, books, coloring, outdoor play) for kids younger than middle school age but primarily we will be taking the summer off to allow all of us the freedom to enjoy our summer activities – guilt free.*

*The lessons planned for this month will begin with an Intergenerational May Day Service on May 6th which will include dancing, singing and general merry making. We would like to encourage everyone to dress in your most fanciful spring attire – fairy wings and flower hair adornment is encouraged. We are also celebrating our Flower Communion during this service – so remind all the little ones to bring their chosen flowers!*

*We will wrap up our lessons this month by reviewing the important elements of each of the Seven Principles. We have some wonderful new books and creative new games to share. We will also spend some time celebrating all the work and fun we have had throughout the year together. Our PLUUF children are simply astounding!!*

*Our traditional Mother's Day Lunch will be on hold this spring – we have some other fun ideas in the works so stay tuned!*

*Thank you to everyone here at Prairie Lakes for making this a wonderful year in Religious Education. Your support makes this a wonderful place to worship and grow!*

*Peace, Nicole*

## FELLOWSHIP NEWS

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### Fellowship News

Thanks to Laird DeCramer and his crew (including temporary recruit, Nicole Roost) for their time and effort put into giving the PLUUF campus a much needed facelift. It really adds to the newly painted building and the new signs. There is the open space now where "Jean's flowerbed" used to be, and there's talk about adding a water feature or -- a butter sculpture perhaps?? The latter refers to one of the most memorable musical numbers at the Art & Service Auction...

Congratulations to Elisabeth and Larry Beuthin on the March 13th arrival of grandson, Gabriel!

Congratulations to Fellowship friends Chris and Michelle Thomas and big sisters Sophia and Helena, currently living in Belize, on the arrival of Solomon Michael Beshara Thomas on April 10. Michelle writes, "Michael is Chris' grandfather's, father's and brother's name, and Beshara is his Lebanese ancestors' surname; it means 'Omen of Joy.' Sophia and Helena are loving their baby brother and everyone is doing well." If you'd like to send greetings, you can email [pluuf@charter.net](mailto:pluuf@charter.net) for their address.

While visiting family in Chicago recently, Nicole Roost had a chance to visit with Mary Brandt, and not long after, Nicole, Jean Johnson, and Marjorie Kenyon-Cler were bale to join Mary for lunch on their way to the Central Midwest District Assembly. She's doing well, and happy to entertain members of her PLUUF family!

On Sunday, April 29th following the service, members of the Board and Worship Services Committee enjoyed a wide-ranging conversation over lunch with visiting minister, Elizabeth Marsh. It is a goal to offer opportunities in a variety of formats for interaction with guest ministers beyond the Sunday service. Stay tuned!



*Religious Education/Fellowship News*

# COMPASSION PROJECT

## Compassion Project Report by Judy Harris

Step by step, person by person, the word is getting out in Ripon that a community read of Karen Armstrong's *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life* is in the planning. A little over a week ago, Linda DeCramer helped me organize a meeting with the Ripon Public Library Director, Desiree Bongers; Adult/Young Adult Librarian; Amanda Canovan and Linda, Children's Librarian. They were interested and enthusiastic. Director Bongers will bring a request to join PLUUF in supporting the Community Read project to the library board in May. The library staff suggested local grants might be available to support buying books and bringing a keynote speaker to a community. Use of library space was also offered. Their enthusiasm was enervating.

On May 1st, I met with a Ripon College student who chairs the Spirituality Association. She has contacted the Campus Crusade for Christ, the Campus Christian Fellowship and the Student Secular Alliance. She's asked me to bring a book for each group and seems to feel this could be a good fall project for her group and maybe the others.

At noon on May 1st, I spent 10 minutes presenting the project to the Ripon Area Clergy Association. They welcomed complimentary copies of the book (funded by PLUUF's social action budget). Ripon's new Fire Chief was also there to talk with RACA, and accepted a boo as well. One minister had already printed out the Charter for Compassion, and asked that the topic be discussed at the Council of Churches meeting, (a discussion arm of the local churches (while RACA is the "business" arm). This will take place on June 1st.

Business cards, printed to accompany the books being distributed, identify the project, contact information, and PLUUF as initiator of the project. At our Service Auction, a website design offered by Meredith Cler was purchased so that we can set up a central site for information about the book, the Charter for Compassion, and the Ripon project, including a community-wide calendar of related events.

Likely future needs will be 1) a steering committee that includes people from a few key areas in the community 2) discussion group leaders 3) publicity in print and then on the web. These will all happen. Meanwhile, I'm getting to know streets in Ripon by name, who's who in Ripon and how to contact them! Thanks to all of you for your support! There will be a time when I need to come to you for help. 'Til then, I'm working on it.



## Annual Meeting

**SUNDAY, MAY 20, 2012**

**11:30 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.**

**Lunch provided (donations welcome)**

- \* Board elections \* \*2012-13 Goals and Budget\***
- \* Vision and Mission Statement proposal\***

**Information packets will be distributed in person on Sunday, May 6, and by mail the following day.**

*Voting members:*

*If you are unable to attend, please exercise your vote by authorizing a proxy!*

*See your annual meeting information packet for the proxy form and guidelines.*

*Compassion Project / Annual Meeting*



# SOCIAL ACTION

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## Social Action

### 20% Project

Our Fellowship contributes 20% of each month's (or two months combined) to nonprofit organizations doing good work in our communities. Although the total amounts are modest (generally less than \$100), it acknowledges their efforts and keeps our own social action commitment in the limelight every Sunday. Organizations selected in the past have included food pantries, environmental projects like the Greenways Bike Path and Ceresco Prairie Conservancy; the animal shelter, and human services work like the Salvation Army's holiday campaign, the Santa Club, and more. Organizations from many of our communities of residence are eligible. Past recipients, for example, have been located in Ripon, Berlin, Oshkosh, Fond du Lac, Princeton, and more.

### March/April

March/April proceeds will go to the Berlin Food Pantry, along with the canned/packaged food items collected over the past several weeks. Coordinator Brad Roost estimates the number of items at around 100 – thanks to all who contributed! Since our goal was 300 items, however, he's added one more Sunday (this Sunday, May 6) for additional contributions. A list of the items often requested by food pantries follows.

### Food Pantry Needs

- 100% Juice (tomato, orange, or vegetable in a can or plastic bottle)
- Fruit (canned in water or 100% juice)
- Vegetables (tomatoes, green beans, mixed vegetables, or sweet potatoes, canned)
- Beans (dry or canned in water)
- Peanut butter
- Meat (tuna or chicken canned in water)
- Dry pasta or egg noodles
- Rice (regular or instant)
- Vegetable soup
- Spaghetti sauce
- Cereal (instant or regular oatmeal, Cheerios, Chex, Wheaties, granola, shredded wheat)
- Powdered milk
- Infant/baby formula
- Diapers and baby wipes
- Personal products (shampoo, soap, feminine hygiene, toothpaste, or deodorant)

### May/June

May-June proceeds will go to Head Start's "Environmental Education Program." It is based on the environmental curriculum, 'Project Learning Tree,' developed by the American Forest Foundation, and implemented by the WI DNR. Four year old Head Start children in Fond du Lac and Green Lake County centers will benefit from "fun-filled sensory experiences which will stimulate imaginations, curiosity, and a sense of wonder, enhancing 'their world,' by experiencing all of the beautiful seasons in Wisconsin."

### Recycling

- Thanks to Jill Stiemsma for delivering our boxes of #5 plastics to Whole Foods in Madison!
- It looks like our "short-term holiday recycling project for packing materials" (Styrofoam forms, air pillows, packing peanuts, bubble wrap) may become an ongoing effort. The collection box will continue to be available for depositing these items, which are taken to Grant Pack N Ship in Ripon for reuse or safe recycling.



*Social Action*