



Prairie Lakes Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

315 Eureka Street
Ripon, WI 54971

pluufripon@gmail.com

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New posts are
added regularly!



Each year Beth Howman-Combs selects a beautiful array of flowers and plants to grow in the large pot near the entryway at PLUUF.

Thank you Beth for making our entryway vibrant and joyful

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Calendar At-A-Glance

ENGAGE Sunday, September 6, 10 a.m.: *Caring for Yourself, Each Other & the World* led by Becky Feyen - What this world, our community, & each of us needs right now are social justice warriors that lead with love. This will be offered as an in-person ENGAGE event.

Worship Service Sunday, September 13, 10 a.m.: Our annual Harvest Fest event will be offered as a stay-at-home service and in-person at PLUUF.

ENGAGE Sunday, September 20, 10 a.m.: Christopher Szymczak is the leader of the Rainbow Alliance for Hope at UWOC and will give a presentation about the LGBTQ+ community.

Worship Service Sunday, September 27, 10 a.m.: Water Sharing/Water Communion will be offered as a stay-at-home and in-person service.

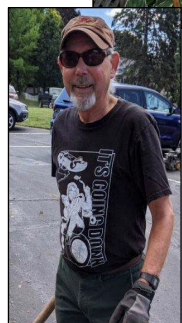
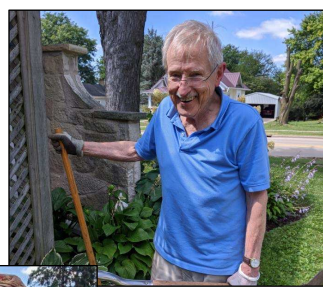
PLUUF Fluff & Buff a Huge Success!

Thank you to everyone who raked, mowed, shoveled, pulled weeds, planted, vacuumed, dusted, mopped, and more on 5th Sunday, August 30!

All photos taken by Lilly Buchanan (except the one of her ☺)



Not only did Linda DeCramer coordinate and lead Fluff & Buff, she provided lunch for all the volunteers!



Lilly Buchanan, Fluff & Buff photographer extraordinaire!



Message from the Moderator by Linda DeCramer

Rose, Thorn, Bud: A mindful way to reflect

My thoughts for this newsletter span a lot of ground and emotion; a structure for conveying them was necessary so I hope you enjoy the Rose, Thorn, Bud method. When our kids were younger, we regularly (and sometimes still do) engaged them in reflective conversation using this approach to process the experiences and issues of their day/s. I highly recommend it for all ages!

ROSE - A highlight, success, or something positive

Wow, it has been a roller coaster of a month! First the good stuff...PLUUF rocked it with in-person Worship Services and E.N.G.A.G.E. Sundays. It has been an absolute joy to gather again, to share, learn and connect as a caring and vibrant, though socially distanced, community. I want to express abundant gratitude and appreciation to those who are creating such spiritually and emotionally strengthening experiences; your work is important to our individual and collective wellbeing: Jill Stiemsma, Robyn Davis-Bartow, Judy Harris, Becky Feyen. In addition, Tanya Schwartz-Roeper and Jim Goyette have become wizards at setting up our outdoor space with comfy chairs in the shade, a tent and podium for presenters, plus accompanying audio/visual technology. This is no small feat each week. It takes a village and this village has come through with flying colors! I find comfort in this show of mettle and strength.

THORN – A challenge

This past month has been a sobering reminder of the incredible amount of social justice work calling for our attention. In contrast to our Fellowship's joys and progress, the nation has tipped further into chaos with the Kenosha, WI police shooting of Jacob Blake, followed by protests and violence which tragically resulted in deaths and injuries. With leadership focused on propagating the "Law & Order" mantra rather than addressing the roots of racial injustice, hope for change is tragically elusive. This fellowship will continue to explore opportunities, spanning local to global, for allyship and action. We've already committed to participation in Ripon's Task Force on Racial Equality.

BUD - New ideas that have blossomed

On August 23, we were rewarded with a service on hope, including a reflection by Hospice Chaplain Karon Sandberg. Is mere hope enough in the face of the multifaceted chaos and upheaval we now face? The answer is YES; by seeking out the ordinary miracles abundantly arrayed before us each day if we only take the time, and maintain the presence of mind, to see and appreciate them. Some ordinary miracles that give me hope are the daily joy of seeing the friendship, respect and care my young adult children have for one another; a daily hug for the GIANT maple tree in our front yard – its magnitude, bounty and beauty are astonishing; sharing the wonder of raising and releasing monarch butterflies with curious young people. I could go on and on, but am more interested in hearing about your ordinary miracles.

I close with this thought: Borrowing from a Chinese proverb, Eleanor Roosevelt famously said, "We are not here to **curse the darkness**, but to **light the candle** that can guide us thru that **darkness** to a safe and sane future"

Keep and nurture hope; stay connected; celebrate love, light and ordinary miracles.

Fondly, and with gratitude for your presence in my life and our PLUUF community,

Linda

September Worship Services (2nd & 4th Sundays) by Jill Stiemsma



Thank you to those who are making on-site services available. Thankfully, sometimes the weather cooperates!

More recently, I've gotten ideas for services by regularly attending Open Circle. So, while you attend PLUUF "live," if you so choose, I'm attending Open Circle services virtually **and** co-opting their Reflections (i.e., Brian Smith's on "Resilience" and Karon Sandberg's on "Hope") ... or at least using some of the focus from a particular service to develop my own (i.e., using pieces of Michael Ketterhagen's Reflection on "Food" to develop our Harvest Festival service). It's a pretty good system! Thank you to all who participate in one way or the other. I also want to thank Robyn Davis-Bartow for developing an entire stay-at-home service which I understand was also well attended – and much appreciated.

So, we forge ahead "as-best-as-we-can-do-under-the-circumstances." Here's September's plan:

Sunday, September 13, 10AM: This will be our annual Harvest Festival, offered both as a stay-at-home and in-person service. Remember: Due to the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, more than 54 million Americans may experience food insecurity in 2020, including a potential 18 million children. Thank you for your generosity at this critical time.

A message from Feeding America: Imagine that you had just enough money to buy food for the week, with nothing left over to pay your utility bills or buy bus fare to get to work. Many hungry families face these tough choices everyday. The median annual income for households served by the Feeding America network is \$9,175. Consequently, 69% of those have to choose between food and utilities; 67%, between food and transportation; 66%, between food and medical care; 57%, between food and housing; 31%, between food and education.

How do they manage? 79% choose inexpensive, unhealthy food; 53% receive help from family and friends; 40% water down food or drinks; 35% sell or pawn personal property; and only 23% grow food in their own gardens.

People who are food insecure are disproportionately affected by diet-sensitive chronic diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure; and according to research, food insecurity is also linked to many adverse effects to overall health.

For children, food insecurity is particularly devastating. Not having enough healthy food can have serious implications for a child's physical and mental health, academic achievement and future economic prosperity. Research shows an association between food insecurity and delayed development in young children; risk of chronic illnesses like asthma and anemia; and behavioral problems like hyperactivity, anxiety and aggression in school-age children.

Here's how you can help:

- Bring fresh and/or nonperishable food items to the Prairie Lakes Harvest Fest service on 9/13. All items will be delivered to the Ripon Food Pantry.
- Send or deliver a check to Prairie Lakes with Harvest Fest in the memo line. If you'd like the money to go to a certain organization (i.e., Feeding America), please include a note.
- Send a check or deliver food to your local food pantry independent of PLUUF.

Sunday, September 27, 10AM: A bit delayed, but we will have a Water Sharing/Water Communion service developed by our "water expert" Brad Roost. This service will be in stay-at-home and in-person format. As with the Flower Communion, I will be soliciting pictures in a couple weeks. Please do respond!!!

Here's to the health of our children and the staff who may be resuming in-person instruction. It's a difficult call to place students and staff in a situation that may well impact community health. Blessings on all.

PS: If you want to join Open Circle services at 10AM on Sundays: (Note: The Zoom address for OC have changed.)

Audio Only: Call 312-626-6799

Meeting ID: 404 410 3110 Password: 795520

Video and Audio: Click on link below

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4044103110pwd=Ui93OVZQb0xtVzBCeTRReWZCYitRdz09>

September ENGAGE Sundays (1st & 3rd Sundays) by Becky Feyen and Judy Harris



ENGAGE Sunday, September 6, 10 AM: *Caring for Yourself, Each Other & the World* - Social justice, community involvement & daily life can feel relentless & down right maddening. We are told we need to "Be the Change" & "Be the Light". How is that possible when the world feels overwhelming? Becky Feyen will discuss various practices to maintain focus & determination, while upholding a sense of grace & openness. What this world, our community, & each of us needs right now are social justice warriors that lead with love.

ENGAGE Sunday, September 20, 10 AM: UW Oshkosh student Christopher Szymczak will lead a discussion about the LGBTQ+ community as part of our renewal of "welcoming Congregation" status. Christopher comes recommended by Barbara Lukas and Paisley Harris, members of "Open Circle UU" in Fond du Lac. Paisley's words about our speaker: "Christopher Szymczak would be an excellent speaker.... He is the leader of the Rainbow Alliance for Hope at UW O and led the Equality Project, an educational and awareness- raising project in Fond du Lac that was active for a couple of years in Fond du Lac." Chris Szymczak's presentation continues to put us on track to renewal of our "Welcoming Congregation" status.



Another Beautiful Pride Flag Created by Mel Kolstad

Artist Mel Kolstad lives in Fond du Lac and is a member of Open Circle Fellowship. Mel is a brilliant artist and teacher, works in a variety of different mediums and has created a series of Pride Flags. The Transgender and Intersex pride flags were featured in the August PLUUF newsletter. Mel donates 50% of the sales to the Fond du Lac Pride Alliance (www.fdlpride.org). Their mission is to promote inclusivity, build positive visibility, perform public advocacy and education, and provide resource and service connections to local LGBTQ+ individuals and their allies.

On August 16, Mel, who features her art on her Facebook page, featured the Asexual Pride Flag (see photo). The Asexual Pride flag's colors represent the spectrum of potential sexual attraction within asexuality. Asexuals are those individuals who do not experience sexual attraction. Theirs is the black stripe on the Asexual Pride flag. Graysexuals rarely or infrequently experience it, with or without a desire to form romantic relationships. Demisexuals also experience sexual attraction only occasionally, but theirs is also dependent on first developing a strong emotional and/or intellectual bond with their partner. The flag's Gray stripe represents graysexuality and demisexuality. Asexuality should not be confused with celibacy or impotence. The difference is their scope of potential sexual attraction or desire. Persons on the asexual spectrum can and sometimes do have various forms of sex for different reasons, depending on their relationships with their partners. The flag's white stripe represents those who do engage in some form of sexual activity. The purple stripe represents community. Asexuals (and Aromantics) are the "A" in LGBTQIA+ The Asexual spectrum is distinct from heterosexuality, regardless of the genders of the partners. Allies are wonderful, but as cisgender heterosexuals they are not part of the acronym.

A New Mosque in Neenah



Congratulations to the Fox Valley Islamic Society on the August 9 groundbreaking ceremony for their new mosque. In years past members of PLUUF attended an interfaith "Under the Tent" event on the first Sunday in August at their old mosque site. The site of the new facility is at 2680 Marathon Avenue, Neenah. Planning for the mosque had been in process for an extended period; and with widespread community support, the City of Neenah issued a special-use permit about a year ago to allow construction on this site.

In Cased You Missed it in August by Tanya Schwartz Roeper

In the August newsletter I commented on how July at PLUUF was empty and lonely. PLUUF came to life in August!

ENGAGE Sunday, August 2, with Becky Feyen *Civil Rights to Social Justice & Black Lives Matter* (1st In-Person Gathering Since COVID hit in March)



After 5 months of stay-at-home and virtual services, we were able to have our 1st in-person gathering at PLUUF! Approximately a dozen PLUUFers gathered on the lawn to partake in an ENGAGE Sunday event led by Becky Feyen. Becky honored Civil Rights leaders of the past and introduced today's leaders continuing the work for respect and equality. She acknowledged the recent passing of civil rights legend John Lewis and explored the actions we can take to continue his nonviolent and loving work. The loose offering collected that day was donated to Sam Luna, the business owner in Ripon who was fined for the Black Lives Matter mural on his building.

ENGAGE Sunday, August 16, with Judy Harris



Judy Harris and Becky Feyen have been working on creating ENGAGE Sundays that focus on social justice issues, adult education, visibility in our

communities, and meeting requirements to renew our "Welcoming Congregation" UU status. On August 16, Judy shared connections between the 2020 Census, Fair Maps, and a 2013 UUA General Assembly resolution that PLUUF along with the great majority of UU congregations and fellowships has not acted upon. Judy shared a copy of a sample U.S. Constitution Amendment Resolution:

"Be it Resolved that *PLUUF* stands with United to Amend and communities across the country to defend democracy from the corrupting effects of undue corporate power by amending the U.S. Constitution to establish that:

1. Only human beings are endowed with constitutional rights – not corporations, unions, nonprofits or other artificial entities, and
2. Money is not speech, and therefore limiting political contributions and spending is not equivalent to limiting speech."

Worship Service Sunday, August 9, with Robyn Davis Bartow *Love Thyself* (1st In-Person Indoor Gathering Since COVID)



Robyn Davis-Bartow & Jill Stiemsma collaborated to bring PLUUF a stay-at-home worship service. Robyn wrote the reflection and Jill coordinated the readings and music. Not only was the service offered as a stay-at-home-do-it-yourself service, but Robyn led a

beautiful worship service in-person. Approximately 8 masked and socially distanced PLUUFers attended. The service reflected the power of radical self-acceptance, love, and becoming our own best friends. Thank you, Robyn, for writing and presenting a beautiful reflection and leading a meaningful and thoughtful discussion with the congregation. Jim Goyette videotaped the entire service which is now available for viewing by following this link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XZya5ji1wJXy2jrzWS8obnNsgWb8ZDho/view?usp=drivesdk>

Worship Service, August 23, with Linda DeCramer *"Hope"* (written by Reverend Karon Sandberg)

Jill Stiemsma created a beautiful stay-at-home service using the reflection written by Reverend Karon Sandberg titled "Hope." Reverend Karon Sandberg is a hospice chaplain who finds great meaning in her work and learns from her patients how to live more fully.

Linda DeCramer and Tanya Schwartz-Roeper turned the stay-at-home service into PLUUF's first outdoor, in-person Worship Service.

After PLUUF member Lyn Corder observed the stay-at-home worship service she shared her response (see page 6).

PLUUF member Judy Morgan attended the in-person worship service and shared her reaction to the reflection during congregational sharing. By request, she put her words in writing (see page 6).



Linda DeCramer is pictured with the Story for all Ages titled, Frederick by Leo Lionni, which reminds us to be hopeful in all the seasons of our lives.

PLUUF Member Lyn Corder's Response to the Stay-at-Home Service on "Hope"



Lyn Corder is pictured with husband Al while on a cruise two years ago. Lyn served as Moderator at PLUUF from 2006 until her move to California in 2009. Still connected to PLUUF, she is an active member from afar. On August 2, at the age of 100, husband Al died peacefully with Lyn by his side and holding his hand.

Almost three weeks after Al's death, Jill Stiemsma created a worship service based on Hospice Chaplain Karon Sandberg's reflection on "Hope". This is Lyn's response to the transcript of that service:

"First, there is the hospice connection: Next Sunday will be three weeks since my dear Al died, while in my care and that of our hospice team. I was holding his hand. Less than a week prior to his death, he told me, 'I'll kick this yet and be able to do my exercises with you again.' Hope was one of the things that kept him going as he

finished his last professional commitment (finishing a draft, with his co-author, of a presentation for the American Political Science Association virtual conference in September), 10 days before he died. His one regret (only one!) was that he would not be able to help vote Trump out of office, but when I told that to his 29-year-old grandson, and asked him to please register to vote and cast his vote in memory of his Grandpa, he texted me a message: "If it means so much to him, tell him I will do this for him." I read it to Al several times during his last few hours. The nurses had told me that hearing is the last sense to go; and even when a person is in a deep sleep, prior to the final forever sleep, they can still hear. When the nurse listened prior to pronouncing his time of death, she shouted, "And you finally got your grandson to register to vote!" (I got an email a few days later from Max, telling me he had registered as a mail voter.) All of this gave me hope. (I just wish I could have convinced Al to go into hospice sooner. I think it would have been better for both of us.)

Then, there is all the rest: what is going on in the country, the months we have been at home to keep us, others and especially Al safe from the virus, depending on others to do our errands, etc., how stark the disparities are in a country with such systemic racism built into all our institutions since we essentially stole this land from the natives who lived here for centuries prior to the arrival of Europeans. For all of those things, the service and reflection helped me to regain a little perspective and made me feel that my "hospice project" had really been worth it. It wasn't much, but it was something and it gave me hope. (I am writing that up when I finish a few other things and will share it with you then, if you are interested.)"

PLUUF Member Judy Morgan's Response to the In-Person Service on "Hope"



"Last Sunday, as I listened to Linda read the reflection about Hope, I found myself musing about what exactly "hope" is to me. The reading seemed to focus on having it, not having it, what it does for us if we have it, and how much better off we are than those who don't have it.

Hope for after life is seen by most to be a plus. It is hard for me because I don't believe in heaven or a place one goes after death. So that kind of hope is nonexistent for me. I believe that having hope is nothing without action. I was reminded about my young 15-year-old friend who is dying of cancer. She has hope that the cancer will go away, so she has taken action in the form of 42 chemo treatments in the last 9 months. Sometimes we hope, take action but to no avail. Then there are those times, for instance, when we hope that we get a good grade on a test, study hard and get the grade.

I know something about hopelessness and the absolute inability to take action to rid myself of living in that dark, empty space. That space tells you that no matter what action you take, you will remain hopeless. It is like talking yourself into that dark hole. That experience is different from the kind of absence of Hope is...it exists in our mind not reality. At my age there is no hope that my joints will stop hurting, that my wrinkles will fade, that my hair will go back to its original color. For me, the present is as good as it gets! So, to think otherwise is to fall prey to False Hope. I guess you could say I am very content to forego hope in some situations. However, I do wear a mask, social distance, and wash my hands in the hope I do not get Covid-19."



A Message from the Bradford Community Church Unitarian Universalist:

We, the members and clergy of Bradford Community Church Unitarian Universalist, are outraged at the violence perpetuated in the name of law enforcement on our people of color throughout our nation's history and yesterday in Kenosha in the case of Jacob Blake for whose life we now pray. Despite the fact that we cannot condone violent response to injustice, we understand and appreciate the anger and frustration that fueled the events of last night. While we are relieved that our church home mostly survived the inferno in the lot next door, we affirm that we would rather lose 100 buildings than one more life to police violence. Some folks

have already commented that our decision to display "Black Lives Matter" on our road sign in some way contributed to the fire or that our support of the BLM movement is hypocritical or "un-Christian." Indeed, all lives do matter to us (that's what "Universalist" means), but given the overwhelming and disproportionate injustice suffered by Americans of color we are compelled by our faith to speak up and affirm that Black Lives Matter too.

If this is not your faith, so be it, but it is most certainly ours and we ask that all folks be respectful in honoring our sacred calling to speak truth to power, protect the innocent, empower the disenfranchised and promote equity and compassion in human relations.

In the name of Love,

Rev. Erik David Carlson

On Behalf of Bradford Community Church Unitarian Universalist, Kenosha

Editors Note: The above information was reprinted from the BCCUU website

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Fellowship Notes:

- Harry Heileman passed away on August 10 at the age of 79. He is preceded in death by his wife and PLUUF founder, Dr. Jean Johnson.
- PLUUFers donated \$160 to Sam Luna to help offset the fine he received for the Black Lives Matter Mural in downtown Ripon.
- THANK YOU to Liz Buchanan-Beegle, Ellen Mueller & Linda DeCramer for baking and individually wrapping desserts for Ripon College students.



Treasurer's Report as of August 31, 2020

	August 2020	Year to Date	Annual Budget
Income	\$2,233	\$2,858	\$26,610
Expenses	\$2,160	\$3,657	\$31,610

Detailed monthly financial reports are always available at PLUUF or by request:

tanyapapermaker@gmail.com