



Prairie Lakes Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

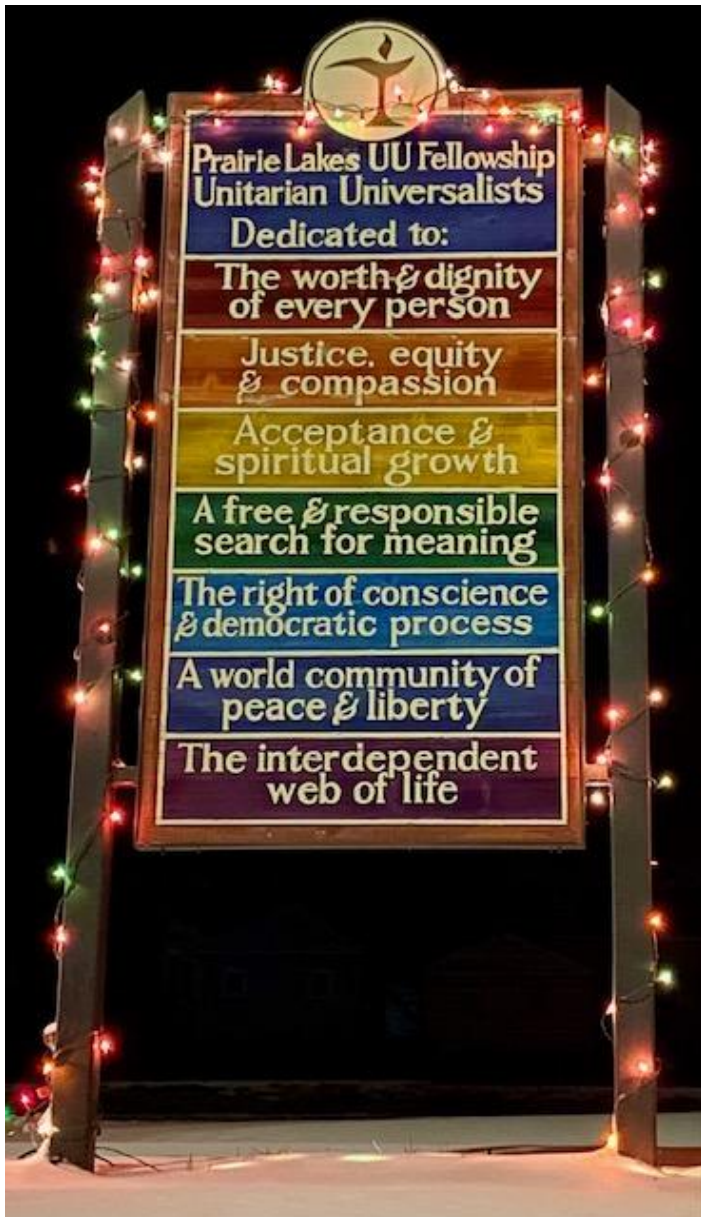
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DECEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER

CALENDAR AT-A-GLANCE



Prairie Lakes UU Fellowship
Unitarian Universalists

Dedicated to:

The worth & dignity
of every person

Justice, equity
& compassion

Acceptance &
spiritual growth

A free & responsible
search for meaning

The right of conscience
& democratic process

A world community of
peace & liberty

The interdependent
web of life

ENGAGE Sunday December 5 at 10AM

with Becky Feyen

Inspiration

Tuesday, December 7, 5:00 PM Board Meeting.

Contact tanyapapermaker@gmail.com

if you'd like anything added to the agenda.

Sunday, December 12, Worship Service 10AM

with Judy Harris

Winter Solstice

Sunday, December 19, 10 AM

Festivals of Light

Sunday, December 26, 10 AM

Piano Music with Jill Stiemsma and

Walk the Winter Spiral with

Robyn Davis-Bartow

DETAILS ON PAGE 2

DECEMBER ENGAGE & WORSHIP SERVICE EVENTS

ENGAGE is an acronym for:

Explore | **N**o Boundaries | **G**ather | **A**ctivism | **G**o! Be the Change | **E**ducate



ENGAGE Sunday, December 5: 10:00 AM with Becky Feyen

I hear you! Many of our ENGAGE discussions yielded the insight that we need to build our own inner light/spirit/soul before we take on social justice initiatives. Sometimes not taking action is the best way forward. It is obvious that the good in our world begins within each of us. To fill our “inner-ness,” we will spend a little time listening to inspirational writings and lovely music, interwoven with quiet time.

Our discussion will be an opportunity to share the practices that we perform to sustain us. Hopefully sharing this time together will provide a moment of rejuvenation and be an inspiration to create practices that enable you to bring your best to the world.



Worship Service Sunday, December 12, 10:00 AM *Winter Solstice* with Judy Harris

The Pagan celebration of Winter Solstice (also known as Yule) is one of the oldest winter celebrations in the world. Come celebrate this special holiday led by Judy Harris with a potluck to follow.

Sunday, December 19, 10:00 AM FESTIVALS OF LIGHT

This has become a beloved annual PLUUF event through the years. We'll celebrate 9 winter festivals with presentations, music and food!



Sunday, December 26, 10:00 AM

A morning of music with Jill Stiemsma and a Spiral Walk with Robyn Davis-Bartow. During the Spiral Walk, we celebrate the turning point in the year when the days become their shortest and the night its longest, and we

look for the light which comes from within. In the center of the spiral, a single candle is lit. Each participant walks the spiral alone to the center of the spiral, where they light their own candle to place along the spiral. When all the participants have walked the path, the whole spiral is aglow with lights. This will be an indoor event.

Prairie Lakes Successfully Renews its Welcoming Congregation Status!

What is a Welcoming Congregation? The Welcoming Congregation designation is one bestowed by the UUA upon congregations that have met predetermined criteria for providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered community as well as any other members of the community with marginalized sexual orientations or gender identities.



A message from Judy Harris: On November 17, Rev. Michael J. Crumpler, LGBTQ and Multicultural Program Director for the UUA, sent a congratulatory letter accepting our application for the renewal of our Welcoming Congregation status.

A big step for us! I am so proud of our congregation and each and every one of you who have supported our efforts to complete the 5 practices required to continue our status as a Welcoming Congregation. Many thanks to our PLUUF Board for supporting these efforts; to Tanya, always available and always helpful; to Jim Goyette for arranging both Zoom meetings and IT support here at PLUUF; to Liz Buchanan-Beegle for her willingness to help with our book discussion and bringing community members to the conversation; to Joe Hatcher for his help bringing the Queer-Straight Alliance of Ripon College students to our book discussion; to Brad Roost who connected the Gay-Straight Alliance of Ripon High School students with PLUUF; to the Rainbow Alliance at UW-Oshkosh; and a hearty thanks to Becky for the new PRIDE flag. Our success is the result of this Fellowship's efforts to "affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person," How proud we should all be!

A celebratory cake was enjoyed by all after the service on November 21.



Editor's Note: Did you know that Judy Harris was part of the original team that helped PLUUF achieve its Welcoming Congregation status back in 2007? Thank you to Judy for spearheading the 2021 Welcoming Congregation renewal status. No easy task!



Children's Religious Education

by Tanya Schwartz-Roeper

Since October I've had the privilege of leading several Children's Religious Education classes. The classes have included reading books on gratitude, practicing a song in sign language, making leaf rubbings, hula hooping, and more.

Everything came to fruition at the Gratitude Service on November 28 when the kids stood in front of the congregation and shared their words of gratitude and used American Sign Language to sign the beautiful words to "You'll Never Walk Alone" while Linda DeCramer sang the song and Jill Stiemsma provided piano accompaniment.



Photo above: Addisyn, Emma, Lilly and McKinley signing to the song "You'll Never Walk Alone" by Rodgers and Hammerstein at the Gratitude service

In Case You Missed it in November



ENGAGE Sunday, November 7, with Becky Feyen *Principle Pursuits & the 8th Principle Project*

Becky Feyen led the final discussion of our Seven Principles and how to live them. Previous discussions were revisited, such as the idea of converting the Prairie Lakes Green Space to gardens that grow food & prairie flowers. Being an ally of the oppressed was also discussed. It was determined that caring for oneself and nurturing our spirituality is the best way to develop the inner light needed to live the Seven Principles.

Becky presented the 8th Principle Project and it created a lively conversation. The 8th Principle is based on the belief that UU congregations need something to renew their commitment to dealing with racism and other oppressions at the systemic level, to holding congregations accountable and to fulfilling the potential of the existing 7 UU principles.

Proposed 8th UU Principle:

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountability dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions

Worship Service Sunday, November 14, with Connie Ghinazzi



Special thanks to Connie Ghinazzi for creating and presenting the reflection called *Hope and Awe in an Absurd Time* and leading the discussion that followed. Becky led a children's religious education session on hope and gratitude and Linda (vocals) and Tanya (piano) performed the hopeful song, "Somewhere Over the Rainbow." Thank you to everyone who ventured out on snow covered roads to attend this service.

To explore the concepts of awe and hope within the context of our UU beliefs, Connie used *The Art of Noticing* by Rob Walker and *Theology Ablaze: Celebrating the 50th Anniversary Year of Unitarian Universalism* by Tom Owen-Towle as resources. The first book was used to introduce a couple creativity building techniques to increase our awareness of the world around us. By developing a heightened sense of awe, we also become more open to the value of hope when things seem unchangeable. The second book is a guide she often uses to learn more about our core theological themes.

Editor's note: Connie Ghinazzi recently moved to Markesan after living her adult life in her hometown of Davenport, IA. Connie retired in 2019 from her work as a research librarian at Augustana College. Prior to that, she worked for Ortho Pharmaceutical as a senior sales representative and trainer. Connie was a longtime member of Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Quad City (UUCQC), serving on the Religious Services team and board. She is excited to find a UU community so close to her new home.

In Case You Missed It In November continued...



The Existential Philosophy of Martin Buber

We thank Ray Gurney and Don VanScotter for presenting "I and Thou - The Existential Philosophy of Martin Buber" on November 21. This presentation aligned with the Unitarian Universalist 4th Principle: A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

I and Thou is a philosophy of human relations with the world, including nature, other humans, and the spiritual realm.

Gratitude Service November 28: *Gratitude for a Path Not Followed*



Jill Stiemsma created and led the Gratitude Service with emphasis on the UU 4th, 5th and 6th Principles, while Tanya coordinated the segment that included the kids presenting their words of Gratitude and signing the words to the song "You'll Never Walk Alone." Photo: Jill read the 7 UU Principles while McKinley, Addisyn, Emma and Lilly recited the children's version.

A BIG thank you to Laird DeCramer



Laird has taken great care in maintaining the beauty of PLUUF's outdoor space by mowing, weed eating, raking and more. Recently he moved PLUUF's compost bin closer to the sharing garden, installed solar lights to the outside of the building, and planted a Catalpa Tree on the grounds. He is currently reconstructing the ramp that leads to the building to make it safer. There are many more behind-the-scenes tasks that Laird has taken on to support PLUUF and he always does it with a smile!

We Are Grateful for ALL you do!