

Prairie Lakes Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

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Find us on Facebook!

February is Black History Month

If you can walk,
You can **dance**.

If you can talk,
You can **sing**.

If you can imagine,
You can do
ANYTHING!



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February 2023 ENGAGE & WORSHIP SERVICE EVENTS



ENGAGE Sunday, February 5, 10AM: *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene - Salvation Through Self-Knowledge*

Dr. Justin Sledge, founder of the YouTube Channel Esoterica, presents a 30-minute overview of the Gospel of Mary. Rediscovered in the mid-nineteenth century, but probably originally written in the Second century. Dr. Sledge presents a most approachable discussion of this notoriously complicated legend (filled with provable facts.)

Pat Dobrinska will be the master of ceremony and discussion leader. Ray Gurney, who has studied Mary Magdala since the 1980s will act as local resident expert. He argues that Mary is the conveyor of the true teachings of Jesus. It was only after Peter (first Pope of the Roman Catholic Church) and the Apostle Paul established their male-dominated leadership roles did the natural leadership of Mary decline and eventually disappear; that is until the most recent decades.

This ENGAGE presentation is a not-to-miss discussion for anyone who wants to see the most recent scholarly proofs on the status and role of women in the early Jesus movement (before it became the Christian Church).



Worship Service Sunday, February 12, 10AM with Taiso Hannya, Byran Bartow, Roshi, Abbot of Hollow Bones Zen "Zen Meditation: the Spiritual Practice at the Heart of Buddhism"

Everyone has the capacity to awaken - to realize buddha nature. Following a brief history of Zen, we'll explore several exercises to experience Zen - clear deep heart-mind and perhaps taste the possibility of non-dual awareness.

(Byran Bartow is the partner of PLUUF's Moderator, Robyn Davis-Bartow)



ENGAGE Sunday, February 19, 10:00 AM with Becky Feyen THE (Religious Education) NEW UU - Tapestry of Faith Program 6 part series

adapted for Prairie Lakes UU Fellowship. The New UU program was designed as an "important tool to help congregations welcome, orient, and integrate newcomers into their faith communities. The program addresses the needs of newcomers who want to know more about who we are and what we believe. It provides opportunities for members of your congregation to share with newcomers what it means to them to be a Unitarian Universalist." It gives everyone a chance to examine their own personal stories in the light of THE

Unitarian Universalist tradition and heritage, providing a great opportunity for connection & outreach.

Worship Service Sunday, February 26 , 10:00 AM "Misusing the Bible to Bash LGBTQ"

We will revisit a presentation written by Brian Smith.





A Message from the Moderator by Robyn Davis-Bartow

I am so excited for February to be upon us. It is one of my Wisconsin favorites. The combination of cold and snow (if we are lucky) with increased daylight makes for some visually stunning days. Long late afternoon shadows across a snow drifted field never fail to fill me with awe. Neither does one of my other Wisconsin favorites; New York Times bestselling author, humorist, singer/songwriter and professional noticer Michael Perry.

For those of you not already familiar with his work, Perry’s bestselling memoirs include *Population: 485* (subsequently adapted for the stage), *Truck: A Love Story*, *Coop*, *Visiting Tom*, and *Montaigne in Barn Boots*. Raised on a small Midwestern dairy farm, Perry put himself through nursing school while working on a ranch in Wyoming, then detoured into writing. He lives with his wife and two daughters in rural Wisconsin, where he still makes an occasional call with the local volunteer fire and rescue service. He hosts the nationally-syndicated “Tent Show Radio,” performs widely as a humorist, and tours with his band The Long Beds.



This fall, Byran and I were in Spring Green perusing Acadia Books before heading to American Players Theater (two more Wisconsin favorites), and came across Perry’s latest work, *Hunker*. I’ve been enjoying it ever since as my morning “meditation” reading. It’s a book of brief essays Michael wrote during the pandemic on human connection. Some of the essays are funny, some are profound, some are quite touching. All make you think about attempting to be better people during trying times.

On March 5th, I will be leading an Engage Sunday discussing this book. I can’t wait to share this gem with my PLUUF family. Reading it has made my days a little brighter. I hope it does the same for you!



PLUUF February Birthdays

This month we celebrate the birth of Randy Roeper on the 9th, Isaiah Luna on the 17th and Cyan Volkmann on the 19th!! Happy Birthday Randy, Isaiah and Cy!

Don’t see yourself listed? Please let us know! Email Robyn at robinaudrey19@gmail.com. 920-896-2770. Also, if you do not want your birthday noted in the monthly newsletter, please let us know.

A CALL TO CONSCIENCE: Defending Freedom & Human Rights

AUGUST 14-18, 2023 | McCORMICK PLACE



In August of 2023, the Parliament of the World's Religions returns to the birthplace of the modern interfaith movement after 30 years away to celebrate 130 years of history in the city of Chicago. Parliament Convenings attract participants from more than 200 diverse religious, indigenous, and secular beliefs and more than 80 nations.

Registrants enjoy access to all the plenary sessions, hundreds of breakout sessions, art & cultural exhibits, performances, a film festival, and countless opportunities to connect with individuals and organizations committed to justice, peace, and sustainability.

The 2023 Parliament of the World's Religions will be hosted in McCormick Place Lakeside Center from August 14-18, 2023.

[BOOK YOUR TICKET](#)

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A MESSAGE FROM JILL STIEMSMA

Editor's note: Jill Stiemsma is a longtime member of Prairie Lakes and has been teaching at the Center for Intercultural Exchange & Solidarity (CIS) in El Salvador almost every January-March since 2011. Below is a recent update:

Hi, all. Hope you're all safe and sound, regardless of your weather conditions. Here, same old, same old: Hot and sunny. I know some of you envy that kind of weather, but I envy WI's snow!

I thought I'd take some time to update you on the increasing dangers of El Salvador's political situation. As some of you know, El Salvador has had a very tenuous safety record given gang threats: extremely high murder rate, continued extortion of wealthier as well as very poor businesses, anticipated robberies. Years back, I asked my students, "How many of you have been robbed?" Every single hand went up. How many of you have been robbed two times? Every single hand went up. Thereafter, the percentages dropped until finally only one student admitted to being robbed 7 times.

So you can understand the desperation of communities to get untangled from criminal gangs. Many kids couldn't go to school because it was simply not safe to walk there. One of my favorite students, Denis, went into

an unfamiliar community to tutor a fellow university student. He was accosted and murdered. Every time I return to ES, I mourn his death. He was just the sweetest man. *Continued on the next page...*
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So, what did President Bukele do? He issued a State of Exception: That is, the military and police can arrest anyone suspected of being in a gang or cooperating with them...mostly that meant young men (but not entirely)...young men in poor communities, that is. An already overcrowded prison system designed to house about 20,000 has since last March imprisoned 60,000 more. None of these men has a right to an attorney, a right to be proven innocent (since no charges are being brought), a right to contact family members (who have NO idea where their loved ones might be housed), a right to obtain needed resources (hygiene products, edible food, etc.). About 100 deaths have been reported, but most of us suspect that number is way low.

So...what is the result?

- Yes, crime is WAY down. A former student, Mirian, and I had breakfast last week. She is a trained hair stylist who had the money to open a salon but never did because she couldn't afford to pay the extortion demands. Now, she has her own salon. Another student, who crafts for a living, is no longer afraid she'll be robbed of her creations. There is 80%+ support for the State of Exception as a result. All is well, yes?
- ...unless you're from a poor community. The military and police have quotas to fill so they arrest at will. Hence, families are devastated by their inability to support themselves since income earners have disappeared. And think of the worry: Where are they? Are they still living? Are they being tortured (as is reported in the news)?
- Imagine the conditions in these prisons, as overcrowded as they are. I'm told the men live in undershorts. Can they access clean, potable water? I doubt it. Do they have to sleep in shifts since there's not enough space for everyone to lie down? Can they access needed medication? Reportedly, diabetics have died because they couldn't get their insulin. In these hot temperatures, can you imagine the stench? And how worried they must be for their loved ones or for their own safety, being housed with actual gang members as they are. And do they get enough food? My friend Brian who has served in ES since way before the 1980's Civil War is convinced they're starving prisoners on purpose as their way of ending the gangs, once and for all. Are they starving everyone???
- And, maybe worse still are the signs of things to come. The State of Exception has been extended through 2023! Last week, six environmental activists were arrested under this decree: Is that a sign the President will renege on this country's promise NOT to allow gold mining here? Gold mining is done by spraying cyanide over vast areas and that requires vast amounts of water which ES does not have. Where "test" mines were allowed here, the rates of kidney disease skyrocketed. Then, just yesterday, a protestor was arrested under the State of Exception. His "crime"? All who work in the paid economy receive an extra check at Christmas time. That's the law. But one community of workers did not get their checks. So he was protesting for something he was legally entitled to.

- So what do these arrests portend? Will ES have another civil war eventually? Who will the US support this time?

Yes, this is a very worrisome time; especially those who are better off feel much safer so it's difficult for them to assess the downside of the State of Exception. ES has an election early next year. I'm sure Bukele will be re-elected (because under him they changed the Constitution so he could run again). There's so much on the line.



In Case You Missed it in January



Sunday, January 1, **Happy New Year Off-site ENGAGE event in Green Lake with Spiral Walk**

We rang in a HAPPY HOPEFUL NEW YEAR! Prairie Lakes welcomed 2023 with an off-site gathering at the home of the Schwartz/Roeper's from 11AM-2PM. This special gathering was hosted by PLUUF members Tanya Schwartz- Roeper, Becky Feyen, Pat Dobrinska, and Cheri Salzberg with an indoor Spiral Walk led by Robyn Davis-Bartow.



Worship Service Sunday, January 8, with Brian Smith *Meditating on Nature: Source of Wonder!*

Brian Smith, professor emeritus of Religion at Ripon College and one of Prairie Lakes most popular visiting speakers, led the first Worship Service of 2023!



ENGAGE Sunday, January 15, 10:00 AM with With Becky Feyen

THE NEW UU - Tapestry of Faith Program Session #1 adapted for Prairie Lakes UU Fellowship. The New UU program was designed as an important tool to help congregations welcome, orient, and integrate newcomers into their faith communities. The program addresses the needs of newcomers who want to know more about who we are and what we believe. Approximately a dozen PLUUFers attended the first session.



Worship Service Sunday, January 22, *Chinese New Year with Nicole Roost*

2023 is the year of the rabbit. We wore red, we used noise makers and confetti poppers, listened to traditional Chinese music, watched a dragon parade through the sanctuary, and more! Ringing in the Chinese New Year was WONDERFUL and has been led by Nicole Roost since 2007! We are already looking forward to next year!



THANK YOU TO THE 5th SUNDAY FLUFF & BUFF CLEAN UP CREW! By Tanya

- The bathrooms are spic and span thanks to Jim.
- Pat rocked the vacuuming in the sanctuary.
- Took a team of two to tackle the entryway: Floors mopped, desk decluttered, surfaces wiped, carpets vacuumed and plants pruned. Thanks Becky & Kitt!
- Enthusiasm and joy with whatever she is tasked with! Robyn joyfully cleaned the fridge, microwave, stovetop and more.
- Countertop patrol: Thank you to Linda for organizing and sanitizing!



FLUFF N BUFF 2023 😊

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| <p>BATHROOMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean Toilet Bowl • Scrub & Disinfect Sink • Clean Mirrors • Sweep • Mop | <p>T H A N K Y O U !</p> | <p>Front Entry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wipe down all Surfaces with emphasis on Window Sills • Prune dead leaves off plants • Vacuum • Mop |
| <p>Social Room</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash inside Refrigerator • Wipe down all Surfaces • Clean both Sinks • Sweep • Mop • Check Cabinet for expired food | | <p>Rear Entry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacuum green rug |
| <p>Sanctuary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dust all Surfaces with emphasis around book shelves & SW Corner Window • Vacuum | | <p>Children's RE Room</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tidy up • Vacuum <p>Other?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microwave |

THANK YOU 🙏 🙏 !! 😊

