



Prairie Lakes Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

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January ENGAGE & WORSHIP SERVICE EVENTS



ENGAGE Sunday, January 5, 10AM: Jill Stiemsma presents *False White Gospel* by Jim Wallis

James E. Wallis Jr. is an American theologian, writer, teacher and political activist. Wallis conducts another provocative theological experiment in his latest book, "The False White Gospel: Rejecting Christian Nationalism, Reclaiming True Faith, and Refounding Democracy." In the book he compares six iconic Biblical texts to White Christian nationalist beliefs. Please join Jill for a presentation and discussion on this book.



Worship Service Sunday, January 12, 10AM: *Where Do We Go from Here - Chaos or Community?* Martin Luther King Jr.

In honor of Martin Luther King Jr Day, Becky Feyen will present a service based on the last book King wrote in 1967. As with most of King's writings, aspects are stunningly & sadly relevant today. The message of this book is ever-so vital in the chaos being stoked by a few with the potential to harm many. Dr. King taught us that we are not powerless. Nor are we condemned to despair. The ideal of a bottom-up justice that King called for is still calling us.



ENGAGE Sunday, January 19, 10AM: *Spirituality with Eckhardt Tolle*. Presenting will be Sherman Leatherberry and his sister Diane Rutsch.

Worship Service Sunday, January 26, 10AM with Connie Ghinazzi Topic to be announced.



Board Retreat Saturday, January 25: If you would like anything added to the agenda contact Connie Ghinazzi. connieghinazzi@gmail.com



A Message from the Moderator by Connie Ghinazzi

Hello friends,

That busiest month of the year is now behind us. January marks a time step back, nurture ourselves and make plans for the months ahead. In the Fall/Winter issue of *UU World*, Executive Editor Kristen Cox Roby says, "This issue ... is centered on Unitarian Universalists' long-haul efforts that support, sustain and renew, even - and especially - in times when the world seems bleak and overwhelming." As you make your own plans for 2025, I suggest taking a look at this issue for encouragement, understanding and ideas.

On January 25, the board will have a day-long retreat to discuss how things have gone in 2024 and plans for the new year. Details for the agenda of this board meeting will be discussed at our next regular board meeting, January 8, at 5:30. If you have concerns or suggestions you want to be sure we include in our board retreat brainstorming sessions, please reach out to any board member or Tanya to let us know your thoughts. It takes all of us to make our community thrive.

Carry Each Other into the New Year

In this new year, may we leave behind the weight of unfulfilled resolutions, of unrealized dreams, and of unrealistic expectations.

May we unpack the heavy weight of stories that tell us we are unworthy and unlovable.

May we remember that we each carry inside of us a spark of the Divine.

In this new year,

May we carry kindness, gentleness and hope that hold us through even the hardest days and the most daunting risks.

May we carry the weight of memory that reminds us of who we are, and the weight of spirit that reminds us we are still becoming.

May we carry the seed of knowledge that teaches us that improvement and growth aren't linear and individualistic but are cyclical and communal.

May we carry the wisdom to seek rest and connection, to lean into mutual care.

May we carry the certain belief that when we have patterns of thinking and behaving that harm ourselves and others, we can seek resources that will help us move towards healing.

May we carry the knowledge that happiness and success take many shapes and one of those shapes is purpose.

May we carry purpose lightly, trusting that it changes and evolves and surprises us.

May we carry curiosity, wonder, and the ability to be surprised.

This year, may we carry space for all of our flaws, all of our longings, and all of our love, remembering that the truly daring adventure of life is not to be better-better-best! but to show up wholly, authentically, lovingly as ourselves.

May we carry these prayers and carry each other into the new year. (From Worship Service Web)

FESTIVALS OF LIGHT in Photos

PRESENTERS

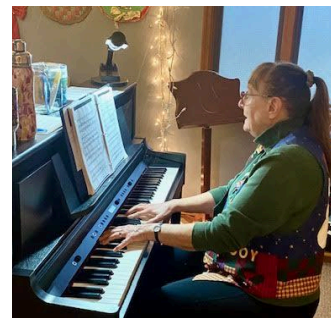
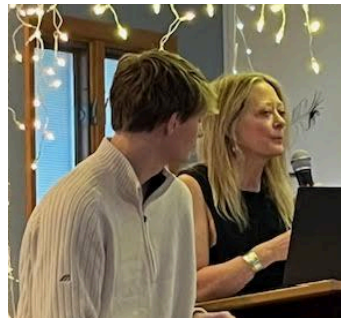
Welcome - Connie Ghinazzi
Los Posadas - Pat Dobrinska
Diwali - Jill Stiemsma
Hanukkah - Tanya & Oliver Roeper
St. Lucia's Day - Tanya Schwartz-Roeper
St. Lucia - Holland
Diwali - Robyn Davis-Bartow
Kwanzaa - via video
Winter Solstice - Beth Homan-Combs & Grace Matson
Christmas - Becky Feyen

PLUUF SINGERS

Sherman Leatherberry
Brad & Nicole Roost
Sue Malsack
Miguel Luna
Linda DeCramer

THE KIDS

Quintin, Torrin, Holland, Lilly,
McKinley & Emmy



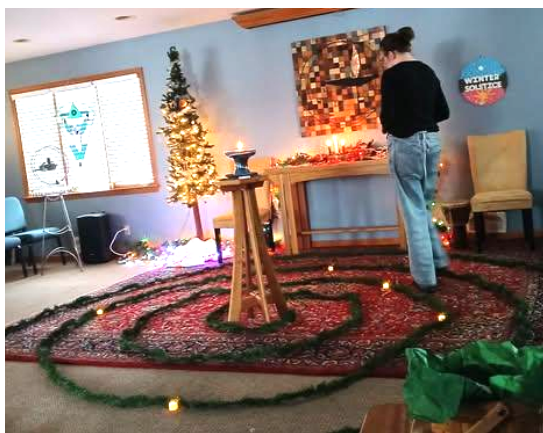
Thank you to everyone who attended! We missed those of you who wanted to be there but could not. Hope you can join us next year!

A Few Highlights from 2024

In addition to year round Worship Services and ENGAGE Sundays, here are just a few of the great things that have happened this past year at PLUUF, thanks to YOU:

- Big events that included the participation of adults and kids like the Festivals of Light event and PLUUF's unique Easter celebration.
- Welcoming Congregation renewal
- Donations given to the Ripon High School Social Justice Alliance and Ripon College Queer/Straight Alliance
- The 4th year of PLUUF's Sharing Garden with vegetables donated to the Ripon Community Food Pantry
- PLUUF's continued involvement with the Ripon Area Ministerial Association (RAMA)
- Our 1st year participating in the Santa Club
- Worship Services & ENGAGE Sunday's coordinated and/or led by a greater number of PLUUFers
- 3rd annual Jean Johnson Memorial paddle event
- Participation in the Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup
- A year of beloved PLUUF events like the Chinese New Year, Water Sharing, guest and lay-led reflections, and much, much more!

**THANK YOU TO ALL THE GENEROUS DONORS
& VOLUNTEERS AT PRAIRIE LAKES! We could not exist without
you!**



The Last Worship Service of 2024

We concluded our last Worship Service of the year by walking the Spiral coordinated by Robyn Davis-Bartow and music by Jill Stiemsma. Photo credit: Grace Matson

December Board Meeting Minute Highlights

by Board Secretary **Michaela Meyers**



With the last board meeting for this calendar year, there were a couple projects that have been wrapping up, including the new shelf Harold Salzberg hung in the RE/Youth Group room and finalizing a procedure manual for teaching RE/Youth Group. Thank you to Harold and Tanya for their hard work on those projects!

We also had a successful first year participating in the Santa Club, raising almost \$300! PLUUF was matched with a family with 3 young children. Beth Howman-Combs, who coordinated PLUUF's involvement with the Santa Club, was able to use the money to purchase gifts for the family and dropped them off two weeks before Christmas. The board also discussed some exciting things coming up in the future, including the continuation of Robyn Davis-Bartow's Wednesday evening meditations, which will be resuming in January, weather permitting.

A Board Retreat is scheduled on January 25 and will be followed by a town hall meeting in March. The goal of our town hall meeting will be to provide updates on PLUUF's finances, updates on completed, ongoing and planned projects, and to provide an opportunity for the congregation to ask questions, celebrate accomplishments or voice concerns. In addition, we're pleased to announce that the 2025 Art and Service auction fundraising event will take place on March 30. More details in next month's newsletter. In the meantime, please be thinking of items or services you'd like to donate to the auction.

Treasurer Report At-A-Glance

Treasurer Report Balances as of November 2024 *(Nov. is the 5th month of PLUUF's Fiscal Year)*

Reports will always appear to be a month behind due to the newsletter submission deadline.

The December treasurer report will appear in the February issue of the PLUUF newsletter.

10100 AST-BMO checking	\$4,207
10111 Golden Rule Savings Vision	\$30,627 (Nov... interest \$2.08)
10112 Golden Rule Checking for Debit Card	\$129
10202 AST-UUA CEF Vision	\$48,768 (Nov. increase \$1,097)

Total Assets \$83,731

	Nov. 2024	YTD 2023	YTD 2024	2024/25 Budget
Member/Friend Contributions	\$1,701	\$8,361	\$6,325	\$30,586
Total Income (includes UUA Common Endowment Fund monthly increases & decreases)	\$2,800	\$8,152	\$8,956	\$33,616
Expenses	\$2,282	\$14,270	\$10,556	\$33,616

Next PLUUF Board Meeting Wednesday, January 8, at 5:30PM

If you would like anything added to the Board Agenda please contact: connieghinazzi@gmail.com

If you would like a complete copy of the minutes or treasurer reports, contact

tanyapapermaker@gmail.com or pluufripon@gmail.com

In Case You Missed it in December



ENGAGE Sunday, December 1, *After the Election: Exploring Paths Forward* with Dr. Paul Jeffries. The discussion centered on reactions to the recent election, highlighting the diverse responses, including jubilation among President Trump supporters and deep despair among others. Key concerns included the potential resurrection of misogyny and racism. The conversation also touched on the need for justice, equity, and compassion, advocating for marginalized groups and engaging in courageous compassion. Historical precedents and the role of the Unitarian Universalist 7 principles were discussed as potential guides for moving forward.



Worship Service Sunday, December 8, Plus Potluck & Children's RE *Embracing Possibility in Times of Change* with Connie Ghinazzi. This service was based on one published with videos on the Worship Web UU website. Although created as a remote service in November 2022, the topic was very appropriate for our current world situation.



Sunday, December 17: **FESTIVALS OF LIGHT**

It was a morning of music and good cheer as we observed 8 winter holidays celebrated around the world. We are grateful to everyone who celebrated with us that morning. If you missed it, we hope you can join us next year. Photos from the event on page 3.



Worship Service Sunday, December 22, 10:00 AM *Spiral Walk & Music* A morning of music with Jill Stiemsma and a Spiral Walk with Robyn Davis-Bartow. During the Spiral Walk, we celebrated the turning point in the year when the days become their shortest and the night its longest, and we looked for the light which comes from within. PLUUF's flaming chalice was in the center of the spiral. Each participant walked the spiral alone to the center of the spiral, where they lit their own candle to place along the spiral.



5th Sunday, December 29: *Spirituality Through Literature & History* with Kathryn Severson. To continue this month's celebration of music and acknowledge the celebration of Kwanzaa by some community members this week, Kathryn Severson presented "Transporting Through Music" a brief historical overview of the impact of spirituals on the African American experience. Inspired by a short passage from the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845) in which Douglass observes, "I've often been utterly astonished, since I came to the north, to find persons who could speak of the singing, among slaves, as evidence of their contentment and happiness. It is impossible to conceive of a greater mistake. Slaves sing most when they are most unhappy. The songs of the slave represent the sorrows of his heart; and he is relieved by them, only as an aching heart is relieved by its tears." The impact of spiritual music on the human ability to transport mind, body, and spirit has a strong history in the African American experience. We looked briefly at the periods of slavery and reconstruction, the rebirth of the Harlem Renaissance, and the Civil Rights Era post World War II to trace musical expression of the themes of Hope, Pride, and Despair.