



Prairie Lakes Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

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FEBRUARY 2025 ENGAGE & WORSHIP SERVICE EVENTS

ENGAGE Sunday, February 2, 10AM with Sherman Leatherberry “Inner Worlds, Outer Worlds Part I: According to *Inner Worlds, Outer Worlds*, a 2012 documentary directed and produced by Canadian meditation teacher Daniel Schmidt, it is believed that all religions are just different manifestations of the same universal ideas. The root belief of all religions is that there’s a field of energy linking the inner spirits of individuals to the external world. There is one vibratory field that connects all things. It has been called Akasha, Logos, the primordial OM, the music of the spheres, the Higgs field, dark energy, and a thousand other names throughout history. The vibratory field is at the root of all true spiritual experience and scientific investigation. It is the same field of energy that saints, Buddhas, yogis, mystics, priests, shamans and seers, have observed by looking within themselves.



Worship Service Sunday, February 9, 10AM with Marie Luna: “Belonging, Community, and the Importance of Place” plus, it’s 2nd Sunday Potluck! How does one find ‘their place?’ How do we belong to our communities, cities, and congregations, even amidst transition and change? Through many changes in my life, I have realized it is a rather simple thing that helps me find my place, and I look forward to exploring this theme with you. *Marie served as the Director of Congregational Life at the Fox Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Appleton for 17 years before leaving the position in 2022. She helped found the Unitarian Universalist Association of Membership Professionals group. She recently moved to Ripon and is excited about getting more involved here.*



ENGAGE Sunday, February 16, 10AM with Sherman Leatherberry “Inner Worlds Outer Worlds Part II - The Spiral” "Inner Worlds Outer Worlds" Part 2 delves deeper into the concept that our inner reality is interconnected with the outer universe, exploring the idea of a unified field of energy that connects all things through vibrant visuals and scientific explanations, suggesting that by accessing this inner realm through meditation and mindfulness, we can tap into a deeper understanding of ourselves and the cosmos around us; it highlights historical figures who may have accessed this knowledge, emphasizing the potential for healing and spiritual growth through this connection.



Worship Service Sunday, February 23, 10AM with Jill Stiemsma “Finding Hope in an Absurd Time. Jill will resurrect a Valentine’s service entitled “Finding Hope in an Absurd Time,” a stay-at-home service she wrote for PLUUF attendees during the Pandemic. The service will offer a message of hope from John Lewis, whose very life was seriously threatened in the Civil Rights marches, and from the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond’s own debilitating experiences as discussed in The Book of Joy, which some PLUUF members examined in an ENGAGE Sunday years back. Their messages are as potent today as when they were spoken long before this last election.





Moderator's Message by Connie Ghinazzi

Hello friends. Although we are challenged by the political environment around us, we have gotten off to a great start with exciting ENGAGE and Worship Sundays to begin the year. This last weekend the PLUUF Board met to review the accomplishments of the past year and brainstorm plans for 2025-26. We will present our ideas at the Town Hall meeting on Sunday, May 4, and invite you to share any suggestions you may have.

I want to invite all of you to think about what you might be able to donate or a service you'd like to offer for the Art & Service Auction on Sunday, March 30. This is a major biennial fundraiser for our congregation. Attached to this newsletter is the form to submit a description of what you'd like to donate.

To close, I will share the message I shared to end our Board retreat on Saturday. *"Life is amazing. And then it's awful. And then it is amazing again. And in between the amazing and awful it's ordinary and mundane and routine. Breathe in the amazing, hold on through the awful, and relax and exhale during the ordinary. That's just living heartbreaking, soul-healing, amazing, awful, ordinary life. And it's breathtakingly beautiful."* L R Knost.

Prairie Lakes Board Retreat Recap by Tanya Schwartz-Roeper

Board Moderator, Connie Ghinazzi, hosted the annual Board Retreat in her beautiful home. With a lake view, delicious food and a comfortable meeting venue near a warm fire, the Board explored emerging issues, and discussed the strengths and weaknesses of Prairie Lakes. The retreat allowed for focused discussion and strategic thinking on how best to serve our amazing Fellowship.



Michaela Meyers, Secretary; Beth Howman-Combs, At-Large Rep; Nicole Roost, At-Large Rep; Jim Goyette, Treasurer; Connie Ghinazzi, Moderator

The Board brainstormed strategies in order to create a strong future for Prairie Lakes. The details of the focus objectives will be shared with the congregation and then discussed at a Town Hall meeting on Sunday, May 4, at 10am. The Prairie Lakes Annual meeting will take place on Sunday, June 1. More information will be shared with the congregation as we approach the dates. In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns please contact:

connieghinazzi@gmail.com



THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO'S BEEN DONATING ITEMS OFF THE LIST! 100's of dollars have been saved by your generosity! The only item on the February Wish List: Natural basket coffee filters 8-12 cup capacity



Ripon Food Pantry Board of Directors:
Gary Berger, Treasurer; Betts Olson,
President; Ellen Shattuck; Secretary

Boxes Needed at the Ripon Food Pantry

This is not Traded Treasures Food Pantry, but a food pantry located at St. Catherine’s of Siena church on Blossom Street. This pantry has been around since 1983 and was originally housed in the Senior Citizen Building on Watson Street. Back in the early to mid 2000s this was the Food Pantry PLUUFers supported by participating in the annual CROP Walk. On Monday, January 27, a meeting was held at St. Catherine’s of Siena church to discuss the future of this small Food Pantry. The meeting covered operational details, financial status, volunteer needs, and ways to become more visible and accessible to the

community. More ways to support the pantry will be shared in future emails, but for now, **sturdy boxes are needed.** They can be dropped off at Prairie Lakes and Tanya will deliver to the pantry.

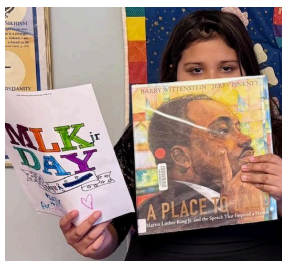
16th Annual United for Diversity Event in Fond du Lac | February 15



The 16th annual CELEBRATE commUNITY event, sponsored by United for Diversity, is scheduled for Saturday, February 15 at the Fond du Lac County Fairgrounds Expo Center. It will be an exciting day of cultural immersion. Adults and children alike will have opportunities to interact with others at over 50 booths that represent different countries, religions, and community organizations showcasing a beautiful spectrum of diversity. From Noon until 3:00 pm, many booths will serve free ethnic food samples, while others will be selling their ethnic wares and artifacts. Families can partake in barrier-breaking games, crafts, and activities that will continue throughout the day to make the message personal and effective. Being shoulder-to-shoulder and eye-to-eye will result in a long-lived positive experience for all who participate. **Doors open at 10:30 am.** The event kicks off at 11 am with an awe-inspiring Flag Ceremony, drummed in by our Native American elders. Jill Stiemsma’s booth will exhibit artifacts and pictures from her beloved El Salvador.

RE/YOUTH GROUP by Tanya Schwartz-Roeper

Although the PLUUF student body is rather small, we had two enriching classes in January on Worship Service Sundays, plus we had a really good time! On January 12 the kids learned about the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. and how he was a civil rights activist in the 1950s & 60’s and how he led non-violent protests to fight for the rights of all people. On January 26, we learned a bit about discrimination by reading the Dr. Seuss book, “The Sneetches”. We followed up with a wonderful discussion and a craft activity in which the kids made stars that said “I can like someone who is different than me.”



January Board Meeting Minute Highlights

by Board Secretary Michaela Meyers



In the January meeting, the Board discussed our upcoming retreat and what some goals for that will look like. We also spent a good amount of time going over upcoming events and future Sunday plans. We're in the process of inviting Rev. Phillip Lund from the UUA MidAmerican Region to discuss the idea of love at the center of the new 6 values. Rev. Lund was here about 20 years ago if anyone remembers his visit from back then

We're also looking to host an Art & Service Auction on Sunday, March 30th. If you'd like to donate something for the auction, forms are available at PLUUF (see page 5), or contact Tanya tanyapapermaker@gmail.com. It does not have to be an already made object, like a quilt. It could be the promise to make a quilt with colors chosen by the person who buys it. So it would be great to start thinking about what kinds of things to contribute. Please see page 5 for more ideas.

Another big focus at this board meeting was to see who in our community can we invite to hold Sunday services. We were thinking of potential professors at the college we could reach out to, but also PLUUF members who have expressed an interest in leading part or all of a service. If you have an interest in leading a Worship Service please reach out to Connie connieghinazzi@gmail.com

Lots of exciting things are coming up for PLUUF in the new year!

Treasurer Report At-A-Glance

Treasurer Report Balances as of January 28, 2025

10100 AST-BMO checking \$8,476
10111 Golden Rule Savings Vision \$30,629
10112 Golden Rule Checking for Debit Card \$128.85
10202 AST-UUA CEF Vision \$47,830 as of 12/31/24

Total Assets \$87,063.85

	Jan. 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	2024/25 Budget
Member/FriendContributions	\$7,045	\$17,675	\$14,949	\$30,586
Total Income (jan nya))	\$7,045	\$19,729	\$16,644	\$33,616
Expenses	\$2,062	\$19,424	\$14,912	\$33,616

Although income is down just a bit over last year, so are expenses, making income and expenses almost equal 😊

Next PLUUF Board Meeting Thursday, March 13, at 5:30PM

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

A complete copy of the minutes or treasurer reports are always available at PLUUF or by request by contacting: tanyapapermaker@gmail.com or pluufripon@gmail.com

Art & Service Auction & Entertainment Karaoke Style!

On **Sunday, March 30, at 10am** we will see the return of Prairie Lakes largest (and only!) fundraiser of the year, THE ART & SERVICE AUCTION! It will be a memorable morning with a live & silent auction, 50/50 raffle, and entertainment!

We need everyone's participation to make this event a success. Here are a few ways you can help:

1. **Donate an item for the live or silent auction and/or basket raffle** (See ideas in yellow box)
2. **Provide food and/or beverages for the potluck.**
3. **Participate in the event by bidding and buying.**
4. **Invite friends, family and coworkers to bid and buy.**

Listed below are a few ideas for the auction, but there are a million other ideas out there. If you have something you would like to donate please fill out this form or just email tanyapapermaker@gmail.com with a description of the item or service you are donating. We appreciate any items or services you can offer!

AUCTION IDEAS:

- Make dinner for another family
- Dessert every month for a year
- Original art or craft item
- Pre-owned art or craft item
- Handyman special-build or repair something
- Yard work/House work
- Pet Sitting
- Pies, cookies or cakes for a special occasion
- Guided Hike
- Horse drawn carriage ride

Pontoon boat use

Restaurant certificates Sports/activity

Theater Tickets

Time with a fitness trainer

AUCTION BASKET IDEAS:

Crazy for Chocolate

Gardening

Caffeine Fix

Great Outdoors

YES! I would like to donate an item or service to be used in the live or silent auction.

Item(s) or Service(s) description (Include value and minimum bid amount if needed).

You don't have to have the item ready, but please provide a general description as soon as possible so it can be included in the print catalog.

Name: _____

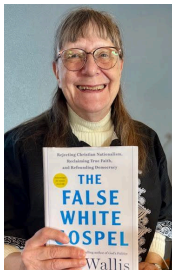
email: _____

Please email tanyapapermaker@gmail.com with a description of your item or copy, complete and deliver or send to: PLUUF 315 Eureka Street Ripon, WI 54971

TIMBER!!! The sick Spruce at Prairie Lakes was taken down and branches loaded up. Many hands made light(er) work. Thank you to Becky for coordinating this endeavor and to Kip for bringing his mighty chainsaw, truck, trailer & rope, and making it happen. Thank you to Brody for assisting with the chainsawing and more. Jim, Jonah & Connie showed up to assist with branch pick up and loading. The project was completed in less than 2-hrs!



In Case You Missed it in January



ENGAGE Sunday, January 5: Jill Stiemsma presented *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. We thank Jill for presenting and discussing this book with the fellowship.



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

In honor of Martin Luther King Jr Day, Becky Feyen presented 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: On Spirituality with Eckhardt Tolle and presented by Sherman Leatherberry and his sister Diane Rutsch. A BIG thank you to the brother and sister team of Sherman and Diane for bringing a fascinating presentation and discussion to Prairie Lakes this morning! The discussion on spirituality was based on personal experiences and Eckhart Tolle's teachings. Tolle's teachings emphasize the ego's role in suffering, the importance of consciousness, and the distinction between spirituality and religion. The conversation highlighted the need for inner openness and the transformative power of living in the present.



Worship Service Sunday, January 26, with Connie Ghinazzi “*Honing Our Empathic Skills*” As the news continues to be filled with unimaginable events, it behooves each of us to step outside ourselves into someone else's shoes. Connie led a presentation and discussion on how to expand our own empathic potential. Empathy is not just a way to extend boundaries of your moral universe. Researchers tell us it's a habit we can cultivate to improve the quality of our own lives. (photo by Grace Matson)