



# Prairie Lakes Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

315 Eureka Street, Ripon, WI 54971

[pluufripon@gmail.com](mailto:pluufripon@gmail.com)

Find us on Facebook!

## September 2025 NEWSLETTER



### Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup Day, Sunday, September 7, 9:30

We have been grateful for the volunteer efforts of PLUUFers to remove trash, recyclables and litter for our stretch of road on Highway 23 through the years. We will meet in the Christiano Restaurant parking lot on highway 23 in Green Lake and we'll supply the trash bags, cool vests and the beverages tail-gate style. Please bring gloves.

WE HOPE EVERYONE HAD A GOOD SUMMER! We missed you! It's our first summer in about 20 years that we have taken a break from on-site summer programming. LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING you on Sunday, September 14, for water sharing!

The Water Sharing/InGathering Service officially kicks off programming for our new fiscal year. To celebrate, there will be a potluck and ice cream social following the service.



**Worship Service Sunday, September 14, 10:00 AM Plus Potluck & Ice Cream social: Annual Water Sharing/In-Gathering (Intergenerational)** This time of year begins another season of Ingathering, when Unitarian Universalists come together to renew our commitments to each other and to our communities. The PLUUF Board members will lead this service. Bring water from your summer expeditions or that is meaningful to you and take this opportunity to share your thoughts. We'll co-mingle the waters as a symbol of our solidarity. Don't have water? No problem. We'll provide some for you. *More details on the bottom of page 2*



**ENGAGE Sunday, September 21, 10:00 AM:** Brian Smith will present a sneak preview of his upcoming book, "Reaching the Religiously Disaffiliated: Comparative Strategies to Engage the Nones". Bloomsbury Academic Publishers, Fall 2025. Brian Smith, professor emeritus of religion at Ripon College and co-director of the Center for Politics and the People, has been a popular presenter at Prairie Lakes through the years. We hope you can join us!



**Worship Service Sunday, September 28, 10:00 AM with Jill Stiemsma** - Topic To Be Announced.



## A Message from the Moderator by Connie Ghinazzi

Welcome back, friends. Our summer sabbatical is concluding and I hope all of you feel refreshed and excited to be back together. Please let me know your thoughts about taking this sabbatical from our regular programming. The Board made the decision to do this once and then evaluate it for the future.

Things were not quiet at PLUUF during this time. Robyn Davis Bartow led a weekly meditation group on Wednesday evenings. Tanya used the time to do a massive reorganization of the back room with the assistance of Harold Salzberg. Harold also stabilized the ramp with an ingenious pipe fix. Last Sunday, PLUUF members got together to weed the grounds.

So we are ready for all of us to gather on Sunday, September 14 for our Water Sharing Intergenerational Service led by the PLUUF Board. Interesting topics are being planned for our Worship and ENGAGE Sundays in the next few months (see page 4). If you haven't already done so, please fill out the 2025 Interests & Skills form so we know how you are interested in being active at PLUUF. Our fellowship needs all of us to take part to flourish. (*Note: The "skills & interests" forms are available at PLUUF or can be emailed by request*)

Over the course of the 2025-26 year we will periodically explore a UUA Lifespan Program called the Circle of Trees. It is designed to nurture deep connections with trees, nature, and all of earth's living creatures. The program uses trees as an entry point to understand and connect with life on earth. Across many cultures, trees are recognized as a symbol for life on earth—for example, the biblical Tree of Life. If this topic speaks to you, please contact Connie Ghinazzi or Pat Dobrinska to get involved in a Worship or ENGAGE Sunday service.

Let me close with these words from John M Higgins.

*Welcome to this place. This is a home where no revealed truths are promoted and no scripture or human being accepted as infallible. This is a place for searching for truth. But we are believers. We believe in intellectual freedom; we believe in justice; we believe in compassion and concern for each other and the whole world. We believe in commitment to those ideals which make us caring and active in the struggles for human dignity. We are Unitarian Universalists.*

# Welcome Back!

Sunday, SEPTEMBER 14, 10:00 AM

## *Water Communion Worship Service In-Gathering/Water Sharing*

"Members bring to the service a small amount of water from a place that is special to them. During the appointed time in the service, people one by one pour their water together into a large bowl. As the water is added, the person who brought it tells why this water is special to them. The combined water is symbolic of our shared faith coming from many different sources." - UUA.ORG

*If you don't have water, no worries, we'll have symbolic water available.*



## 12 Zoom Discussions with Dr. Brian Smith and Rev. Karen Rodriguez

September-November book discussion via ZOOM. Brian Smith requests that you send him an email if you would like to participate: [bhsmith801@gmail.com](mailto:bhsmith801@gmail.com) and he will share the meeting invitation details with you.

Twelve ZOOM discussions in Fall 2025 of two books, co-moderated by Rev. Karen Rodriguez, Pastor of the Federated Church in Green Lake, WI and Dr. Brian Smith, Professor Emeritus of Religion, Ripon College, Ripon, WI.

**Thursday evenings from Sept. 4<sup>th</sup> through Nov. 20<sup>th</sup> - 6:30 – 7:30 PM (Central Time)**

Notes and questions on each week's reading assignments will be sent to participants ahead of time and video recordings of each week's discussion will subsequently be shared with participants.

Book #1: Mariann Edgar Budde, How We Learn to Be Brave: Life's Decisive Moments in Life & Faith discussed weekly from 9/4-10/9

Book #2: Tomas Halik, Afternoon of Christianity: The Courage to Change discussed weekly from 10/16-11/20

If interested in participating contact Brian Smith at [bhsmith801@gmail.com](mailto:bhsmith801@gmail.com)



Our Fellowship saved hundreds of dollars because of your generosity during the 2024/25 fiscal year. Thank you!

September marks the first "ask" of the new fiscal year and we are seeking the following items:

1. Batteries: AA & AAA
2. Toilet Paper
3. Paper Towels
4. Stamps: A few, several, or many
5. Plastic or metal garden rakes (used or new)

## The Prairie Lakes Programming Team Planned the September to December Schedule!



The Worship Service & ENGAGE Sunday programming team has been working hard planning upcoming events and services. For those of you who like to plan your schedule in advance, below is the lineup. Detailed information regarding each

service/event will be shared via e-mail leading up to each event.

Sept. 7 ENGAGE Sunday: Adopt-A-Highway Clean up day

Sept. 14 Worship Service: Water Sharing with potluck and ice cream social to follow

Sep. 21 ENGAGE Sunday: Brian Smith to present his upcoming book

Sept 28 Worship Service: Led by Jill Stiemsma topic TBA

Oct. 5 ENGAGE: Judy Morgan to present a topic on water

Oct. 12 Worship Service: Led by Robyn Davis-Bartow topic TBA

Oct. 19 ENGAGE: Guest presenter Elliot Luedke

Oct. 26 Worship Service: Remembering Don Martin and others with Becky & Tanya

Nov. 2 ENGAGE: Part I: Bill Moyers interview with Joseph Campbell led by Sherman & Pat

Nov. 9 Worship Service: "Circle of Trees" with Connie Ghinazzi

Nov. 16 ENGAGE: Part II: Bill Moyers interview with Joseph Campbell led by Sherman & Pat

Nov. 23 Worship Service: Gratitude Service with Becky Feyen

Nov. 30 5th Sunday: Fluff 'N Buff to make PLUUF shine!

Dec. 7 ENGAGE: Part III: Bill Moyers interview with Joseph Campbell led by Sherman & Pat

Dec. 14 FESTIVALS OF LIGHT

Dec. 21 ENGAGE: Part IV: Bill Moyers interview with Joseph Campbell led by Sherman & Pat

Dec. 28 Worship Service with Robyn Davis-Bartow

### Are you interested in leading an RE/Youth group Lesson on a 2nd or 4th Sunday?

You can create your own lesson or we have pre-made lesson plans ready to go. Our pre-made lessons have everything you need to present the topic, questions for discussion and story to read. There is a sign-up sheet in the Social Room at PLUUF or contact Tanya at [tanyapapermaker@gmail.com](mailto:tanyapapermaker@gmail.com) if you would like more information.





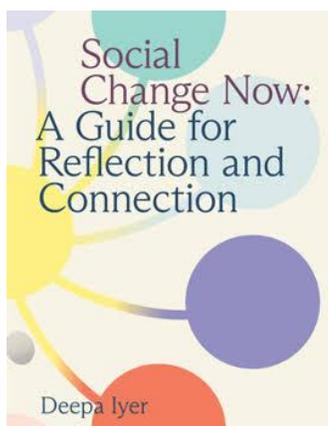
**What: 2025 Freeland Film Festival**

**Where: Green Lake**

**When: September 12-14.**

The theme for the festival is “Celebrating our Planet” and will feature films, panels, and guests focused on wildlife protection, habitat preservation, regenerative agriculture, and climate change. Attendees can expect to see films from North America, Asia, Africa, and Latin America, with local and international experts, activists, and media personalities in attendance. Tickets are on sale and can be purchased through their website:

[www.freeland.org/film-festival.html](http://www.freeland.org/film-festival.html).



## Common Read 2025-26: *Social Change Now!*

The 2025-26 UU Common Read is *Social Change Now: A Guide for Reflection and Connection* by Deepa Iyer (Skinner House).

Unitarian Universalists are invited to explore Iyer’s work through the lens of our UU faith and shared values. Participants explore Iyer’s Ecosystem model, the roles that comprise it, and how these can support the congregational community and, in turn, our role in wider communities where we work with others for social change.

*Social Change Now* is a practical guide for those at every stage of their individual and organizational journeys towards justice, equity and solidarity. It introduces an ecosystems framework that includes ten roles that many of us play in service of our social change values. But the book goes further. It contains detailed descriptions and real-world examples, reflection prompts (with room to write responses), and accessible tips that can immediately be put into action. This book is a resource that will accompany individuals and organizations not only in times of crisis, but throughout their lifelong social change journeys to build connected communities and equitable systems in our world. Over the past three years, people and organizations around the world have used the social change ecosystem framework to respond to the pandemic, express solidarity during the uprisings against anti-Black racism, and support multiracial coalitions struggling for reproductive rights, immigrant and refugee protections, and climate justice.

*Note: This book is available through Skinner House Books, Barnes & Noble, & Amazon.*

***“To engage in social change at this moment in time requires consistent attention, deep reflection, and committed collective action.”***

## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT IN AUGUST

### End of Summer Gathering at Riggs Park for the Kids



2025 Summer Youth Programming was led by Liz Buchanan-Beeple and concluded with a hike and picnic at Riggs County Park in Ripon on Friday, August 29. Riggs Park is a large, mostly natural county park known for its wetlands, prairie restoration areas, a playground, a splash pad, walking trails, and shelter with tables. Liz treated the kids to a hike along the trail. For dinner the kids dined on hot dogs, corn, beans, cookies, fruit and vegetables. Thank you, Liz, for coordinating and leading another wonderful summer of Youth programming!



### Jean Johnson Memorial Paddle & Picnic Event



The 4th annual Jean Johnson Memorial Kayak and picnic event took place on Sunday, August 31. We ventured out in kayaks, a canoe and a rowboat to experience a beautiful sunny morning on the calm waters of Spring Lake. We saw an Osprey, hummingbirds and more. The paddle event concluded with a delicious potluck lunch. We shared memories of Jean Johnson (one of the 14 founders of Prairie Lakes) and sang her favorite hymn, "Blue Boat Home."



Jean Johnson  
1941-2017