



Prairie Lakes Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

315 Eureka Street, Ripon, WI 54971 pluufripon@gmail.com
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FEBRUARY 2026 ENGAGE & WORSHIP SERVICE EVENTS



ENGAGE Sunday, February 1, 10AM with Steve Sorenson “Is the Constitution Being Protected or Eroded by the Current U.S. Supreme Court?”: Whether the Roberts Court is preserving the U.S. Constitution is subject to intense legal and political debate. Perspectives are largely split amongst those who see the role as preserving the originalist view of the constitution and those who believe that the constitution is dismantling long-standing legislative initiatives. It can also be viewed as those who favor federalism as opposed to those who advocate local and state control. There is also an underlying debate between those who prefer a pure democracy, and those who support the constitutional framework of a republican form of government. These are the questions that will be raised, and hopefully everyone can come with a perspective in mind.



Worship Service Sunday, February 8, 10AM with Robyn Davis-Bartow: “Embracing the Cold: Seasonal Living as Spiritual Practice” plus, it’s 2nd Sunday Potluck! This Worship Service is Inspired by different cultural traditions, Robyn will discuss adopting intentional practices to embrace a seasonally centered existence that contributes to a life well lived.



ENGAGE Sunday, February 15, 10AM with Tom Eddy “Beneath the Oaks - Green Lake Before the Settlers” Long before the Green Lake area became a hub of towns and farmland, the land was alive with open, sun-dappled oak savannas. Around 1830, early surveyors crisscrossed the area, recording the lay of the land, and their notes give us a rare window into this vanished world. They describe vast stretches of oak woodlands, with sunlight spilling onto grassy openings where wildflowers and prairie grasses thrived. Historical accounts from people who actually saw it confirm the picture: a landscape that felt open and airy, with scattered oaks standing like sentinels over rolling meadows. It was a place shaped by nature’s quiet rhythms—before plows, roads, and towns transformed it forever.



Worship Service Sunday, February 22, 10AM with Becky Feyen “The Power Within.” Let us pause to honor the quiet power within us—the source of our will, our love, and our identity. Within us, too, is a void felt in loneliness, sorrow, and despair, where anger and greed can take root. We are shaped by both our need for solitude and our deep urge to connect. If we look inward with honesty, we find a personal center that defines us and binds us to others, widening outward to all humanity. This shared, irreducibly human core is the heart of love, growth, and spiritual life—a place where we feel at one with each other, with nature, and with the universe itself.



Moderator’s Message by Connie Ghinazzi

Hello friends. Although we continue to be 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. On Saturday, Jan 31 the board had our retreat and discussed how this past year has gone and our ideas for the next year. We will present our ideas at the Town Hall meeting on Sunday, May 3, 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 April 26, 2026. This is our major fundraiser for our congregation. Attached to this newsletter on page 5 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. *Our religious communities at their best are places where we grow our capacities to be with experience in all its complexity and paradox, to listen deeply to one another, to allow ourselves to be seen and held in love, and to respond creatively and collectively.* Sheri Prud’homme

Prairie Lakes Board Retreat Recap by Tanya Schwartz-Roeper

For the 2nd year in a row, 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 with emphasis on 10 Focus Objectives ranging from revising the PLUUF Mission/Vision statements to how to increase our presence in the community. The retreat allowed for focused discussion and strategic thinking on how best to serve our amazing Fellowship.

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 leading up to our Town Hall meeting on Sunday, May 3, at 10am. The Prairie Lakes Annual meeting will take place on Sunday, June 7. 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



Cheri Salzberg, Secretary; Jim Goyette, At-Large Rep; Beth Howman-Combs, Treasurer; Connie Ghinazzi, Moderator

Enjoying lunch during the break in the meeting. Unfortunately At-Large Rep Nicole Roost was unable to attend the meeting due to illness. Wishing her a speedy recovery!

Now's the perfect time to start thinking about what you might donate to the Art & Service Auction and/or the Ripon City-Wide Garage Sale!

The Art & Service Auction is coming up April 26 (check out page 5 for all the details), and it's always a highlight—your creativity and generosity make it shine.

We're also excited to share that planning is underway for our 2nd Annual Ice Cream Social, timed to coincide with Ripon's City-Wide Rummage Sale happening sometime in June. The vision? Rummage tables set up both indoors and outdoors, sweet treats in hand, and a whole lot of community fun. 🍦 More details are coming soon—stay tuned, start dreaming, and get ready to be part of the fun!



February Wish List:

1. Natural basket coffee (unbleached) filters 8-12 cup capacity
2. White Copy Paper

17th Annual United for Diversity Event in Fond du Lac | February 21



Fond du Lac's signature celebration of diversity, "CELEBRATE CommUNITY," takes place February 21, 2026, at the Fond du Lac County Fairgrounds Expo Center. Hosted by United for Diversity, the event offers a full day of cultural immersion, from an awe-inspiring Flag Ceremony at 11 a.m. led by Native American elders to over 50 booths showcasing countries, religions, and community organizations.

Doors open at 10:30 a.m., and from noon to 3 p.m., attendees can sample free international foods, browse ethnic wares, and enjoy crafts, games, and interactive activities designed to connect people of all ages. Past highlights include art and artifacts like those displayed by Jill Stiemsma from her beloved El Salvador. This year, Jill will be walking with a Salvadoran flag during the opening ceremony.

Beyond this flagship event, Fond du Lac celebrates diversity year-round with Juneteenth, Pride events, and Black History Month programs, supported by community partners such as United Way and Ebony Vision. It's a day to meet, share, and celebrate the rich tapestry of cultures in the community—an experience that stays with you long after the last drumbeat fades.



The Kids of PLUUF created and led our 4th Sunday Worship Service: “Behind the Smile: Mental Health in Teens”



Ylenia, Lilly, Holland, Torrin, Quinton & McKinley | Emmy assisted with creating the service but was unavailable to lead it.

January was an exciting month for the kids of Prairie Lakes! In just two short sessions, Liz Buchanan-Beegle helped coordinate a truly remarkable kids-take-over worship service—and wow, did our youth rise to the occasion.

The Prairie Lakes kids, ages 9–17, knocked it out of the park with their service, “**Behind the Smile: Mental Health in Teens.**” From start to finish, this was *their* vision. The kids thoughtfully chose the theme, music, readings, and creative elements, bringing depth, honesty, and compassion to every moment.

For the Story for All Ages, Ylenia and Holland read *Good Morning Yoga: A Pose-by-Pose Wake-Up Book*—and didn’t stop there! They demonstrated the poses and joyfully invited the entire congregation to join in, turning the sanctuary into a shared moment of movement and connection.

The kids also shared fidgets with everyone in attendance. What’s a fidget? It’s a small, handheld tool that supports focus, self-regulation, and emotional calm—perfect for easing anxiety, restlessness, and yes, even boredom.

This service was filled with heart, intention, and courage. We are so grateful for our incredible youth and their leadership. Thank you for reminding us how powerful young voices can be. 🧡

Thank you to everyone who came out to support our youth—and experienced worship through the honest, insightful eyes of the next generation.

Art & Service Auction & Entertainment

On **Sunday, April 26, 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

In Case You Missed it in January

January ENGAGE & WORSHIP SERVICE EVENTS



ENGAGE Sunday, January 4: Iceland's Women with Judy Morgan
Judy shared information on Iceland's culture and geography, its welcoming people, and some of its unique traditions. She also touched on stories of hidden people and elves, as well as Iceland's strong support for women's rights and acceptance of sexual differences.



Worship Service Sunday, January 11: *Embodying Resilience* with Connie Ghinazzi. Connie shared how trees have been examples of resilience throughout literature and how we can be inspired today. She explored the symbolic and practical significance of trees in dealing with grief, adversity, and resilience and how literature often uses trees to represent human experiences. She even touched on the practice of "forest bathing" and how it has therapeutic benefits that promote mental and emotional well being.



ENGAGE Sunday, January 18, *Green Lake Conservancy (GLC)* with Bur Zeratsky. Bur is a lifelong Green Lake resident and Vice President of the Green Lake Conservancy, where he has volunteered for over 20 years. He presented a timeline of the Conservancy's protected properties, discussed the importance of land conservation, and answered audience questions. Celebrating its 30th anniversary, the all-volunteer Conservancy has preserved more than 20 properties, protecting 1,274 acres and 26,500 feet of shoreline in the Green Lake Watershed and surrounding areas.



Worship Service Sunday, January 25, "Behind the Smile: Mental Health in Teens." The children of Prairie Lakes led the service and did an amazing job! Details with photos on page 4.



Annual Board Retreat Agenda? The PLUUF Board met on Saturday, January 31 to make plans and set goals for the upcoming fiscal year (July 1-June 30). Details from the meeting will be shared at the Prairie Lakes Town Hall meeting in May and there's a brief summary on page 2 of this newsletter.