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## Prairie Lakes Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

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### January ENGAGE & WORSHIP SERVICE EVENTS



**ENGAGE Sunday, January 4, 10AM: Iceland's Women with Judy Morgan** Learn about Iceland's culture and geography, its welcoming people, and some of its unique traditions. Judy Morgan will also touch on stories of hidden people and elves, as well as Iceland's strong support for women's rights and acceptance of sexual differences. Come learn more about this fascinating country.



**Worship Service Sunday, January 11, 10AM: *Embodying Resilience* with Connie Ghinazzi.** Connie will share how trees have been examples of resilience throughout literature and how we can be inspired today.



**ENGAGE Sunday, January 18, 10AM: *Green Lake Conservancy (GLC)* with Bur Zeratsky.** The GLC was established in 1995 to preserve the land that protects Green Lake. Join us to learn about how this organization has maintained and enhanced the ecological integrity of lands and waters in the Green Lake Watershed.



**Worship Service Sunday, January 25, 10AM "Kids Takeover" is here!** The children of Prairie Lakes will be leading the service. Come support them and experience worship through the eyes of the next generation!



### Do you have items you'd like to add to the Annual Board Retreat Agenda?

The PLUUF Board will meet on Saturday, January 31 to make plans and set goals for the upcoming fiscal year (July 1-June 30). Please contact Connie at [connieghinazzi@gmail.com](mailto:connieghinazzi@gmail.com) if you have items you'd like added.



## A Message from the Moderator by Connie Ghinazzi

Hello Friends,

We say goodbye to 2025, a tumultuous year that was trying and stressful, blessed and eventful. Our PLUUF family has been supportive of each other and our wider community throughout the year and look forward to doing so again during 2026. Our board retreat will be on Saturday, January 31, to make our plans for the coming year. Please contact me at [connieghinazzi@gmail.com](mailto:connieghinazzi@gmail.com) if you have items you'd like added to our agenda.

On this last day of the year, I'd like to share some thoughts from poet Mark Nemo. He shares this essay on December 31 in his *Book of Awakening*. "I See You!" "I Am Here!" For centuries, African Bushmen have greeted each other in this way. When the one becomes aware of his brother or sister coming out of the brush, he exclaims, "I See You!" and the one approaching rejoices, "I Am Here!" "This timeless bearing witness is both simple and profound, and it is telling that much of our modern angst stems from this: to have who we are and where we've been be seen. For with this simple and direct affirmation, it is possible to claim our own presence, to say, "I Am Here!" As far back as we can remember, people unencumbered by civilization, have been rejoicing in being on earth together. Not only can we do this for each other, it is essential." May we carry these thoughts into 2026.

### 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
- Bodhi Day - Robyn Davis-Bartow
- Maghi - Jill Stiemsma
- Diwali - Jill Stiemsma
- Hanukkah - Tanya & Oliver
- St. Lucia's Day - Tanya Schwartz-Roeper
- Kwanzaa - via video and Cheri Salzberg
- Winter Solstice - Beth Homan-Combs
- Los Posadas - Judy Morgan
- Christmas - Becky Feyen

## PLUUF SINGERS with pianist

- Jill Stiemsma
- Liz Buchanan-Beegle & Lilly
- Linda & Laird DeCramer
- Keela Disterhaft
- Sherman Leatherberry
- Emmy Luna
- Sue Malsack
- Brad & Nicole Roost

## THE KIDS

- Quintin as Joseph, Lilly as Mary
- Ylenia and Holland as St. Lucia



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!





## 2025 Tax Receipts

Thank you for your faithful generosity and support of our Fellowship this past year. This community thrives because of YOU—your participation, your creativity, and financial generosity. Tax receipts are being distributed and should arrive in the next couple weeks.

If you have questions or notice an error contact:

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

**Thank you for supporting Prairie Lakes♥**

## In Case You Missed it in December

**ENGAGE Sunday, December 7: Sherman Leatherberry & Pat Dobrinska: [Richard Rohr and The Universal Christ.](#)**

Richard Rohr, born in 1943, is an American Franciscan Priest and writer on spirituality. In 2011, PBS called him "one of the most popular spirituality authors and speakers in the world." He has been quoted as saying, "The key is to fall in love with the divine presence, under whatever name. For Sherman & Pat, they replace the term Christ in Rohr's talk, with the term universal consciousness. They feel that the term "Christ" is limiting, as it refers to only Christianity and its doctrines. The divine is beyond labels that refer to only one religion. Rohr's essential message focuses on the union of the divine reality with all things, and the human potential to know the true self (spiritual being) and not the false self (Earthly presence) Resource-Wikipedia



## [FESTIVALS OF LIGHT](#) December 14, with a special

**Holiday Potluck** This has become a beloved annual PLUUF event through the years. We celebrated 9 winter holidays through stories, music, and food. (See previous page for more photos)



## **Worship Service Sunday, December 21, Sherman Leatherberry presents, [Awe in Music](#)**

Awe in music is the feeling of wonder and amazement evoked by a piece of music, which can provide a sense of perspective and connection to something greater than oneself. This emotion is triggered by the music itself, sometimes leading to physical reactions like goose bumps and chills, and can improve well-being by reducing stress and increasing openness to the world. Many examples of differing musical styles were listened to and examined. It was an absolutely awe-inspiring morning and we hope Sherman will lead this one again!



## **ENGAGE Sunday, December 28: 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. In the center of the spiral, our chalice was lit. Each participant walked the spiral alone to the center of the spiral, where they lit their own candle to place along the spiral.

