

Prairie Lakes Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

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Find us on Facebook!



Upcoming April 2026 Events



Happy Easter! Sunday, April 5, 10AM with Sherman Leatherberry: *Easter Reflections* This reflection explores the Easter story through a Universalist lens that welcomes multiple interpretations and personal growth. Rather than a literal event, Easter becomes a metaphor for renewal, transformation, and re-examining beliefs. A powerful personal story—watching a friend face ALS with faith and joy—illustrates the strength of belief in resurrection, however it's understood. The message also highlights inclusion and dignity, uplifting figures like Mary Magdalene and affirming everyone's worth. Ultimately, Easter calls us to move beyond ego, live fully in the present, and embrace inner transformation and new life.



Worship Service Sunday & POTLUCK, April 12, 10AM:” *Embracing Possibility with Connie Ghinazzi*. This is the title of our Soul Matters resource for the month of April which acted as a wake up call for me. Seeing how individuals come together and show up for each other, particularly in Minneapolis, is a powerful message of hope and possibilities. How can we get beyond our natural risk adverse nature to stop fearing what we might lose rather than dreaming of what we might gain? A thought to consider from wise Jane Goodall, "You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make".



ENGAGE Sunday, April 19, 10AM *Reaching the Religiously Disaffiliated with Brian Smith*. Brian's book explores the rapid rise of Americans who identify with no religion—the “Nones,” now making up over a quarter of the population and an even larger share of younger generations. Drawing on survey data, it examines why many are leaving or avoiding organized religion and the challenges this poses for the future of Christianity. Brian also highlights emerging efforts to engage the Nones, especially relational, non-proselytizing approaches like the Nuns & Nones movement that emphasize dialogue, shared experiences, and spiritual accompaniment. (See page 4)

APRIL 26, 10AM is the ART & SERVICE AUCTION

A MORNING OF FUN and FUNDRAISING

This is Prairie Lakes Biggest & Best fundraiser this fiscal year. Let's make it great! Brad Roost returns as the auctioneer, there will be entertainment, and a multitude of great prizes to bid on and win! Food & refreshments will be available. Can't make it? You can bid by proxy. Check out a sneak peek of auction items and get more info on page 3 of this newsletter!

- Entertainment will be performed by PLUUFers and a couple special guests!
- If you would like to donate an auction item please let us know soon!

Questions about the Art & Service Auction contact:

pluufripon@gmail.com or tanyapapermaker@gmail.com



Board to Host Town Hall Meeting on Sunday, May 3, 10AM



Connie Ghinazzi
Moderator



Cheri Salzberg
Secretary



Beth Howman-Combs
Treasurer



Nicole Roost
At-Large Rep



Jim Goyette
At-Large Rep

A town hall forum on May 3rd will allow for the Prairie Lakes Board to share their vision of PLUUF's future and will create space for everyone to share ideas and concerns.

Agenda items may include:

- In the months of July & August take another hiatus from Sunday morning programming
 - Schedule other activities and events outside of PLUUF such as a picnic, hike a Green Lake Conservancy trail, etc.
- Discuss proposed revision of PLUUF's Vision, Mission, and Covenant (see detailed versions in the March Newsletter and paper copies at PLUUF.
- Webster Grant: Brainstorm ideas on what to ask for when PLUUF applies for its next grant
- **An opportunity for all members and friends to share their ideas & concerns**

**BECOME
A MEMBER**

Prairie Lakes Annual Meeting on Sunday, June 7, 10AM

Not a Prairie Lakes member, but would like to become one? See Connie next time you are at PLUUF or contact her by email at connieghinazzi@gmail.com (To vote at the annual meeting you need to have been a member for at least 30 days).



**Please Join Us for
Coffee, Cookies & Conversation on April 3rd!** ☕🍪

☕ **Coffee, Cookies & Conversation in downtown Ripon**


Prairie Lakes is hosting a casual gathering at **Ripon Dough Company** to connect with fellow PLUUFers. It's a great chance to enjoy conversation and show the warmth of our community! Organized by Cheri Salzberg.

Details:

Where: Ripon Dough Company- Cookies and Nitro Coffee

Address: 223 Watson Street, Ripon

Date: Friday, April 3

 **Time:** 10:00am

Stop by and join the conversation, your presence matters!

No program, no pressure, just coffee, cookies, and friendly conversation.



ART & SERVICE AUCTION - April 26

Get ready to be inspired! The items listed below and more are now on display in the PLUUF entryway for you to preview ahead of the big event.

Take a sneak peek, pick your favorites, and start planning your bidding strategy because all the action kicks off at the Live Auction on April 26!

And the best part? 100% of the proceeds support Prairie Lakes and the meaningful causes championed by PLUUF. Join the excitement, support a great mission, and get ready to bid!

Check out these AWESOME Auction items:

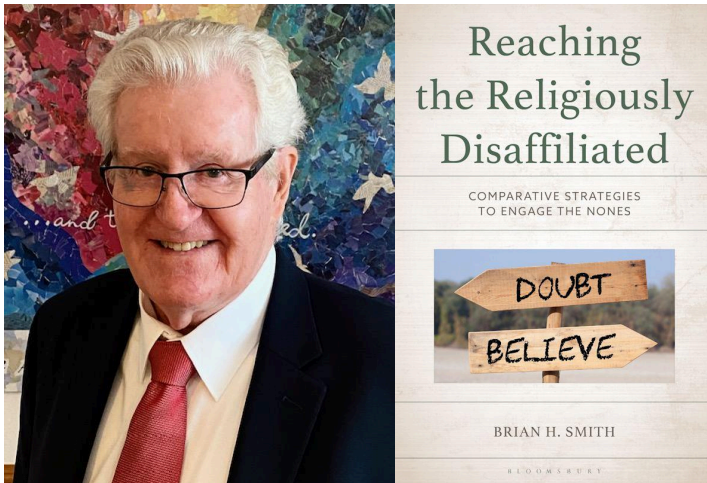
Please think outside the box, if something isn't quite right for you, it could be the perfect, one-of-a-kind gift for someone else. Be sure to invite your friends and family to join the fun and bid, too! Can't make it? Proxy forms are available or just email pluufripon@gmail.com and let us know what you want to bid on and the maximum amount, and we will designate a proxy to do your bidding.

1. Private Aerial Tour with Pilot Joe Hatcher - Soar the skies
2. Lake Shore getaway for up to 6 people on Little Green Lake in Markesan (3 days & 2 nights)
3. Water color or oil painting workshop with Pat Dobrinska (10 sessions!)
4. Pot of Cheri's Soon-to-Be-Famous Minestrone Soup
5. Scrumptious decorated cupcakes by Linda + made to order cupcakes
6. Master Gardener Consultation - Your Plants Will Thank you.
7. 4-hours of decluttering service - Your mess has met it's match
8. A box of 48 rolls of plush pillars of personal comfort- Toilet Paper!
9. PreSeason Green Bay Packer tickets (game date TBA)
10. 2-hrs of hands on tech help with a pro - PLUUF's Superhero-Jim
11. Kids items: Fish tank, books, games, and more
12. Themed baskets
13. ...and MORE items to come!!

**Can't make it to the Auction but want one of these items?
Contact pluufripon@gmail.com and give a bid amount and we'll
assign you a proxy bidder.**

Reaching the Religiously Disaffiliated

Comparative Strategies to Engage the Nones



The book addresses the growing number of Americans who no longer identify with any religious tradition, or the Nones. By 2022 Nones reached 27% of the population. They constitute 31 % of the millennials between 25 and 40, and 33% of the adults in Generation Z between 18 and 25. Brian examines survey data on the growth of the Nones and the reasons they give for leaving, or never joining churches. Their exodus has caused concern by religious leaders since the future viability of organized Christianity is at stake given the large numbers of young Americans

leaving religion. The author analyzes strategies to engage the Nones by recruiting efforts of Evangelical Christian megachurches, educational initiatives by the US Catholic Bishops, and methods of the Nuns & Nones movement which include dialogs, meals, meditations and shared living experiences between Catholic sisters and the religiously unaffiliated. This approach involves spiritually accompanying Nones rather than efforts to proselytize or educate them. The concluding chapter explores ways for churches to engage Nones based on spiritual accompaniment approaches of the Nuns & Nones movement.

Links to editorials about the book by Tim Lyke that recently appeared in the Ripon Commonwealth Press:

https://www.riponpress.com/editorial/empty-pews-do-they-pose-a-challenge-or-an-opportunity/article_f59100c2-5a9b-4ae4-af38-ec8e92ea90cf.html. https://www.riponpress.com/editorial/are-ripons-churches-lost-sheep-retrievable/article_bbb1ec99-3d3b-44c7-b5c2-99a0aa3d6ad1.html. https://www.riponpress.com/editorial/community-outreach-part-of-megachurches-mission/article_49f6049d-cbf5-43c8-a862-1ba1ff27cfe2.html

Check out this latest editorial, it features an image of the PLUUF banner!

https://www.riponpress.com/editorial/reaching-nones-dont-seek-conversion-seek-conversation/article_c82abb2e-df46-42ea-900d-717342919242.html

Small Acts, Big Impact

As we move through this month, we're reminded that living our values doesn't always require grand gestures. Often, it's the small, intentional acts that create the greatest ripple.

This month, consider one simple way to put your values into action—whether it's reaching out to someone who may be feeling isolated, offering kindness in an unexpected moment, or making a choice that reflects care for our wider world.

These quiet actions, multiplied across our community, become something powerful.

What's one small act you can take this month to make a difference?



Midwest UU Summer Assembly Takes Place at Ripon College This year! Date: July 5-11

The Midwestern Unitarian Universalist Summer Assembly (MUUSA) is an intergenerational, week-long "camp" for Adults, Young Adults, Senior High School, Junior High School, Elementary and Early Childhood campers. MUUSA is a place for spiritual reflection, intellectual growth, and creative play within a caring and supportive community.

Adults enjoy a long list of workshops and excursions. Teens live separately from adults with their own counselors and their own programming based on their year in school. Our youngest children enjoy day long activities and religious education and rejoin their families at the end of each day.

Multigenerational activities include a social hour, open-mic "Coffeehouse," games, and spiritual meetings.

All inclusive registration fees include housing, meals, workshops and other activities. Additional fees may be required for some workshops and excursions.

NOTE: We're in the process of finding out if PLUUFers can attend parts of the weeklong Assembly to make it more affordable. More details coming soon.



muusa.org



HONORING EARTH DAY

As Earth Day approaches on April 22, we are invited to pause and reflect on our connection to the natural world and our responsibility to care for it. In the spirit of our shared values, this is a time to renew our commitment to justice, sustainability, and respect for all living things.

Whether it's planting something new, reducing waste, spending time outdoors, or supporting environmental efforts in our community, every action—big or small—helps nurture the planet we call home.

Together, our choices can create a more just and sustainable world.

How will you honor the Earth this month?

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT IN MARCH



ENGAGE Sunday, March 1, 10AM Tom Zuhlke had planned to share his presentation, "Time of Your Life," with us, but after a recent fall and knee injury, he will need surgery. Please keep Tom in your thoughts as he begins his recovery. **Cancelled due to Tom's injury, Wishing Tom a speedy recovery!**



Worship Service Sunday, March 8, "Herstory: What It Takes/What it's Taken" with Jill Stiemsma

In honor of Women's History Month, Jill Stiemsma delved into the valuable contributions of women and their mighty struggles to be recognized in the political arena and in the marketplace. During congregational sharing, the conversation touched on modern challenges to women's rights, including Christian nationalism and possibly voting restrictions.



ENGAGE Sunday, March 15, 10AM "Immigration Today: A Conversation with Kat Griffith"

Postponed Due to Blizzard Rescheduled to June
Kat will lead a timely and insightful presentation on the current state of immigration. A member of the Fond du Lac County Board, representing District 1, Kat is a respected community leader based in Ripon. She is widely recognized for her dedicated advocacy on behalf of immigrants and asylum seekers. Kat brings both professional insight and firsthand community experience to the conversation. Her extensive work in immigration policy and local community development offers a thoughtful, informed perspective on one of today's most important issues.



Worship Service Sunday, March 22, with Cheri Salzberg: "Faith Over Fear: What Does This Look and Feel Like for UU's?"

Unitarian Universalists choose hope, trust, and ethical courage over fear, without requiring belief in a specific God or doctrine. In this exploration, we reflected on how faith, grounded in love, shared values, and human dignity guides our response to uncertainty and division. Also discussed was what practices help us embody courage and compassion in our daily lives, especially when fear feels loudest.



5th Sunday, March 29, Sunday Fluff 'N Buff Indoor & Outdoor Cleanup

Let me tell you, it truly takes a village (and a lot of elbow grease!) to scrub, sweep, vacuum, dust, mop, rake, and revive those planter beds.



Huge shoutout to Spud, Kathryn, Beth, Connie, Jill, and Tanya for rolling up their sleeves and making everything shine. Prairie Lakes is looking fresh, bright, and beautiful! 🍀

Nothing better than teamwork and a little sparkle to wrap up the day!

