

# Prairie Circle UU Congregation

October 4, 2009

**\*\* Religious Education Program News \*\***

## This Month in Children's RE – World Religions Program

10/04/09 – Judaism

History & Holi-days

Nursery Care Available

Pre-Teen (PCPSA) Meeting until 11:30

10/11/09 – Judaism

Beliefs, Customs & Principles

Nursery Care Available

10/18/09 – All Children Social Action Project

Preparing Bag Lunches for PADS

Nursery Care Available

### **ATTENTION families of children 6<sup>th</sup> grade and up:**

Please remind your child to attend the special  
Social Action Project Sunday held regularly for this age group,  
on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of every month during regular services  
and continuing until 11:30.

**Next meeting is TODAY.**

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### **ATTENTION families Book Group:**

The final meeting to discuss 'Deep Economy' will be held next Sunday, October 11<sup>th</sup>  
at 10:45 in the Charter School classroom behind the Barn.

The next book for the group to discuss will be chosen at this time. All welcome.

**If you have any questions, concerns, please feel free to call  
847-871-7049 or email [re@prairiecircleuuc.org](mailto:re@prairiecircleuuc.org)**

**Laura C. Tomsy - Director, Religious Education**

Our classes will be studying Judaism throughout a two week period learning about the History of this faith, the holidays and festivals it celebrates, core values, belief system, and what a typical service may be like.

This exploration will take place through sampling foods, songs, playing games, the making of crafts and various interactive discussions.

Judaism includes religious rituals and beliefs along with a code of ethical behavior dictated by the Torah. The Torah is made up of the first 5 books of the Bible – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy

The history of Judaism stems from the belief that god made a covenant with the Jews, as a nation of people, through Abraham, his son Isaac and grandson Jacob (Israel). In this covenant the Jewish people accepted one god as the only god (monotheism) versus the more popular worship of many gods (polytheism).

Central to this belief system is that the Jewish people were the chosen people of god which was not a spiritual privilege but an obligation to spread the word of the one true god. In return, god would give the Jewish people their own homeland (the Promised Land) of Israel.

The Jewish people lived and prospered in Jerusalem until about 1200 BCE (before Common Era) when the Roman armies conquered and dispersed them. The first Jewish settlement in the America's was in 1654 in New Amsterdam (modern New York). The first major settlement in Canada was in 1760. The modern Jewish state of Israel was founded in 1948 after the holocaust which resulted in the murder of 6 million Jews (of the 13 million killed).

Prior to the Roman invasion of 1200 BCE, Judaism was established under a patriarchal (male) hereditary (passed from father to son) priesthood centered on the Temple in Jerusalem with biblical prophets providing the ethical and moral teachings. After the destruction of the Temple and the Jewish people were scattered, the leadership was passed from priests to rabbis (teachers and scholars).

There are four major movements within Judaism:

- 1) Reform (liberal end of spectrum) – established in early 1800's in Germany which believes that the Judaism is an ongoing and evolving process resulting from a relationship between god and his people (Jews) over long period of history, past and future. Reform Jews see the Torah as a divinely inspired text, subject to interpretation based on ongoing study which emphasizes the ethical and moral messages of the prophets to help create a more just society. (Approximately 900 Temples with 1.8 million members in US)
- 2) Reconstructionist – established in 1930's (most recent organization) which believes that Judaism is defined by a civilization of people who have the authority and responsibility to reconstruct the covenant from generation to generation. (Approximately 100 Synagogues with 50,000 members in US)
- 3) Conservative – established in the 1800s as a reaction to the more liberal and perceived radical Reform sect. Conservative Jews see the Torah as binding as a whole text and the resulting Jewish Law (rules for conduct) authoritative and not open to vast interpretation. However new ideas and modernization has had an influence in Conservative Judaism. (Approximately 800 Synagogues with 1.6 million members in US)
- 4) Orthodox – meaning the one true way sees the Torah as divinely revealed to Moses by god and now laws can be tampered with even though they may be at odds with modern sensibilities. All other forms of Judaism seen as a deviation from the divine truth and authentic Jewish life. (Approximately 1,000 Synagogues with 600,000 members in US)