

# Notes from the Prairie



PRAIRIE CIRCLE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

February 2011

## Upcoming Services

### February 6th

#### *Grace Explored: Amazing, Earned or Nonexistent*

Tonia Becker VerShaw

The concept of grace is a timeless one – the inspiration for songs, poetry and religious teachings. Yet, how much thought have we really given to the concept of grace? This sermon will compare concepts of grace presented by philosophers and world religions. In addition, thoughts on the “stages of grace” will be presented.

### February 13th

#### *An Odyssey for Truth and Meaning in Life*

Petros Petridis

This sermon is presented in the form of a personal quest to understand the essential truths of religious thought. It examines the historical evolution of various religious practices, particularly those related to Christianity, and how they borrowed from the traditions that preceded them. At the core of these multiple manifestations of religious wisdom is a common message of love and compassion.

The PCUUC Choir will be singing.

### February 20th

*TBA*

Reverend Adam Robersmith

Please check our website for more up-to-date information:

[www.PrairieCircleUUC.org/worship/worship-calendar](http://www.PrairieCircleUUC.org/worship/worship-calendar)

### February 27th

#### *Our Fourth Principle: A Free and Responsible Search for Truth and Meaning*

Please check our website for more up-to-date information:

[www.PrairieCircleUUC.org/worship/worship-calendar](http://www.PrairieCircleUUC.org/worship/worship-calendar)

The PCUUC Choir will be singing.

**Note:** There will be a Congregational Meeting following the service. See the related article on page two.



## Our Caring Circle

Cares of concern were expressed by: Cathy Moon for her mother's continuing eye problems, Tony & Carol Niec for family members experiencing difficulty, Jim Cubit for Laurie's mother who is ill, Inge Crowley for the Arizona shooting tragedy, Tonia Becker Vershaw for Marty's health and Rory Klick for her son's employment.

PCUUC members, families and friends experienced the great joy of happiness and appreciation which music brings to each of us. During the Fire Communion held on January 2nd, led by Mike Merritt, all participants enjoyed the skillful musical talents of our members: Joyce DeWitt, Scott Helmke, Jim Cubit and Peg Sheaffer to the tunes of *'Happiness Runs'* by Donava and *'Arlington'* by The Wailin' Jennys.

Congratulatory wishes to: Tony and Carol Niec who recently celebrated their 29th wedding anniversary.

Announcements of family gathering joys were expressed by: Scott Helmke, Joyce DeWitt, Donna Marshall and Diana Fox.

Jan Kirch lit a Caring Candle to acknowledge the many Prayers for the Planet presented to PCUUC by Sue Opeka, the owner of The Present Moment. Prayers for the Planet is a collective effort to heal the planet by submitting a written prayer, positive affirmation or statement of intention. Two examples were read: *My Prayer for the Planet is: "Open your heart to life, love & happiness"* and *"Peace, love and acceptance"*.

In the wake of the recent Tucson tragedy, we widen our Circle of Concern and extend our deepest condolences and healing wishes to the victims, their families and friends. As so eloquently stated by President Barack Obama, *"Let us remember the forces that divide us are not as strong as the forces that unite us. What matters most in life is how well we have loved"*.

*Let us each be filled with the joys and sorrows of our PCUUC family.*

If you have a joy or concern to be published, contact the Caring Committee at:  
[Caring@PrairieCircleUUC.org](mailto:Caring@PrairieCircleUUC.org).

## PCUUC Community Meeting February 27<sup>th</sup> After the Worship Service

On **February 27, 2011**, we will have an All Church Meeting to discuss topics of interest to our church community. Topics to be covered at this meeting are:

- 1) Ministerial search process -
  - a) a statement from the Board regarding the intent to begin the search process
  - b) the financial ramifications of the search
  - c) a By-laws adjustment to clarify the "called" versus "consulting" minister process
- 2) Conflict resolution policy
- 3) Covenant of Right Relations
- 4) Pastoral care

On February 20th, Reverend Adam Robersmith, Counselor on Ministry for the UUA Midwest District, will provide the sermon at PCUUC and will be available for questions after the service regarding the UUA and ministry. The purpose of this discussion is to inform the congregation about ministry in UU churches and to lay a foundation for our further discussion at the February 27 meeting.

Since the issues above may come to a vote at the February 27 meeting, a package with pertinent documents will be provided to all members prior to the meeting for their consideration. Since these issues are important to the future of our congregation, please review them carefully and plan to attend church on February 20th and February 27th.



## Looking for Musicians

The Music Committee is hoping to get more people involved in performing music during worship services. In particular, we'd like to have people playing music for things like prelude, postlude and during the offering. You don't need to be perfect either! If you're interested, please contact Scott Helmke at [scott@scotthelmke.com](mailto:scott@scotthelmke.com).

## New Vice President/President-Elect

Our previous Vice President/President Elect regrettably resigned from the Church Board in December 2010 due to conflicts with his work commitments. The Nominating Committee reviewed potential replacement candidates and referred the names to the Board which selected Tonia Becker VerShaw as the replacement. Tonia assumed her new duties at the January 2011 Board meeting. She has been extremely active in our church community and has continuously demonstrated leadership and commitment to PCUUC. We look forward to her continued leadership and dedication to the church in her new role!



## Circle Dinners 2010-2011

The next PCUUC Circle Dinner will be on March 12th. This will be a small group dinner of approximately 6 to 10 people in a member's home.

Contact Sally Merritt with questions or an RSVP at [merritt69\\_99@yahoo.com](mailto:merritt69_99@yahoo.com). Please let her know if you are willing to be a host/hostess for one of the dinners.

## Join Us For Our Next International Dinner!

The next International Dinner will be on Saturday, February 12th, at 5:00 p.m. Enjoy warm, hearty, Italian cuisine at Saluto's Restaurant, 7680 Grand Avenue, in Gurnee. Their phone number is (847) 356-6900. Sign-up sheets will be available at the Sunday Services or contact Leo Wazlo at 847-548-5732 or at [lwazlo@yahoo.com](mailto:lwazlo@yahoo.com). Please let me know if you plan to attend by Monday, February 7th, so that we can assure your place at the table. Saluto's web site is: [www.salutosofgurnee.com](http://www.salutosofgurnee.com).



## Greeters Needed

We are looking for Greeters to welcome guests to our Sunday morning worship service. It is an easy and fulfilling way to help the Congregation. You will work with an experienced greeter for guidance and help direct new visitors to the New Visitors table. Only one or two Sundays per person are requested.

If you are interested, please contact Rich Fendrych at: [membership@PrairieCircleUUC.org](mailto:membership@PrairieCircleUUC.org).

## Social Action News

### Avon Township Food Bank

Avon Township continues to send thank you letters to our congregation for PCUUC's support both in dollars and in food supplies, as well as for the donation of children's books for their library. In December of 2010, the Township was able to provide emergency sustenance to 2582 persons. They are continuing to accept volunteers to assist in their food bank operation and in planning a community garden this coming spring.



### PADS Family Center in Waukegan

On January 16th, the members of the PCUUC Affirmation class, with the guidance of Julie Palumbo, Karen Achtemeier and Inge Crowley, provided and served a meal to the clients that are staying at the Family Center in Waukegan. In addition they made more than 25 lunches for a PADS overnight shelter, which was delivered the following day to the Shepherds of the Lake Lutheran Church in Grayslake. The Affirmation class also delivered the donated diapers, wipes and scrip cards to the Family Center in Waukegan. Presently there are 42 people

staying there until they find apartments and work that can support them.

The Shepherds of the Lake Lutheran Church is looking for adult volunteers that could volunteer at night. Please contact Ardie Lane at 847 -836-0674 if you can help.

### Guest at Your Table

The PCUUC 2010-2011 Guest at Your Table campaign to fund the programs of UUSC raised a total of \$570.77. Your generosity in support of this important work is greatly appreciated. If you missed out on helping the UUSC during this annual program, you can still give at any time. Visit [www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org) or look for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee on Facebook.

## UUSC Update

UUSC's relief work continues in Haiti and around the world. For detailed information, please go to [www.usc.org/haiti](http://www.usc.org/haiti).

UUSJ (UU's for Social Justice), [www.uusforsocialjustice.org](http://www.uusforsocialjustice.org), is an affiliate of the Chicago Area UU Council. Presently there are 3 Task Forces: Economic Justice and Homelessness, Environmental Task Force and Peace Task Force.

Upcoming Events: The Peace Task Force will be meeting on February 19th at 2:30 p.m. at Third UU Church, 301 N. Mayfield, in Chicago. Contact Gene Horcher at 773-561-5296 for more information. The Environmental Task Force will be meeting on February 20th from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. at Unity Temple in Oak Park. Contact Andrew Fisher at [fisher.a@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fisher.a@sbcglobal.net) for more information.

## Treasurer's Corner

I wanted to share how we're doing financially at the mid-point of the church year. To date, income is outpacing expenses. At this point, I am projecting we will have a small surplus at the end of the church year, barring any unforeseen major expenses.

In the figure below, the dotted line represents the budget as if it was spread evenly throughout the year. Of course, in reality, there is always some variance from month to month. As you can see, our year-to-date (YTD) income is outpacing expenses. This is because some members prepay their entire annual pledge. Also, the committees have been very conscientious with their spending in the first half of the church year.

### 2010 Financial Contribution Statements

By now, you should have received a statement itemizing your 2010 financial contributions to PCUUC which you may use for tax purposes. If you did not receive a

statement, or if you have any questions about your statement, please contact me.

### A Word about Pledges

Thanks to everyone who pledged this year for your generous support. If you're behind on your pledge, please do what you can to catch up. You can drop your pledge payment in the basket each week at church or mail it in.

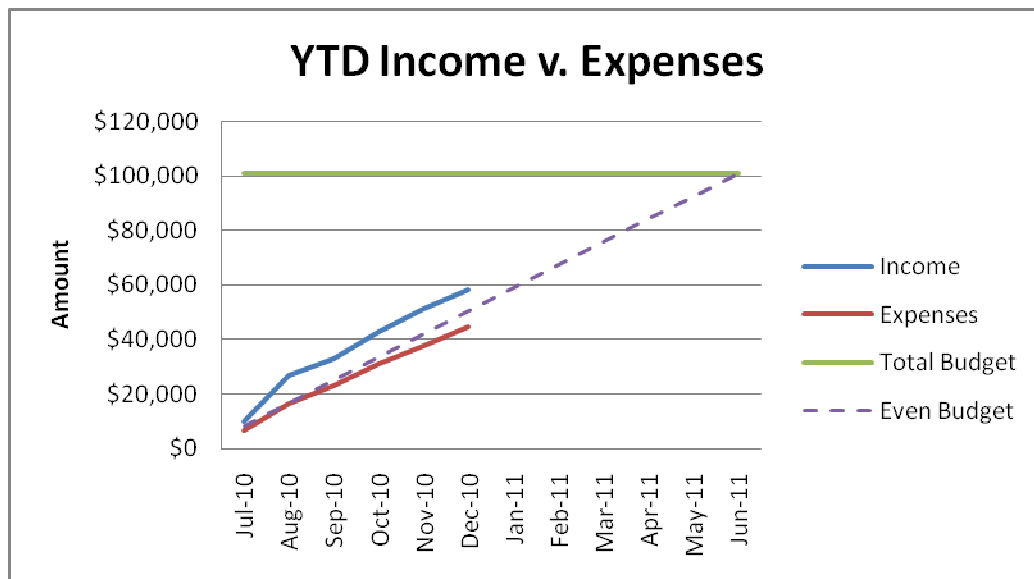
As always, if you've had a change in circumstance and you won't be able to meet your commitment this year, please let me or any other Church Board member know.

### Finance Committee

The finance committee welcomes new members who are interested in the church's finances. We generally meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month before church services. If you'd like to attend an upcoming meeting, please email me at:

[Treasurer@PrairieCircleUUC.org](mailto:Treasurer@PrairieCircleUUC.org).

Chris





## Religious Education

The children's religious education program is disseminating the *Tapestry of Faith* curriculum designed and offered through the Unitarian Universalist Association. The chosen lesson plan for this school year (begun by the former Director of Religious Education and continued by the current Interim Director of Religious Education) have been *Wonderful Welcome* for kindergarten through second grade, *Toolbox of Faith* for our third and fourth graders, and *Amazing Grace* for our fifth, sixth and seventh graders. Religious Education is offered in the gymnasium of the Charter School adjacent to the Bryon Colby Barn. Children in kindergarten through eighth grade stay in the service and go to religious education after the Story for all Ages is read and the *Go Now in Peace* is sung.

We also offer nursery care for infants and toddlers age five (pre-K) and under. You can drop off your children when the service begins.



We are currently looking for individuals to apply for our nursery position. Candidates must be 21 or older and be able to commit to weekly direct care on Sunday mornings along with assisting the Director of Religious Education with set-up and clean-up of tables and chairs and activity materials. For more information regarding this position, please

visit our website at [www.prairiecircleuuc.org](http://www.prairiecircleuuc.org) and go to the sub tab of *Being Involved*, click on *Religious Education Committee*, then click on *Help with Religious Education*.

We have developed an Affirmation Program this year for our eighth graders. Laura Franz, Religious Education Committee Chair is currently teaching this class and Julie Palumbo, Interim Director of Religious Education, coordinates both community service and social events for the Affirmants. Each Affirmant is paired up with a mentor. The Affirmation class, mentors and parents will be doing various fundraising activities within the next few months in order for them to participate in an educational trip to the city of Boston, where our Unitarian Universalist founders are located. Affirmants from several other UU churches travel to Boston each spring to learn the history of the faith and increase awareness of personal growth connected to the Unitarian Universalist



beliefs and values. This trip is proposed to occur mid-June, followed by Affirmation Sunday when the Affirmants will present their Statements of Faith and personal project experience to the congregation. Keep on the lookout for announcements both virtually and at the services for these fundraisers in the near future! We need the support of the congregation to make this trip financially possible.

Julie Palumbo has been the Interim Director of Religious Education since early November and is pleased to report and commend several members of our congregation who have volunteered their time as teachers over the past five months and those who intend to teach segments in the upcoming months completing this school year.

The Religious Education Committee and PCUUC Board are currently reviewing applications for the permanent position of Director of Religious Education at this time. Further details regarding this decision will be announced publicly in the near future.

Attention: New members with children, visitors and guests of members: It is encouraged to sign your children up for Religious Education. There are sign-up sheets on the tables surrounding the periphery of the Barn, near the membership information.

For further questions regarding our Religious Education program please contact:  
Laura Franz at:  
RE-Committee@prairiecircleuuc.org or  
Julie Palumbo at:  
[RE@prairiecircleuuc.org](mailto:RE@prairiecircleuuc.org).

## Covenant Groups

A covenant group is a small group that meets to discuss topics of interest and develop bonds of friendship. Interested in starting a new covenant group? Contact Interim Director of Religious Education Julie Palumbo for more details:  
[re@PrairieCircleUUC.org](mailto:re@PrairieCircleUUC.org).

### **Mother/Daughter Group**

There has been interest in forming a mother/daughter based on the book "The

Mother/Daughter Project: How Mothers and Daughters Can Band Together Beat the Odds and Thrive Through Adolescence". If you have a daughter of any age and would be interested in forming a group, please contact Julie Palumbo at:  
[re@PrairieCircleUUC.org](mailto:re@PrairieCircleUUC.org).

### **Men's Group**

Meets on select Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. Check our website calendar for the next meeting date:  
<http://www.prairiecircleuuc.org/news-events/calendar/>  
Contact Rich Fendrych if you are interested in attending:  
[membership@PrairieCircleUUC.org](mailto:membership@PrairieCircleUUC.org).

### **Father/Son Group**

If there is any interest in a Father/Son group, please contact Julie Palumbo at:  
[re@PrairieCircleUUC.org](mailto:re@PrairieCircleUUC.org).



### **Prairie Women's Covenant Group**

The PCUUC Prairie Women's Covenant group meets twice each month on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM. Location rotates. Topics are varied. New members are always welcome! Contact Norine Fendrych at:  
[nativeheart27@sbcglobal.net](mailto:nativeheart27@sbcglobal.net)  
or Sally Merritt at:  
[merritt69\\_99@yahoo.com](mailto:merritt69_99@yahoo.com)  
for more details.

# Our Wider Community



## Winter Woman Spirit 2011

February 25<sup>th</sup> through 27<sup>th</sup>, Winter Woman Spirit 2011 will welcome Margot Adler to keynote a weekend about Balancing Our Power: Self, Spirit, Earth. It will be held at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Elkhart, Indiana. The dates to save are February 25th through February 27th. More information available at:

[www.womenandreligion.org](http://www.womenandreligion.org)



## Church Choir Festival

The Unitarian Church of Evanston (UCE) choir joins choirs of the Baha'i Temple (Wilmette) and Unity Temple (Oak Park) for a grand Choir Festival from 2 to 4 p.m. on Sunday, February 6th, at UCE, 1330 Ridge

Ave. (at Greenwood) in Evanston. Freewill donations will benefit U.S. Veterans.

After each choir performs separately, the massed choir of voices will perform "Kaki Lambe," a traditional Senegalese chant.

The festival wraps up with a rousing pre-game *Hallelujah Chorus* sing-along - a surefire way for Super Bowl fans to warm up their vocal cords to cheer on their favorite team. Don't miss this stirring music benefiting a worthy cause. For more information, call Sandra Robinson or Judith Ramey at 847-864-1330.



## UU Vacation Opportunity

For thirty years, the UU bed and breakfast directory, UU're Home, has been providing UUs a network of hosts in the United States (and a few abroad) who enjoy meeting new friends and who are happy to open their home to like-minded people. Travel and stay in homes of people who share your ideals. Host travelers in your home to meet new friends and earn extra money. For more information, visit [www.UUreHome.com](http://www.UUreHome.com) or write to [info@uurehome.com](mailto:info@uurehome.com).

# Final Notes

## Newsletter Submissions

All submissions for the March 2011 newsletter are due by the end of the day on **February 25th**. The newsletter will be posted on the website at the beginning of March. Please send submissions as attachments to Andrea Mills, PCUUC's Church Administrator at: [office@PrairieCircleUUC.org](mailto:office@PrairieCircleUUC.org).



## To Discontinue Receiving Monthly Email Notices of the Publication of the Newsletter:

Please send your request to the Office Administrator at [office@PrairieCircleUUC.org](mailto:office@PrairieCircleUUC.org) and include your name and email address in your request. Thanks.



Visit PCUUC on the Internet at <http://www.prairiecircleuuc.org>!

## List of PCUUC Contacts

|                                       |                                     |  |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Mike Merritt                          | Board President                     | <a href="mailto:President@PrairieCircleUUC.org">President@PrairieCircleUUC.org</a>         |
| Tonia Becker VerShaw                  | President Elect                     | <a href="mailto:VP@PrairieCircleUUC.org">VP@PrairieCircleUUC.org</a>                       |
| Norine Fendrych                       | Secretary                           | <a href="mailto:Secretary@PrairieCircleUUC.org">Secretary@PrairieCircleUUC.org</a>         |
| Chris Kozlowski                       | Treasurer                           | <a href="mailto:Treasurer@PrairieCircleUUC.org">Treasurer@PrairieCircleUUC.org</a>         |
| Diana Fox                             | Trustee                             | <a href="mailto:Trustee@PrairieCircleUUC.org">Trustee@PrairieCircleUUC.org</a>             |
| Scott Helmke                          | Trustee                             | <a href="mailto:Trustee@PrairieCircleUUC.org">Trustee@PrairieCircleUUC.org</a>             |
| Andrea Mills                          | Church Administrator                | <a href="mailto:Office@PrairieCircleUUC.org">Office@PrairieCircleUUC.org</a>               |
| Julie Palumbo                         | Interim Dir. of Religious Education | <a href="mailto:RE@PrairieCircleUUC.org">RE@PrairieCircleUUC.org</a>                       |
| Joyce DeWitt                          | Choir Director                      | <a href="mailto:Choir@PrairieCircleUUC.org">Choir@PrairieCircleUUC.org</a>                 |
| Mark Wilson, Jim Cubit & Scott Helmke | Music Committee                     | <a href="mailto:Music@PrairieCircleUUC.org">Music@PrairieCircleUUC.org</a>                 |
| Tonia Becker-Vershaw                  | Worship Committee                   | <a href="mailto:Worship@PrairieCircleUUC.org">Worship@PrairieCircleUUC.org</a>             |
| Laura Franz                           | Children's RE Committee             | <a href="mailto:RE-Committee@PrairieCircleUUC.org">RE-Committee@PrairieCircleUUC.org</a>   |
| Mike Honegger                         | Adult RE Committee                  | <a href="mailto:Adult-RE@PrairieCircleUUC.org">Adult-RE@PrairieCircleUUC.org</a>           |
| Inge Crowley                          | Social Action Committee             | <a href="mailto:Socialaction@PrairieCircleUUC.org">Socialaction@PrairieCircleUUC.org</a>   |
| Peg Fredrickson                       | Social Action Committee             | <a href="mailto:Socialaction@PrairieCircleUUC.org">Socialaction@PrairieCircleUUC.org</a>   |
| Rich Fendrych                         | Membership/Publicity Committee      | <a href="mailto:Membership@PrairieCircleUUC.org">Membership@PrairieCircleUUC.org</a>       |
| Mark Wilson & Diana Fox               | Long Range Planning Committee       | <a href="mailto:Planning@PrairieCircleUUC.org">Planning@PrairieCircleUUC.org</a>           |
| Ric Sarmont                           | Nominating Committee                | <a href="mailto:Nominating@PrairieCircleUUC.org">Nominating@PrairieCircleUUC.org</a>       |
| Teresa Aguinaldo                      | Hospitality Committee               | <a href="mailto:Social_events@PrairieCircleUUC.org">Social_events@PrairieCircleUUC.org</a> |
| Jan Kirch                             | Caring Committee                    | <a href="mailto:Caring@PrairieCircleUUC.org">Caring@PrairieCircleUUC.org</a>               |
| Rory Klick                            | Ministerial Study Committee         | <a href="mailto:RKlick@CLCIllinois.edu">RKlick@CLCIllinois.edu</a>                         |
| Jan Kirch                             | Fundraising Committee               | <a href="mailto:Fundraising@PrairieCircleUUC.org">Fundraising@PrairieCircleUUC.org</a>     |