



THE CHALICE NEWS

Unitarian Society of Menomonie
A Welcoming Unitarian Universalist Congregation

August 2022 Newsletter

SEVEN PRINCIPLES

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person
2. Justice, equity and compassion in human relations
3. Acceptance to one another and encouragement of spiritual growth in our congregations
4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning
5. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large
6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all
7. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part

CALENDAR

**10 AM IN OUR MEETING ROOM
(ZOOM CONNECTIONS WILL BE PROVIDED)**

August 7 – Kubba at Sherry and Jack Hagen’s house at 10 am
Email Sherry at sherryhagen0115@gmail.com for more info.

August 14 – Service with Dennis Peters, “A Lighter Touch”
Sometimes humor is a requirement for our sanity. At other times, we’ve already gone ‘round the bend, so to speak, and humor is our last cognitive function. You’ll have to decide which is the case this morning. I apologize in advance if by the end of this I haven’t demolished your favorite beliefs, or alternative “facts.”

August 14 – USM Board meeting after service

August 21 – Pool Party at Lynn Shaw’s at 2 pm.
If you’re interested, email Lynn for directions: shawlynn38@yahoo.com

August 28 – Service with Dennis Peters, “The Call to Action”
Let’s take a blindingly fast look at problem areas of the world that are reaching out to us today. Keep in mind that this is a snapshot. Some issues may actually resolve because of someone’s hard work. And of course new problems, issues, and crises will always be added to the list. If our goal is to participate in repairing the world, this list is a catalog, really, for us to peruse, to perhaps choose our area or areas in which to participate.



JULIANA SCHMIDT, PRESIDENT



I was dusting books the other day and found Glad to Be Human: Meditations by Kaaren Solveig Anderson, a UU minister at Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Glens Falls, New York. Glad to Be Human is a book essays. I thought that “Eve’s Muse” was a good choice for this month’s newsletter. This excerpt is Eve talking about Adam and the Garden of Eden.

“Describe Adam, you say. Well, he’s kind of a wuss. Don’t get me wrong, though, Adam’s a nice guy. He just adheres to rules a little too strictly. Take his conversation with God before I was created. God tells my husband not to eat fruit from a tree in the center of the garden. Adam, unquestioningly goes along with the deal, ‘Sure God, I won’t ever, ever touch that tree’s fruit, cross my heart, hope to die.’

That’s Adam, just hanging out and enjoying this “paradise” as he calls it. Well, let me tell you, paradise wasn’t nirvana. It was beautiful: luscious lakes, meandering rivers, verdant trees, prolific flowers, stunning mountains, but... boring. The Garden of Eden lost its appeal pretty quickly. It was nice not to have to work. It was nice essentially to have God wait on you hand and foot. Food was abundant, scenery ever wonderful, seventy degree days, light showers in the afternoon, and then back to perfect.

But, have you ever longed for something because life felt like a matzah cracker – dry and thin? Have you ever wanted something because you knew it would add spontaneity, diversity, and just plain change to your life? I did. Life sat pathetically before me on a silver platter. I didn’t have to work, struggle, worry, engage, or contemplate. Life was supposedly perfect, and I was bored. Personally, I think God was bored too. Why else set up something to tempt so blatantly?

God also knew me. He knew I couldn’t be stopped. He saw me bored out of my mind in that garden. Adam and I used to sit idly around, waiting for something to happen, anything to happen. I fell to twiddling my thumbs. Adam used to ask, ‘Is that all you know how to do?’

I’d tell him, ‘No, I can go this way too’ and change the direction of my thumb twiddling. It got to the point where death didn’t seem like such a bad alternative to boredom. At least monotony would get a run for its money.

Enter the snake. Smooth voice, pleasant serpent smile. A reptile that made sense. The snake reminded me that it was God who told Adam not to eat the apple. I was getting all my information secondhand. ‘Remember,’ the snake reminded me, ‘Adam would rather stay in the so-called paradise with the same day, day after day than to risk, or challenge, or imagine, or venture anything.’

It was then that I looked into those snake’s eyes and I saw my life. In great big capital letters, the irises of that snake’s eyes read, boring. I saw myself and myself saw me. It was then that I knew I had to taste that apple. I took a bite of that tart crispness. And all felt different. My body changed. I felt the sores on my feet. I felt a surge of life in my belly, my mind expand, my vision clear. I felt wholly alive.

[Message from Juliana Schmidt. Continued](#)

I went to find Adam. I tried to explain how I felt. He just looked at me in horror and amazement, yet he kept asking me what it felt like. All I could think to say was 'I'm truly human. I feel more me than ever before!' I cajoled, argued and finally just shoved the apple into his taut mouth. He reluctantly took a bite. Later he told God that it was all my fault.

Now here is the part of the story that I must confess needs correcting. I didn't blame the snake for my transgressions. I fessed up and admitted that I had eaten the apple. I said, 'I am glad to be human! Everything is not perfect, but it is real, alive! I feel sorry for you, God. For you everything is perfect. Do you ever get bored?'

Then God got mad, cursed us both. He said that I would scream out in pain during childbirth, that I would regret the day I was born. I picked up the apple and went to the gate. I stood there, leaning against the gate, throwing the apple up and down. I stood enjoying the rhythm of that apple slap into my hand, followed by silence as the air embraced it for a brief moment. I thought about a song I had heard, 'You can make the world your apple, take a bite before it sours, you can make the world your charm or your chain.' I knew it lay before me, my opportunity, my humanness. And I said out loud, in a clear voice, 'I'm so glad to be human!'"

-- Kaaren Solveig Anderson

[Pow Wow Field Trip](#)

USM President, Juliana Schmidt, is trying to put together a field trip for USM to a pow wow. Inspired by the book we read recently, *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee* by David Treuer, it would be a good cultural experience for USM. A signup sheet will circulate at August services for a pow wow in Minnesota for a Saturday or Sunday in September. She will gather info on which weekend is better and get an idea how many will be willing to attend.

[Have content for the next newsletter?](#)

Please email events, news, poems, stories by the 25th of the month to be included in the next newsletter to kwiersgalla@gmail.com.

[Diane Light Returns in September](#)

After a long hiatus, Diane Light will present the message on September 11 with our usual Gathering of the Waters service at 10 am. Diane is excited to be back and will be with us from September to December.

[Suggested Reading: WORLD WAR C](#)

"CNN chief medical correspondent Sanjay Gupta, MD, offers an accessible, data-packed answer to our biggest questions about Covid-19: What have we learned about this pandemic and how can we prepare for, or prevent, the next one? As America's favorite frontline Covid-19 health journalist, Dr. Sanjay Gupta has barely left his primetime seat in his makeshift studio basement since the pandemic began (other than to perform brain surgery). He's had the insider of insider access to the drama's unfolding, including exclusive conversations with the world's top public health experts and behind-the-scenes scientists racing to find treatments and cures. And now he's sharing what he's learned in a book that will answer not only all our questions about what happened, but also about how our world will change in the years ahead, even once we're back to "normal." Gupta argues that we need to prepare for a new era where pandemics will be more frequent, and possibly even more deadly. As the doctor who's been holding America's hand through the crisis with compassion, clarity, and well-earned wisdom, he gives you the unvarnished story behind the pandemic, including insights about the novel virus's behavior, and offers practical tools to ready ourselves for what lies ahead. He answers critical questions: Can we stamp out the virus for good (and if not, how do we live with it)? Should we put our parents in a nursing home? Where should we live? What should we stockpile? What should we know before taking a trip? Does it make sense to spend more on health insurance to deal with any long-term effects? How do you decide when it's safe to go to a public pool or schedule elective surgery? What should Covid survivors know about protecting their future health? What if you become a long-hauler with chronic health challenges stemming? World War C will give you hope for the future along with real information that leaves you more resilient and secure."--Publisher's website.