



THE CHALICE NEWS

Unitarian Society of Menomonie
A Welcoming Unitarian Universalist Congregation

May 2023 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)**

May 7 – Annual Meeting

At the annual meeting we elect officers and approve the budget for the next fiscal year which begins on July 1. Potluck after the meeting.

May 13 – Adopt a Highway Clean Up

Meet at the Cedar Creek Park near Lucettes. We will gather and share vehicles. Please have good walking shoes or boots, gloves, sunscreen/bug spray and be prepared to walk 2 miles in teams of at least two people. [Please watch the 6 minute safety video](#). Rain date June 3rd. Please contact Sherry at sherryhagen0115@gmail.com with questions.

May 14 – Happy Mother’s Day! – No Service

Go forth and do good works!

May 21 – Service with Dennis Peters, “Golden”

How do you treat your family members? Your pet(s)? Do you try for the best for them, try to treat them well? What about your neighbors? Not just the ones you consider your friends, but how about that guy at the corner who keeps threatening to sue those around him for property line disputes, or claiming your dog does his business on his lawn, or generates conspiracy theories about... everything?

May 28 – Service with Dennis Peters, “Youth”

What happened to my youth?! It was here just a minute ago. One minute I was running, working on projects around the house, memorizing all sorts of “important” stuff. Now I can hardly bend my left knee, or turn my neck. I see more doctors than I do family members some weeks. And I can’t find that second pair of glasses that I was relying on as spares. I think someone has been playing dirty tricks on me!

DAVE WILLIAMS, Happiness



"We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." From the Declaration of Independence

"The United States is the 19th happiest country in the world." World Population Review annual report for 2021

"The fact that happiness lies more in altruistic actions than in selfishness is one of the most important things that we need to learn as humankind." Pelin Kesebir, honorary fellow at the UW's Center for Healthy Minds

The recently published rankings of the world's happiest countries sparked some reflection, mostly triggered by why we Americans, with all the wealth and influence we have in the world, ended up in 19th place. Of course, that's far better than 149th and lowest place Afghanistan, but still, why aren't we number one?

NOTE: The World Population Review considers the following to determine its happiness rankings: 1. Gross domestic product per capita; 2. Social support; 3. Healthy life expectancy; 4. Freedom to make your own life choices; 5. Generosity of the general population; and 6. Perceptions of internal and external corruption. The top five ranked countries are: Finland, Denmark, Switzerland, Iceland, the Netherlands.

Just as I was reading about those world rankings by the World Population Review, our University of Wisconsin-Madison Alumni magazine appeared with a story titled "How to Have It All," by Megan Provost. Provost's article explored the topic of happiness as seen through the lens of two UW faculty members, Pelin Kesebir, whose quote is noted above, and Christine Whelan, a professor in the Department of Consumer Science.

Provost noted that happiness first appeared as a "marketed commodity in America" during the 1920s, when "advertisers sought to kickstart a culture of consumerism." And that purported belief, that money can buy happiness, has never abated since. Whelan notes the self-help publishing and personal care industry has become a \$450 billion per year industry, as Americans' search for control—and thus happiness—in their lives.

But nothing has impressed us more with our lack of control than the Covid pandemic. Provost cites the General Social Survey, a study from the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, which notes that we are the least happy we've been in 50 years.

Whelan's and Kesebir's research and thinking focus on the conflict of individualism (an important American belief) and community-centric approaches to life, and argue that the latter tend to yield greater enduring happiness. "One of the core concepts of human ecology is that we are interdependent. The key predictor of happiness is not money. It's not success or fame. It's the quality of relationships that people have," Provost quotes Whelan.

What might we do to achieve greater happiness? Provost paraphrases Kesebir, who suggests that "through mindfulness, gratitude, practiced positivity, and the cultivation of healthy relationships, individuals can reclaim control of their perception of and response to their circumstances, even when they can't control the circumstances themselves."

The final observation in Provost's article notes the remarkable increase in benevolence in the world as one result of the pandemic. Every region of the world saw "large increases in the proportion of people who give money to charity, help strangers, do voluntary work," all up by 25 percent from pre-pandemic.

Which circles us back to the quote above from Kesebir about the important relationship of happiness to altruism. Perhaps the social action we Unitarian Universalists undertake, while often triggered by our unhappy contemplation of the causes, might just be our best route to true happiness? I ask you to contemplate what moments, what actions, what responses, have helped you feel truly happy? Responses are most welcome!



LIFE IS LIKE A MAYPOLE

*Outstretch above are blue skies and golden sunshine as
train of threads is softly thug and braid to a pole. Behold,
this sky high pole o bright crayon colors, they speak
slowly about life in quite a number...*

*Sturdy wooden pole standing high and tall
is like a man endowed with wit and strength
The lengthy colored ribbons children install
are the shifting, rolling faces of life's events*

*Black as night sometimes dawn in life,
one maybe blue but not long, instead
do stand and chase rainbows on green belt bend.
Being a tickled pink to explore, never strife!*

*See, how the color red blush as it dance in the wind so
must we as we share love along kinship line we aren't all
born with a green finger
yet, each kindness touch, grin lingers!*

*Shed that yellow-bellied skin
to mingle without any charign.
Our life is given by God in silver plate.
Hence, let our daily goal be a red-letter day!*

*If we do, earth and sky may wed of rapport
like the ribbons together pulled and blend
by hands of dancing children that mend...
Raising the Maypole aloft with ribbon pour*

*so is a lived life despite black and blues decor.
As the threads slide smoothly in span of minutes
we, humans, must climb to reach our full limits.
The intertwining colors that fused, all roar*

*salad differences of man can be sorted, united to be one.
Screaming colors tickle lowly spirits' to fire daring man to
live before his body will retire... Living life to the fullest
before each setting sun!*

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11:23 pm-- February 02, 2015

Sponsor: Seren Roberts
Contest Name: Life is like a Maypole
Placed 1st

Mark your Calendars! June 4th

On Sunday, June 4, at 10 am Bruce Siebold will present "Stories on 80 Acres" based on his book. He is a retired UW-Stout professor. His book will be available for sale at the service.

To quote Volume One, "Bruce Siebold believes that there are all sorts of stories to tell, wherever you live. He has made it his mission to tell those that take place in his own backyard. Every day for the past 27 years – that's nearly 10,000 days – Siebold has explored his family's 80 acres of land in Menomonie, camera in hand. From thousands of images, he recently compiled the best vignettes into his second book of photography: Seasons on Eighty Acres."

Bruce will share his photos and insights at the June 4 service.

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.

