



# THE CHALICE NEWS

**Unitarian Society of Menomonie**

*A Welcoming Unitarian Universalist Congregation*

## September 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)**

#### **Sep 3 - Labor Day Weekend, No Service.**

Go forth and do good work!

#### **Sep 10 - “Gathering of the Waters and Sharing of the Water” Service with Dennis Peters and Jack and Sherry Hagen**

We’re coming back from our long summer respite. Respite??? Well, some adventures, anyway. And it’s time to bring in waters that we’ve collected on those journeys. This service will be jointly led by Dennis and Sherry. Come join us for the beginning of fall!

#### **Sep 10 - USM Board Meeting after the service**

#### **Sep 17 - Service with Dennis Peters, “Gifted People: Are You One?”**

How many times do you hear of people with special abilities: amazing memories, perfect pitch, mathematical minds, HSAM (or Highly Superior Autobiographical memories), and many others. Do they give up anything to have these gifts? Why don’t I have any of those things??? Let’s explore a little, and see some examples.

#### **Sep 24 - Meet at Devil’s Punchbowl, potluck picnic at Riverside Park; bring a chair and a nature poem or reading to share**

#### **Sep 30 - Highway Cleanup – rain date is October 7; meet at Riverside Park at 10 am.**

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](#). Please contact Sherry at [sherryhagen0115@gmail.com](mailto:sherryhagen0115@gmail.com) with questions.

## DAVE WILLIAMS, A Humanist Awardee Speaks



The summer 2023 issue of *the humanist: A Quarterly of Ideas and Action* landed in our mailbox a few weeks ago. The central focus of this issue was to highlight three award recipients honored at the American Humanist Association's 82nd annual conference. One of those was Dr. David Breeden.

Dr. Breeden is Senior Minister at First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis. His acceptance speech for the Humanist Distinguished Service Award was printed in its entirety in this quarterly journal, and serves as an enlightened description of what humanism is today.

Dr. Breeden was raised in the Pentecostal tradition by parents to think that what you believe and what you do in the world with those beliefs are life's most important questions, something he continues to believe. "And I believe that it is a fundamental human right that all human beings must have the ability to pursue truth and beauty as they see fit," he stated.

At the foundation of humanist ethics, Dr. Breeden asserts, are four aspirations. He said that humanists call you in to trust that;

1. Human beings matter more than ideas.
2. Each and every person is precious and unique, having unique human genetic and social composition and individual rights and collective responsibilities.
3. Freedom of speech and thought are essential to human flourishing.
4. Human beings can solve human problems; our goal is flourishing for all sentient beings.

Dr. Breeden provided a history of the founding of the American Humanist Association in 1941 by Unitarian ministers, Curtis W. Reese and John H. Dietrich. Their goal, he said, was not to establish a religion, but instead to recognize the nontheistic and secular nature of humanism, organize its advocates, and align the organization for the mutual education of both its religious and nonreligious members.

Reese's and Dietrich's leaning toward humanism went back long before that 1941 founding. Both had become Christian ministers, but both had come to the conclusion that Christianity no longer made sense for them, Dr. Breeden relates, and both left their denominations to become Unitarian ministers. Dietrich was called as minister of First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis in 1916, while Reese worked for a social action center in Chicago, where he also served on the board of Meadville Lombard Theological School, a Unitarian Universalist seminary today.

Dr. Breeden shared this bit of history because he believes the base and core of humanism "is—and I think always will be—not the airy heights of a Paul Tillich but the down-and-dirty pragmatism of John Dewey. ...Our intellectual forebears were not of the 'sit-an-git variety but were rather constructivists—get your hands dirty; get in there and explore." He cites First Unitarian Society board member Drew Bekius' comment that there are *aspired* values and *lived* values. Our work is to align values and actions, Dr. Breeden asserts, and part of that is listening to and searching for marginalized voices.

He concludes his acceptance address by describing the wisdom of women philosophers from the World War II era, some of those marginalized voices. "When are we going to see that misunderstanding and untruth flow from the failure to consider 'alternative possible descriptions?' When will we learn that we can't get 'alternative possible descriptions' into the room until all sorts of human beings are in the room."

Dr. Breeden noted that was why these women philosophers weren't listened to in 1950, when they were saying that the "vast palaces of reason created so pridefully by the glitzy science that had won the war were only so

### Williams, continued

much dust. Smoke. Partial solutions and unintended consequences. They are saying, they still are saying, quote:

“It is that all our solutions are incomplete, for reasons that can often be understood. The area of our ignorance is enormous and, by its very nature, has no outward frontiers.”

He concluded by referring listeners back to the four assertions noted above, saying that they “have helped me live a life of meaning and purpose as a humanist for something over forty years now. ...Join with us, lovers of freedom, lovers of liberation, lovers of mystery and multiplicity. Join with us lovers of life!”

### Circle Suppers

The program committee is reviving Circle Suppers which have not been held since before pandemic. A signup sheet will be circulated in September. How does a Circle Supper work, you may ask? A host agrees to hold the supper and provide a beverage (or you can BYO alcohol if you like). Those who sign up must bring the food for the evening. No more than 4 or 5 guests at any supper is advisable.

Being an American means reckoning with a history fraught with violence and injustice. Ignoring that reality in favor of mythology is not only wrong but also dangerous. The dark chapters of American history have just as much to teach us, if not more, than the glorious ones, and often the two are intertwined.

As some question how to teach American history to our children— and even question the history itself— I urge us to confront the hard truth, and to trust our children with it. Because a truly great nation is one that can acknowledge its failures.

Ken Burns,

Being American means reckoning with our violent history

### 5th Sunday Revival

At a recent USM service, a member of the River Falls UU fellowship attended. Paula of the Unitarian Universalist Society of River Falls invited us to their service on October 29 which is

### You are welcome to attend:

- New Moon Ritual and Tarot Reading Sept. 17, at 6 pm
- Full Moon Ritual and Drumming Oct. 1, 6 pm

At Jack and Sherry Hagen's in Menomonie  
RSVP [sherryhagen0115@gmail.com](mailto:sherryhagen0115@gmail.com)

### Needlework Group

Needlework group meets every Wednesday at 1 pm at Golden Leaf Café for an hour. All are welcome even if you don't do needlework! And if you don't know how to do needlework, we can teach you!

### Homeless in Menomonie

The homeless situation in Menomonie is real. There are three homeless encampments in Menomonie; one behind Wal-Mart, another behind the movie theater on the north side, and another by the river near the Menomonie Library. Stepping Stones in Menomonie is building a new homeless shelter with a possible opening date by November. Recently when the weather was brutally tropical and the heat dangerous, Stepping Stones housed the homeless temporarily in hotel rooms.

Our work for homeless children in our community continues. With the August 12 benefit for homeless kids, we raised more than \$1,000. Our thanks to those who donated their time, talents and treasure to this worthy cause. Mary Beth Lvoncek, who spearheads the project, states that the pop-up pantry bags are disappearing quickly while the students await the first day of school where there is shelter and food available.

Donate used/new blankets or quilts for the homeless to the Menomonie Police Department. The Menomonie Police Department is taking blankets and/or quilts to donate to the homeless.

If you have blankets or quilts to donate, please contact the Menomonie Police Department and/or drop them off at the police station. Contact: 715-232-1283 (non-emergency line) or Aaron Bergh, Behavioral Health Officer, 715-308-5475. Bergh will be making a presentation to our congregation at an upcoming service.

a 5th Sunday. BP (Before Pandemic) we hosted 5 th Sundays and visited various fellowships in our region. Those on our list of western Wisconsin fellowships are Rice Lake, River Falls, Eau Claire, La Crosse, St. Croix Falls, and Superior. We can carpool to River Falls if needed.

[Book Discussion: Happiness is a Choice You Make by John Leland](#)

Our next book discussion will occur when weather gets colder. More information will be coming in the next newsletter. You can get started on the book now. The book is Happiness is a Choice You Make by John Leland. A leader for the discussion is needed. This can be a shared position.

[Aluminum Cans for Alano](#)

The Alano folks are collecting aluminum cans. If you want to donate cans, bring them in and leave them at the other entrance (glass door nearest the parking lot).

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

Please email events, news, poems, stories by the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month to be included in the next newsletter to [kwiersgalla@gmail.com](mailto:kwiersgalla@gmail.com).

*Sermons We See*

by  
Edgar Guest

I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day;  
I'd rather one should walk with me than merely tell the way.  
The eye's a better pupil and more willing than the ear,  
Fine counsel is confusing, but example's always clear;  
And the best of all the preachers are the men who live their creeds,  
For to see good put in action is what everybody needs.  
I soon can learn to do it if you'll let me see it done;  
I can watch your hands in action, but your tongue too fast may run.  
And the lecture you deliver may be very wise and true,  
But I'd rather get my lessons by observing what you do;  
For I might misunderstand you and the high advice you give,  
But there's no misunderstanding how you act and how you live.  
When I see a deed of kindness, I am eager to be kind.  
When a weaker brother stumbles and a strong man stays behind  
Just to see if he can help him, then the wish grows strong in me  
To become as big and thoughtful as I know that friend to be.  
And all travelers can witness that the best of guides today  
Is not the one who tells them, but the one who shows the way.  
One good man teaches many, men believe what they behold;  
One deed of kindness noticed is worth forty that are told.  
Who stands with men of honor learns to hold his honor dear,  
For right living speaks a language which to every one is clear.  
Though an able speaker charms me with his eloquence, I say,  
I'd rather see a sermon than to hear one, any day.