



# THE CHALICE NEWS

Unitarian Society of Menomonie  
*A Welcoming Unitarian Universalist Congregation*

## May 2024 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 A.M. IN OUR MEETING ROOM  
(ZOOM CONNECTIONS WILL BE PROVIDED)

*\* No Board Meeting in May \**

**May 5 – Annual Meeting, followed by a potluck meal**

**May 12 – Happy Mother’s Day! Service with Dennis Peters, “Tech Support and Chaplaincy: The Same Skillset!”**

I’ve joked in recent years that my career change from IT to . . . whatever this is I’m doing now (lay ministry? pastoral care?) is a natural transition. And I usually get at least a chuckle.

But I recently had a “Eureka!” moment — it is a very similar set of skills involved. Really! This may be useful information for you, also. Let’s talk about it.

**May 19 – Traditional Flower Communion**

Please bring a flower to place in a communal vase. It can be from your flowerbed or from a florist. We will honor the event in Unitarian history, and each person will go home with a different flower.

Also, Dr. Steven Nold, a UW-Stout professor of Biology, will speak to us regarding water quality issues and studies of our area’s bodies of water.

**May 26 – Memorial Day Weekend**

No Service

**June 2 – Guided Imagery Workshop w/Sherry Hagen: Journey through Contemplation, Looking Out and Am I Ready?**

“We will be journeying through three paintings. After each journey we will have a silent meditation, when the brief meditation is over a tone will sound and you will have the opportunity to pause to color, draw and write whatever you experienced and share as you wish.” — *Sherry Hagen*

## DAVID K. WILLIAMS, Democracy — Who Needs It?



I recently finished reading “The Hitler I Knew: Memoirs of the Third Reich’s Press Chief,” by Otto Dietrich, who served as press chief for Adolf Hitler’s Third Reich from 1933 to 1945. He was tried at Nuremberg and sentenced to seven years in prison, where he penned these memoirs.

Dietrich wasn’t always “in the room” with Hitler, but he was a close observer of Hitler’s leadership style and his decision-making processes, and he often had to put the best face forward for the German regime. He titles half the book “Scenes from Hitler’s Life,” with daily portraits of Hitler’s work habits, interactions with his military leaders, and sometimes with the common people.

Dietrich’s time in prison gave him ample opportunity to reflect on what was wrong with the Hitler regime, and to assess his prior loyalty to and admiration of Hitler. Dietrich ultimately became “completely disillusioned” with Hitler, according to a reviewer, and paints a fairly critical portrait of Hitler as a man who was a bohemian; a bigot; a man who would brook no criticism, contradiction or interruption; and who used any social gathering to hold forth on his views. Hitler’s ego convinced him that he knew better than his entire cadre of generals.

There are some uncanny parallels with autocrats we today see rising or currently in power around the world. Dietrich describes Hitler’s minimal appreciation for science and scientists, unless “he needed it immediately for military or other utilitarian purposes” (pg 123). He hated journalists and controlled the news through his propaganda minister and Dietrich’s press releases. Hitler outright banned any criticism in the press at times (pg 117).

Dietrich also wrote, “But he never wasted a word on humanitarianism except on one occasion, to characterize it as a mixture of cowardice, stupidity, and intellectual conceit . . . He studiously avoided the subject of the concentration camps” (pg 172). Dietrich’s memoir also studiously avoids that topic, with only three passing references, and no acknowledgment of the depth of depravity of the Holocaust. One must ask how true his repentant and revisionist view of the Third Reich was?

Here’s another action dictators and autocrats seem to favor in their efforts to achieve and hold power: Hitler effectively did away with any democratic institutions in Germany once he had cemented his grasp on power. He believed he alone could fix any problems Germany had.

Unitarian Universalists confirm in our fifth principle “the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.” An early Unitarian sympathizer, Benjamin Franklin, referred in 1787 to our nation as “a republic, if you can keep it.” Today we find ourselves in turbulent times with the specters of Hitler’s assault on German democracy, and then the world, in our rear-view mirrors, and of various world leaders and would-be leaders today jettisoning democratic institutions in real time.

In the concluding pages of his memoir, Dietrich sounded certain when he wrote, “But in the future no politically mature nation will ever commit itself unreservedly to the hand of a single man and an authoritarian government. Henceforth the democratic rules alone will regulate the game upon the chessboard of world politics” (pg 232). How naive will our current politics show Dietrich to have been?

“The Hitler I Knew: Memoirs of the Third Reich’s Press Chief” is by Otto Dietrich, with an introduction by Roger Moorhouse. Published by Skyhorse Publishing. Copyright 2010.

## JONAH Schedule

Follow [JONAH](#) of the Chippewa Valley to find out more about training, events, etc.

## USM Needleworkers

USM needleworkers meet every Wednesday at 1 p.m. at [Golden Leaf Café](#) to chat and relax with their fiber projects. They can teach you how to knit, crochet, or tat. All are welcome.

## Resources from our April visit with Lama Yeshe at Hay River KTC Meditation Center

“Understanding and Eliminating Stress and Anxiety,” by Jane Nelsen

“From Here to Serenity,” by Gail Manishor

“The Art of Living: Peace and Freedom in the Here and Now,” by Thich Nhat Hanh

## Coming Up! Summer Get Togethers

The Program Committee is putting together an interesting and stimulating summer! Dennis Peters will continue to present thought-provoking sermons on the 2nd and 4th Sundays.

For June, there will be a guided imagery workshop by our own Sherry Hagen (see calendar for more info), and a picnic and Kubb at Elmwood Park on June 16. Lorene Vedder will speak to us about environmental issues on June 30.

For July, we are working on a mini concert by harpist Sarah Ohr and a possible collaboration with the Foster Closet to raise money for the homeless kids project.

In August we are going to visit the [Devil's Punchbowl](#) and a potluck lunch at River Side Park after our visit on August 4, and a pool party at Lynn Shaw's on August 18. There will be more information in the next newsletters.

## “The Colors of Communion” by Jennifer Pratt-Walter

*Flowers chant their wordless songs*

*of color and scent, delighting like*

*a joyful choir at dawn.*

*I breathe in with my whole body, feeling*

*how it is we grow, quietly rising together*

*among spring's green and dew.*

*The rhythm of seasons rolls ahead*

*and I, a shy blossom, voice my small*

*prism of song. I am singing*

*of the wonder of how roots*


*so love the buds they bid them grow,*

*unseen as they are,*

*while the buds never look back.*

## Have content for the next newsletter?

Please email events, news, poems, and stories by the 25th of the month to be included in the next newsletter to [Kyser.Cassandra@gmail.com](mailto:Kyser.Cassandra@gmail.com)



## **UUA MidAmerica Regional Assembly**

### **by Paul Helgeson**

The Regional Assembly of Unitarian-Universalists from the Upper Midwest (MidAmerica) for 2024 was held April 19 & 20 at First Unitarian Society of Madison. It was a hybrid meeting with folks attending both by Zoom and in-person. I attended in-person.

A little about the venue: As most of you are aware, First Unitarian Meeting House was designed by one of its members — Frank Lloyd Wright in the early 1950's, and much of the stonework done by members of the congregation. First Unitarian was founded one year before the Unitarian Society of Menomonie (1883) and the two organizations originally had the same Statements of Union.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, First Unitarian was the largest UU congregation in the UUA with well over 1,000 members. So an addition with a new auditorium was built and that is where the Assembly was held. If you are in Madison on a Saturday or Sunday, I highly recommend checking out the First Unitarian. They have two services on Sunday and one on Saturday.

The first session of the Assembly kicked off with a dialogue between the president of our UUA, the Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt and the president of the United Church of Christ (Congregational), the Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson. Both organizations have roots in the early Congregational Church and split over the question of the Holy Trinity. Today our two organizations are together on social issues and we share the same curriculum for our young people. The two presidents are both highly accomplished academics and black women.

The discussion centered on, what is meant by “Liberal Religion”? What are the markers of a Progressive Religion? We must be willing to talk about where religion has got it wrong, as well as where it is right.

On Saturday, there were a number of workshops mostly led by UUA staff. The workshop that most impressed me was led by a UUA staff person from Boston and dealt with the rise of “neo-facism” and white nationalism. We were reminded that nationalism is rising all over the world and that white nationalism goes back to the 1600s. People of Faith must come out of the closet and be proud of our liberal faith and its position as it relates to human values.

There was a discussion concerning the history of proposed changes to Article II of UUA bylaws, but no real debate about the proposed changes to the Article. The proposed Article II will require a 2/3 positive vote of delegates at General Assembly in late June. The GA is all virtual. So if you feel strongly become a delegate and be heard.