



THE CHALICE NEWS

Unitarian Society of Menomonie

A Welcoming Unitarian Universalist Congregation

May 2025 Newsletter

Seven Principles

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person
2. Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations
3. Acceptance of 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

Programs are at 10 a.m. in our meeting room, unless otherwise noted.
(ZOOM CONNECTIONS WILL BE PROVIDED)

Sunday, May 4 – Annual Meeting at 10 am. The church will vote on the 2025-26 budget and elect officers. Bring a snack to pass.

Sunday, May 11 – Service w/Dennis Peters, “The Creatures of My World”

The “nature” I’ll be referring to today will be just a small subset of what’s out there. This will be just those creatures that are a part of my world, the ones that I see and occasionally interact with.

So, no alligators, no brown bears (also called “grizzly,” or, by Will Geer in *Jeremiah Johnson*, “griz”). Welcome to a little bit of my world!

And, Happy Mother’s Day!

Sunday, May 18 – Our own Dave Williams will talk about the vibrant little newspaper that could: *The Hay River Review*. Dave writes for the newspaper.

Sunday, May 25 – Service w/Dennis Peters, Flower Communion
Bring a flower to put in the communal vase.

Coming Up...

Sunday, June 1 – Peter Kilde, newly retired from the head position at Westcap, will present *The Economics of Perpetual Poverty*.

Sunday, June 15 – Mark your calendars to attend the joint service of the Eau Claire fellowship and the Unitarian Society of Menomonie at our original church home, the Mabel Tainter Theater, on June 15, at 10 a.m.

The Eau Claire fellowship choir will sing, and there will be other special music as well. The theme is the connection between the two churches which was established by Bertha Tainter, a community mover and shaker in Menomonie over a century ago.

Sunday, June 29 – USM will have a get-together at Wakanda Park on the north side of Menomonie. There will be a potluck picnic, and we will see the Native American Burial Mounds in the park.

DAVID K. WILLIAMS: Trial of the Century



One hundred years ago this July, the nation's attention was riveted on the small town of Dayton, TN. Newspapers from across the nation sent reporters there to cover what was billed as the "Trial of the Century." Two "rock stars" of the day — Clarence Darrow and William Jennings Bryan — were facing each other across the courtroom for the Scopes Trial.

Earlier in 1925, the Tennessee legislature had passed a law making it illegal for anyone to teach the theory of evolution in a public school. The nascent American Civil Liberties Union, just five years old at that time, sought someone to test this new law in a courtroom. John Scopes was a high school science teacher in Dayton and agreed to test the law.

Both Darrow and Bryan had volunteered their services. Darrow, a well-known criminal defense and labor lawyer, signed on to Scopes' defense with a few other ACLU lawyers. Bryan, a three-time candidate for the Democratic nomination for president, and Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of State, rushed to help prosecute Scopes with the local district attorney. Bryan was a staunch believer in the inerrant nature of the Bible, which he believed was the literal word of God. Darrow was an agnostic.

The atmosphere into which these Titans of the day stepped was hardly conducive to Darrow and his client. The presiding judge entered the courtroom each day carrying his Bible and a dictionary. Each daily session began with a lengthy prayer—one ran 15 minutes—by a local clergyman from a fundamentalist church. The judge did later relent and allow other ministers to lead a prayer, including one Unitarian minister who had come from Boston for the trial.

The details I am citing here are from an excellent recent book, *Keeping the Faith: God, Democracy, and the Trial That Riveted a Nation*, by Brenda Wineapple, published by Random House in 2024. Wineapple included much of the actual testimony as Darrow and Bryan sparred throughout the trial. Darrow took the unconventional step of calling Bryan to the witness stand late in the trial, and proceeded to challenge Bryan's beliefs. At trial's end, Darrow also declined to make closing arguments. By Tennessee law, then Bryan was not allowed to present the closing argument he had prepared, intending to refute Darrow's badgering questioning and logic. Bryan did later find a few newspapers willing to print his argument, but by then it was anticlimax.

John Scopes was convicted by what was not an impartial jury, and was fined \$100.

Why does this trial still matter 100 years later? As Wineapple noted on page 195, "To Darrow, then, belief in God per se was not the issue in Tennessee. Rather, a Fundamentalist reading of the Bible mandated by a state legislature would easily lead to a devastating loss of civil liberties. Church and state must remain separate. Freedom of speech must remain free. Freedom of thought must remain free. And Bryan was a dangerous man, a demagogue on the loose."

The author added further, "To many, it seemed obvious that Bryan was hoping to establish a theocracy in the country, and that, to them, was the real issue, not whether evolution was itself true, or how true. The issue was not science itself, or the religion of science, or even Darrow's vaunted agnosticism. It was freedom, freedom to worship and to reason and to learn." (p.335). A fellow lawyer on the defense team, Dudley Field Malone, said "Mr. Bryan has been organizing through political and church organizations a campaign to control the educational system of the country by dogmatic religion, and to organize sufficient church and political power to create a state religion in America."

Not much, other than the players, seems to have changed in 100 years. The state superintendent of public instruction in Oklahoma wants to force all schools, public and private, to incorporate the Bible in all classes. The State of Louisiana wants a copy of the Ten Commandments posted in every classroom. Prayer in public schools has found friends at the U.S. Supreme Court. Christian nationalism seems a burgeoning movement, challenging the notion of separation of church and state.

A final quote from Clarence Darrow which appears on page 248 of Wineapple's book: "Ignorance and fanaticism is ever busy and needs feeding. Always it is feeding and gloating for more. Today, it is the public school teachers, tomorrow the private. The next day the preachers and the lecturers, the magazines, the books, the newspapers. After a while, Your Honor, it is the setting of man against man and creed against creed, until with flying banners and beating drums we are marching backward to the glorious ages of the sixteenth century when bigots lighted fagots [a bundle of sticks] to burn the men who dared to bring intelligence and enlightenment and culture to the human mind."



For All the Mothers

For all the mothers and mother figures

The grandmothers, aunts, and extended
family members who mother

The soon-to-be mothers, the wish-they-were
mothers, the never-wanted-to-be mothers, the
“it’s complicated” mothers

The birth mothers, foster mothers, adoptive
mothers, stepmothers

The “used to be Dad” mothers and “more than
one Mom” mothers

The single mothers, separated mothers, stay-
at-home mothers, unhoused mothers

The grieving mothers, those who grieve their
mothers, and those whose grief is complex

For all the communities that mother

And for all who depend on the Great Mother

You are held — and beloved.

— By Lindasusan Ulrich



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.



The Program Committee meets on
the third Thursday of the month at
9 a.m. at Golden Leaf Café.

All are welcome.



Save Pop-tops on Aluminum Cans for Oaklawn Students

The students at Oaklawn Elementary School
are collecting aluminum can pop-tops/pull
tabs to help fund Ronald McDonald houses.

Take your collected pop-tops to Oaklawn
Elementary School which is on the east side
of Menomonie at 500 21st Street SE.

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