



THE CHALICE NEWS

Unitarian Society of Menomonie

A Welcoming Unitarian Universalist Congregation

November 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, Nov. 2 – Randy Dean, of Randy Dean will speak of his experience relative to his leaving a fundamentalist church. Dean seeks to help others through his nonprofit organization, Randy Dean Ministries, which is dedicated to spiritual refugees as they search for healing and wholeness in these crazy times.

Sunday, Nov. 9 – Service w/Dennis Peters, “Exceptional: Are You?”

We’ve heard the word “Exceptional,” or “Exceptionalism,” for a long time now. Usually it is in the context of the United States, and tries to explain why we’re so much better than the rest of the world. A political message.

That is not the conversation today. This time we’re taking a look at ourselves. Am I exceptional? Do I have something in me that defines me as exceptional? If so, compared to what, or to whom? How did (or do) we become exceptional? Is it inherent? A gift of our birth? Is it something we earn?

Sunday, Nov. 16 – Joe Plouff, is a Menomonie resident and former Wisconsin state assemblyman for the 29th Assembly District. He served in the Assembly from 1997 to 2005. His presentation will focus on Politics and Civil Discourse.

Sunday, Nov. 23 – Service w/Dennis Peters, “Let’s Talk About Giving Thanks”

At least once a year we should consider what it means to be thankful. And what better time than the Thanksgiving holiday? For many of us it means getting together with friends and/or family. Sitting down to a large meal. Engaging in pleasant conversation (or our best effort at it!).

For other folks that doesn’t always happen, either because we choose a day of solitude, or because life puts us in that position. Let’s discuss it, and come participate in this our annual day of thanks!

Sunday, Nov. 30 – No Service. Happy Thanksgiving!

DAVID K. WILLIAMS:
The Season of Charity



Scarcely a day goes by when our mail doesn't include multiple charitable requests—one recent day there were nine such requests. Some of the organizations are on our charitable giving list, but others have clearly bought lists of names and are sending hopeful requests.

Which directed my thinking to the whole concept of charity as we head into the year-end season when so many charitable decisions are made. I went in search of the Jewish rabbi Maimonides' recounting of the eight levels of charity.

Maimonides lived from 1138 to 1204 in Spain, where he was an important philosopher, adjudicator and physician. He published a 14-volume codification of Jewish Law among other writings. (Biographical information from the website ReBoot: Rebooting Jewish Life) His levels of charity bear consideration, whether we are Jewish or not. Maimonides described the levels from the greatest down to lesser levels. They are:

[1] The greatest level, above which there is no greater, is to support a fellow Jew by endowing him with a gift or loan, or entering into a partnership with him, or finding employment for him, in order to strengthen his hand so that he will not need to be dependent upon others . . .

[2] A lesser level of charity than this is to give to the poor without knowing to whom one gives, and without the recipient knowing from who he received. For this is performing a mitzvah solely for the sake of Heaven. This is like the "anonymous fund" that was in the Holy Temple [in Jerusalem]. There the righteous gave in secret, and the good poor profited in secret. Giving to a charity fund is similar to this mode of charity, though one should not contribute to a charity fund unless one knows that the person appointed over the fund is trustworthy and wise and a proper administrator.

[3] A lesser level of charity than this is when one knows to whom one gives, but the recipient does not know his benefactor. The greatest sages used to walk about in secret and put coins in the doors of the poor. It is worthy and truly good to do this, if those who are responsible for distributing charity are not trustworthy.

[4] A lesser level of charity than this is when one does not know to whom one gives, but the poor person does know his benefactor.

[5] A lesser level than this is when one gives to the poor person directly into his hand, but gives before being asked.

[6] A lesser level than this is when one gives to the poor person after being asked.

[7] A lesser level than this is when one gives inadequately, but gives gladly and with a smile.

[8] A lesser level than this is when one gives unwillingly.

I suspect we are all at various levels on Maimonides' list in our personal giving. Giving to needs, regardless of the level, is still a good thing. But should we aspire to move up his list as we make personal decisions?

Circle Suppers are Returning!

Circle Suppers will return this fall. One person agrees to host. No more than 5 guests can sign up for 1 host.

The guests bring salad, bread, vegetable, dessert, and the host provides the location and the entrée.

The suppers will run this fall and into the winter. There will be a signup sheet at services.

Factoids

- 29–31% of American adults consider themselves unchurched: i.e., the “Nones.”

85% of the world’s population identify with a religion.

Suggested Reading

Strong Ground: The Lessons of Daring Leadership, the Tenacity of Paradox, and the Wisdom of the Human Spirit, by Brené Brown

Now available at the Library and the UU bookstore.

Quote from Amazon:

“Brown offers a broad assessment of the skill sets and mindsets we need moving forward, including the capacity for respectful and difficult conversations, increased productive urgency and smart prioritization rather than reactivity, and strategic risk-taking, paradoxical thinking, and situational and anticipatory awareness skills. She identifies the toughest skill set as the discipline, humility, and confidence to unlearn and relearn.”

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 will meet Nov. 20 at 9 a.m. at Golden Leaf Café.

All are welcome.

Our Working Title

The USM Board has decided at its most recent board meeting that our new working name is “Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Menomonie.”

Good Reads

- When Religion Becomes Evil: Five Warning Signs, by Dr. Charles Kimball
- From the Dust Returned, by Ray Bradbury
- Jumper, by Steven Gould

For the Dec. 2025 newsletter, please email events, news, poems, photos, stories, and all other submissions to williamsda@uwstout.edu.