

## Chara Solyst Ayer Obituary

Chara Morgan Solyst Ayer, formally known as Matthew Ephraim Solyst, passed away on January 23, 2026. Chara, 43, died in his sleep in his home in Raleigh, North Carolina. He was born in Marshall, Minnesota, on February 6, 1982, to Mark and Carol (Jorgenson) Solyst. He graduated from Logan High School in La Crosse and majored in computer science at Waldorf College and the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse.

Chara loved computers, technology, philosophy, and video games. He met Kyle Chernoff, his life's partner, in an online forum in 2001. They maintained an online relationship for ten years before moving in together in 2011. They formally married in 2025.

Chara worked several Information Technology jobs before achieving his goal in 2017 of working for Red Hat, a company at the forefront of Linux and open-source software movements. Before his death, Chara worked as a Senior Information Security Analyst for Red Hat in Raleigh.

With compassion and a strong sense of justice, Chara passionately cared for those who were oppressed and treated unjustly by a materialistic and power-hungry empire. Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan guided and motivated his passion. At the same time, friends experienced Chara as a gentle, thoughtful, and loving person. Friends described Chara as soft-spoken, articulate, engaging, and genuinely interested in the lives of those he met.

Chara is survived by his partner, Kyle Chernoff; his parents, Mark and Carol Solyst; his brother, Adam; his sister and brother-in-law, Ann Solyst and Zak Shaw; and his nephew Ephraim.

Funeral services will be held at English Lutheran Church, 1509 King St., La Crosse, WI., Saturday, February 14. Visitation will be at 10:00 a.m., service at 11:00, followed by lunch and fellowship. In lieu of flowers, if you wish, you may give to Ammparo (the migrant ministry of the ELCA) or to the charity of your choice.