



James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Weekly News for 8/12/2026-8/18/2026

This Sunday, August 16, 2026, 10:00 a.m.

“Queer as a Verb – Madison Pride” with Rev. Denise Cawley

Queer is not just a gender or sexuality, but also a theology. The language we have for understanding gender, and sexuality is constrained by language, culture and even faith. Queer theology is an emerging way of describing life’s mysteries. You are invited to explore queer theologians as we “queer” culture and faith and celebrate Pride here in Madison. Queer is a word that has been reclaimed. Today, I hope you learn a bit more about why that word is expansive and more than a sexuality or gender identity but also a theology and philosophy. [Image from uua.org.]



Worship Associate: Vera Leone

Special Music: Rachel Avery

[Service Webpage](#)

[Zoom Link for Service](#)

After Service: Community Meal

Next Sunday Worship: “[Love at the Center](#)” at First Unitarian Society (more details within)

Next Sunday after Service: Potluck Meal, Zoom Coffee Hour

The Share the Plate recipient for Sunday, August 9 and 16 is the [OutReach LGBTQ+ Community Center](#). They are a trusted gathering place in Madison and south central Wisconsin dedicated to advancing equity, connection, and well-being for LGBTQ+ people. For more than 50 years, they’ve offered supportive programs, services, and inclusive spaces where people build community and feel celebrated. They host the annual Magic Pride Festival at Warner Park happening this year on August 16. They were nominated by Mary Schaper.



Ministry Connections

RevD's Musings

From Rev. Denise Cawley, Interim Minister

What an incredible first service Sunday. Thank you to all who joined us in person and online. I was gobsmacked by our Sacred Breath Choir and our Folk Group's music. Of course, [The Highwomen: Crowded Table](#) as well as the *You Got a Friend* by Carole King - both absolute favorites of mine sparked joy in me. I hope you all felt it too.

Thank you for all your questions. We will continue our dialogues. At the end of service I asked YOU questions. If you missed filling out the question form, [please answer it here](#). I want to keep learning about you.

One result of the questionnaire I can share with you so far, is that every single option for what or where you may call Spirit or the Divine or where your heart finds Mystery, inspiration or wonder, was CHECKED by this congregation. ALL of them speak in some way to members of this congregation. We are more theologically diverse than many realize. Obviously some choices were more common than others. Seeing the diversity of responses will inform both my language and preaching as it will impact our musicians. I love reading your responses. [Please get that form in to me](#) if you haven't already.

None of you responded to my request for local Madison recommendations, which does make me wonder if you are reading this. If you have tips for the best: coffee shops, Mediterranean food, unusual grocery stores, garden places, community markets, fiber arts, art supply stores, easy short hikes near church and other community finds, please [email me](#) your tips. I would love to hear them. When you [email me](#), I invite you to introduce yourself to me, include a photo, tell me about your loved ones and why you are a part of this community.

See you Sunday for our Pride Service: ["Queer as a Verb"](#)



Board President's Corner

From Board President, Virginia Harrison

We held an Election Day Bake Sale that was well received by voters who came to Reeb to cast their ballots in the August 11 primary election. We raised \$171.25 in cash and \$26.22 in online donations for a total of \$197.47. A huge thank you to Cindy Rudd, Leila Pine, and Rev. Denise for donating their baked goods to the sale!



Photos: The bake sale (taken before Rev. Denise's muffins were added), and Rev. Denise's muffins

This was only the second time Reeb served as a polling place, and it's happening again in November. Does someone have interest in leading the effort for a bake sale for the general election on November 3? Please [contact Virginia Harrison](#) to volunteer to organize/staff/donate baked goods. We need at least 4 people to take shifts throughout the day as well as many baked goods to offer quantity and variety to our voting customers! If we raised this much with very little effort, imagine what we could raise with a planned event!

Music Ministry

The Sacred Breath Choir is taking a break for the summer, but we're always looking for people who would like to share their musical gifts with the congregation on Sunday mornings!

Choir members are invited to join the folk group in practicing and providing music while the choir is not meeting regularly.

Are you a musician looking for an opportunity to share your music? Maybe you played an instrument in a school band or orchestra and would love to be able to play again. Maybe you are a singer/songwriter who would like to introduce us to new songs. Maybe you would like to share your love of a non-traditional instrument from another part of the world. There are opportunities at Reeb

to play and/or sing with others – or to play a solo. All are welcome. We would love to hear from you. Please [contact David Henry](#).

Folk Group - 8/22, 8/29 (No Meeting on Saturday 8/15)

The Folk Group and Choir had a great time bringing their talents together to welcome Rev. Denise in her first Reeb service on Sunday! Thanks to all who sang and played. The next folk performance will be on **Sunday, September 6**. We will support Doug Way, who will lead most of the songs. Stay tuned for the song lineup! We will meet to practice and have some time to just have fun singing on **Saturday, August 22 and 29, and September 5, from 10:30 a.m. to noon**. Please join us, everyone is welcome!

Religious Exploration and Family Ministry **From Emily Smith, Director of Family Ministry**

This Week: Religious exploration classes will be offered during service on 8/16. Children will leave the sanctuary with Emily after the Time For All Ages. After worship and classes, we will reconvene in the sanctuary for our **August community meal**.

Next Week: On 8/23, we will be across town at First Unitarian Society for a joint service with all three Madison UU congregations. There will be RE programming for kids with options for both busy hands activities in worship and classroom time. Come meet our UU peers!



Community Meal: Our August community meal will be on **Sunday August 16** after worship. Come feed your stomach and your spirits! If you can, please bring a dish to share and/or help with set up and clean up.

Small Group Ministries

Offering and Receiving Connection, Support, and Spiritual Practice

[Read more here](#)

Meditation With Friends - Wednesdays, 6:30-7 p.m., newcomers welcome, [Zoom Link](#)

Sacred Breath Choir - Paused until September, contact [David Henry](#)

Folk Music Gatherings - Saturdays (**no meeting on 8/15**), 10:30 a.m. - noon, contact [Mike Stimson](#)

Laughter Yoga - Paused until September, contact [Virginia Harrison](#)

[Zoom Link for Meditation](#)

Our Congregation and Community Calendar

Slow Pitch Softball for All Ages - 8/14

Join Jocie and Benny Luglio on Fridays for some free softball fun, **Fridays in August from 5:30 to 7 p.m.** We will meet at **EMLL Diamonds at 1010 North Street**. Bring water and a softball/baseball glove and any other equipment you'd like to use. Respect everyone, no bullying. All skill levels welcome.

Peace,

Jocie Luglio (phone number in [Breeze](#))

Music Club - 8/15

Please join members of the folk group to watch Reeb's own talented Tom Wernigg perform at **Cargo Coffee East on Saturday, August 15 at 6:30 p.m.** Also:

- Brandi Carlile will be playing at **Breese Stevens Field on August 24, 6 p.m.** She has written many amazing songs, including as part of The Highwomen, who wrote "Crowded Table," which the choir and folk group sang on Sunday.
- Alabama Shakes will be playing at **Breese Stevens Field on August 30, 6:30 p.m.**
- The Blue Moon Marquee will be playing at the **North Street Cabaret on August 30, 7 p.m.**
- The **Orton Park** Festival weekend is **August 28-30.**

Annual Collaborative Madison UU Service - 8/23

We join together, for the fourth year, as Madison Unitarian Universalist Congregations, people guided by and centered in love and all that it asks of us. We will explore how love is central to our faith tradition, how it called our ancestors forward in their time, and what it is calling us toward in these times, in a world so desperately in need of a powerful and justice raising love. The service will be on **Sunday, August 23, at 10 a.m., at First Unitarian Society** (900 University Bay Drive) in the Atrium Auditorium (the newer side of the building).

Everyone is invited to sing in the **choir starting at 8:20 a.m.** as part of a no-commitment, "one and done" singing opportunity. The "Anybody Choir" is for anybody and everybody – all are welcome! Learn a new piece and sing it in a worship service, all in one morning. The choir schedule will be:

- 8:20: Arrive, get music, find a seat
- 8:30: Rehearse
- 10: Sing in worship service
- 11: Turn in music, get coffee, done!

Also, we'll be using the Reeb chalice lighting response as part of the service, so sing loud and proud for that one, and thank you to Liz Chapa for leading the singing for the chalice lighting response! Rachel Avery will be playing the piano for that and a few hymns.

Also, note that afterwards there is a potluck: The potluck meal will be inside the Gaebler Living Room and outside the nearby Landmark Lawn after the service. Bagels will be provided, please bring a dish to share, and your own beverage, plate and utensils.

Not interested in singing but want to learn more about First Unitarian Society's historic building? Before the service, you can join the Friends of the Meeting House, who are offering a **tour at 8:45 a.m., beginning in the Landmark Lobby** (the historic side of the building).

Can't come in person? [Streaming will be here](#) (this will be available after the service as well). There will be a digital order of service projected on screens.

A note about parking: If you're able-bodied, please consider coming a bit earlier and utilizing street parking or one of the additional parking lots available to us on Sunday mornings. By doing so, you'll allow the FUS lot to remain accessible to those with mobility issues. There is a staircase from Marshall Court directly to the FUS parking lot between the University Bay Office Building (800 University Bay Drive) and the Ronald McDonald House playground. More information, including a map, can be found on our website: [Parking at FUS](#)

All money collected in the offering will go to CILC (Community Immigration Law Center), which strives to ensure dignity and access to justice for people, especially those facing deportation, by providing legal representation and consultations, as well as support and education regarding immigration issues for the community at large.

Open Mic - 9/12: Different Date!

The next open mic will be on **Saturday, September 12** (second Saturday in September instead of first Saturday) **from 6 to 8 p.m.** Share your prose, poetry, songs, and jokes, and be entertained by the local talent!

Congregation News, Invitations & Announcements

Wisconsin and Minnesota Solidarity Summit & WUUSAN Board

[WUUSAN](#) is co-sponsoring a joint Wisconsin and Minnesota Solidarity Summit on **Saturday, October 3, from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. in Duluth, MN** (great time to see fall colors too). You are invited to an Interfaith UU the Vote gathering in the Northland. Across faith traditions, we are increasingly called to respond to authoritarian violence, community harm, and democratic crisis with care, coordination, imagination, and action.

This Solidarity Summit is designed to build relationships spanning urban and rural contexts and to strengthen our capacity for justice-centered, spiritually rooted organizing that sustains long-term transformation. [Visit here for updates, and register today!](#)

WUUSAN is also looking for board members interested in statewide social justice and democracy advocacy. If getting out the vote, encouraging congregational participation in Side with Love and interfaith activities that promote voting with love and uniting in our values, and congregation to congregation actions speak to your heart, [contact Rev. Mark Richards](#) to learn more.

Lawn and Grounds Care

Warmer temps mean it's time for lawn and grounds care! [Please see the sign-up sheet](#) and sign up for a week (or two) that you can mow the lawn and pick up trash around the building. Instructions for how to access the mower are on the sign-up sheet. If you have any questions, please [contact Renee Buchanan](#).

Special thanks to Doug Way, who has been taking such good care of our lawn this year!

Share the Plate Donation Totals: June 2026

JRUUC is committed to serving our community, so we give half of all Sunday offerings to local organizations whose work furthers our mission. In the month of **June**, we raised:

- \$249.81 for [Friends of the State Street Family](#)
- \$114.00 for [Side with Love](#)

Deadline for the Weekly Newsletter Submission

Please send your submissions to news@jruuc.org by **10 a.m. on Tuesdays**. *Remember to include relevant event and announcement information, such as date, time, location, links, contact information, and how long you would like the information included in the newsletter.*

JRUUC Online Giving and Directory

[Breeze](#) is JRUUC's website for online giving and the directory. If you would like to create an account, or if you need any help, email Bryan Rainey, our office administrator, at office@jruuc.org.

Website Errors or Suggestions? Contact web@jruuc.org

If you notice an error or something important missing from our website, please let Susan Podebradsky know by sending an email to web@jruuc.org. It helps if you send a link to the specific page in question. You can also let us know if there is something you can't find, something new you would like to see, or something you really like to see. Thanks!

Unitarian Universalist Association News & Connections

Want to act but you're not sure how? Join forces with other UU's!

 A public advocacy campaign that seeks to harness love's power to stop oppression, with four intersectional justice priorities: Climate Justice, Decriminalization, Democracy, and Reproductive Justice & Trans Rights. [Click here](#) to learn more. We build strong movements when we take action together. Organize teams and networks that can take these actions together, and get support on practical organizing skills and support at our [Organizing School](#) and [Skill Up](#) resources. **Side with Love offers two ways to take concrete action:**

Weekly Action Update features essential resources, upcoming events, and spiritual reflection to support work across our intersectional priority areas. [Click here to view this week's update!](#)

The Gathering:
Second Mondays at 7 pm
A monthly virtual event designed to offer:



- Spiritual grounding - strengthen your heart and spirit for the work ahead
- Political analysis - understand the threats to democracy and justice
- Collective action - organize with others to block anti-democratic forces and build a just and loving world

[Click here](#) for more information, to register to receive the Zoom link, and to view previous recordings.

The Woodlands:
First Sundays at 3 pm

A UUA monthly online gathering designed for trans children, youth, and adults – as well as the parents and caregivers of trans people. [Click here](#) to learn more about the sessions and to register online.

Activates people of faith and conscience to resist the harm inflicted by criminalization, to create safer, more just, welcoming, and sustainable communities. [Click here](#) to learn about current actions, and to download resources and tools to bring the Love Resists campaign to your community by expanding sanctuary, growing solidarity, and raising your voice.





UUs support the use of inclusive democratic processes to make decisions within our congregations, our Association, and society at large, and UU the Vote engages in year-round movement-building work toward building a truly inclusive democracy. Wisconsin is a key state for UU the Vote's action initiatives. [Click here](#) to learn how you can get involved in getting out the vote.

And here are some other UUA resources relevant to these times:

[Community Resilience Hub](#)

[ICE and Immigration Enforcement in Congregations](#)

[Expanding Sanctuary](#)

[Wisdom and inspiration from UUA President, the Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt](#)

[More UUA Updates](#)

[See our website for more information - jruuc.org](#)

Please submit articles for the newsletter to news@jruuc.org by Tuesday at 10:00 am.