

“Now More Than Ever...”

A Reflection for Ingathering Sunday 2025

Unitarian Church North

Sunday, September 7, 2025

Rev. Scott W. Alexander

I am an optimistic person by nature...but as we celebrate our Fall ingathering service this year, I speak to you this morning with a heavy heart, angry mind and worried soul. As we begin another year together as a Unitarian Universalist congregation, as your minister in this progressive, inclusive and compassionate faith tradition I am **deeply, deeply troubled** by the direction our nation (and, by extension, our world) is now taking.

You all know (of course) what I am talking about. Our current U.S. President (and his aggressive, meanspirited, dictatorial and racist

administration) are pursuing innumerable policies and actions that are **morally and humanly antithetical to everything –EVERYTHING!** -- that we believe in, cherish and fight for as Unitarian Universalists. Need I enumerate here the heinous and inhumane policies and actions of our current national leadership? Let me mention just a few: The dehumanization (and deportation) of millions of hard-working (and economically beneficial) immigrants and refugees...the attempted revocation of equal rights and opportunities for LGTBQ, Black, Hispanic, handicapped and other minority persons...the cruel withdrawal of medical insurance (and reproductive care and freedom) for millions of struggling Americans....the heartless slashing of “safety net” support of the hungry, the homeless, the poor in our society...the assault on the ***“diversity, equality and inclusion”*** progress we have made in in our government, academic

institutions, and museums (where this administration is attempting to re-write and sanitize our complex national history)...the autocratic and unconstitutional attacks on the autonomy of the judiciary and local and state governments...the idiotic (and completely irrational and short-sighted) gutting of environmental protections (and eco-friendly technologies) to preserve our planet...and the insane so-called ***“America First”*** policy of turning all the nations of the world (friends and foes alike) into ***“adversaries”*** instead of ***“Allies.”*** -- to name just some of the actions of this Administration which attack and undermine almost everything we UU's value.

Now I grant you...as a small American progressive religious movement (we UU's represent fewer than **one-quarter-of-a-million persons** in a nation of **three-hundred-and-forty-three-million souls**) we have often found ourselves (over the last 200

years) being somewhat in the position of being ***“counter-cultural outsiders”***...always something of a ***“minority report”*** on the **“far liberal end”** of American thinking, spirituality and morality.

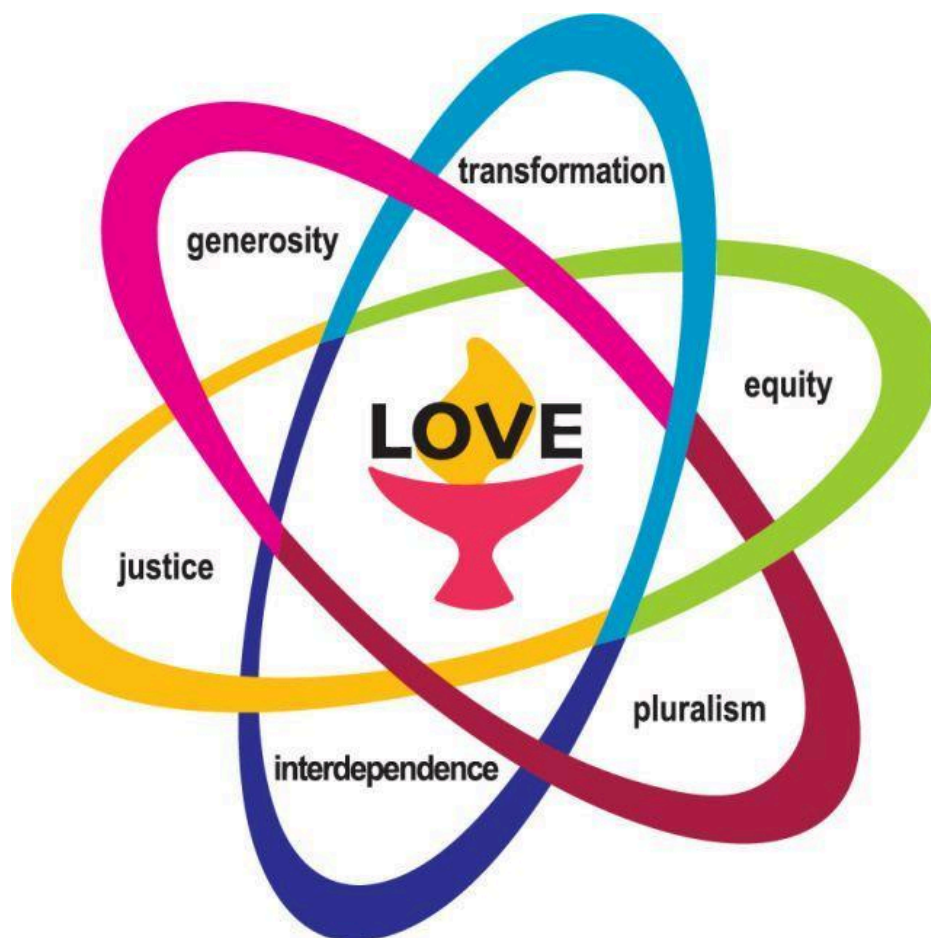
But after the last divisive (and narrowly decided) election, we find ourselves in **near total and fierce opposition** to where this President and the slim-congressional-majority he Lords over) want to take the nation.

I know that many (if not ALL) of you share **my near total discouragement, anger and fear** (each and every morning when we open our morning newspapers or turn on the television) and are greeted with endless reports of **further systematic and pernicious assaults** on **almost everything** we believe about persons, society and what it will take to build a decent and compassionate human future on this fragile planet. As a Unitarian Universalist, never before in my life have I felt so many direct and

dangerous threats to **absolutely everything** I cherish and believe in...and at times (over recent months) the resulting sense of dread and discouragement over the future of my society (and world) threatens to overwhelm (and immobilize) me. I never thought my nation (and its ideals) would be in the dire moral and human predicament they now face.

But tough times like these are **precisely why** we establish, nurture and support local Unitarian Universalist congregations like this one here on Milwaukee's North Shore. All across America – in good times and bad -- faithful Unitarian Universalist regularly gather (as covenantal and caring communities) to articulate, embody, serve and defend our progressive values and beliefs – and fight to build a society with justice, equity, freedom, respect and compassion for all.

***[GRAPHIC OF OUR NEW UU “VALUES” IS
PROJECTED UP ON THE CHANCEL
SCREEN]***



***THE GUIDING VALUES (AND HUMANE
VISION) OF UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM***

Here – once again, for your reflection and consideration -- is the newly-adopted “graphic” that articulates the ***“guiding values”*** (and humane vision) of our Unitarian Universalist faith tradition. You will notice that we have (morally) placed ***LOVE*** (other words might be ***“COMPASSION” and “Care”***) at the very center of all that we believe and seek to do. And radiating out -- from this commitment (to treat all other human beings with love and compassion) – are 6 progressive values we promise to serve:

JUSTICE...

EQUALITY...

GENEROSITY...

PLURALISM...

TRANSFORMATION and

INTERDEPENDENCE.

These commitments are **the soul and center** of our Unitarian Universalist faith...and as a community of faith we promise to bring our lives in as much concordance as possible with these guiding values.

[PAUSE...]

If you have been paying **even the least bit of attention** to what is now happening in America, you know that the current administration in Washington is seeking to take our nation **IN THE EXACT OPPOSITE DIRECTION FROM THESE MORAL VALUES AND HUMAN GOALS.** From a Unitarian Universalist perspective, our beloved America is now in grave moral danger of **losing its mind, heart and soul**...and becoming a mean, dark, and narrow nation that has lost its way from the expansive ideals upon which it was founded.

[PAUSE...]

But – in this difficult time -- we in this congregation are not helpless. We are not (as Unitarian Universalists) powerless pawns in an impenetrable and indifferent system. We have both **THE AGENCY** and **THE FREEDOM** to **act** and **care**...to embody our religion, and to help turn our culture and country around.

[PAUSE...]

And so my heart-felt message to you this morning my dear friends (as we begin the brand new church year as the UU congregation on the North side of Milwaukee) is that **NOW MORE THAN EVER** our nation and our world needs our progressive religious voice and vision. **NOW MORE THAN EVER** we need (right where we live...individually and together) to respectfully articulate and promote and serve our Unitarian Universalist values and vision...starting (and ending) with love, respect and compassion for all persons, and mother

earth which sustains us all. In these dangerous human times, we must **tirelessly try to persuade** – not by FORCE but by **RESPECT, REASON AND COMPASSION** – PERSUADE the culture (and country) around us that there is a better and more humane path than the dark one they are now on.

So, as we take up this new year of being together as a congregation of CARING AND RELIGIOUS SOULS, let us -- with full hearts, eager hands, and wise spirits -- get about the good (yet hard) work that is ours to do in the world.

And I say and mean,

Amen.