

*Responses of Love From Around the Word*  
*August 12, 2018*  
*Neal and Elizabeth Hill, Guest Presenters*

**READING**

**The Seven Principles in Word and Worship**

Unitarian Universalists have long held, when it comes to expressions of faith, actions speak louder than words: words have never been the ultimate expression of beliefs for religious liberals. Former president of the Unitarian Universalist Association, John Buehrens once wrote, “We will not make words the test of faith, only deeds.”

Yet words, too, have their place -- especially words describing what is important and which remind us of higher priorities and values – like the seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism. We can do more than simply say the Principles, we can pray them. We can live them out in our faith life and in our actions in the world. Only then do they become real.

We celebrate the inherent worth and capability of every individual, and in so doing, we affirm the historic pledge of liberal religion to seek that justice which transcends mere legality and moves toward the resolution of a true equality; sharing that love which is beyond even our cherished reason, that love which unites us.

We promote justice, equity, and compassion in human relations and in so doing, we are inspired by the words of Marian Wright Edelman who said, ‘we must remember that all the darkness in the world cannot snuff out the light of one little candle.... therefore, we must continue to light candles until a mighty torch of justice sweeps our nation and our world.’

We accept and encourage one another in our individual and congregational need for spiritual growth. How strong is our need for one another, a silent beckoning to our neighbors -- invitations to share life and death. Our welcome into the lives of those we meet and their welcome into our own, is to meet on holy ground; for every place where love moves, hope stirs, and where we truly see and hear each other is blessed.

We engage in a free and responsible search for truth and meaning, and in so doing, we believe we are all here to grow in wisdom and learn how to love better. As we do this in our own ways, we slowly become a blessing to those around us and a light to the world.

We affirm the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large, and in so doing the words of William Ellery Channing inspire us: ‘I call that mind free which jealously guards its intellectual rights and powers, which calls no one master, which does not content itself with a passive or hereditary faith, which opens itself to light whencesoever it may come, which receives new truth as an angel from heaven.’

We strive for the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all, and in so doing, we light a chalice to symbolize the illumination of the world we seek. In our search for truth, we pray we may be just; in our search for justice, we pray we may be loving; and we pray that in our loving, we may find peace.

As Unitarian Universalists we value the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part, and in so doing we offer a prayer to the Spirit of life – a God of many names:

who holds us in the hollow of His hands  
 and who holds us in the curve of Her arms...  
 ...whose flesh is the flesh of hills and hummingbirds and angleworms,  
 whose skin is the color of an old black woman and a young white man,  
 and the earth tones of indigenous children;  
 it is the color of the leopard and the grizzly bear and the green grass snake;  
 Whose hair is like the aurora borealis, rainbows, nebulae, waterfalls and spiders’ webs;  
 Whose eyes sometimes shine like the Evening Star and then flicker like fireflies,  
 and then again like an open wound;  
 whose touch is both the touch of life and the touch of death;  
 and whose name is everyone, but mostly mine.  
 And what shall we pray? Let us simply say thank you.           Amen

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Neal and Elizabeth are currently living and working in Aman Jordan. After his retirement from the Air Force, where he was trained as a weapons specialist for the F16 fighter jets, Neal is currently employed by Lockheed Martin as a consultant to the Jordanian Air Force, whose pilots are now the ones flying the F16 jets.

In addition to her private practice, Elizabeth works at the Maria Den Braven Center as an outpatient mental health therapist. Her clientele includes staff members from the many and varied non-profit agencies and organizations working in the Middle East.

Their residence in Jordan has also created the opportunity for Neal and Elizabeth to make friends with a wide range of folks: from American State Department staff; to International Embassy appointees and staff; an interesting variety of local residents and business people; to Muslims, Christians, Jews, and every faith in-between.

Because of the current crisis in Syria, and other historical events like the Iraq War, Jordan and Palestine have taken in more refugees than any other country in the world; which is significant because both Jordan and Palestine, and toss in Israel and Lebanon, would all fit comfortably within the borders of Wyoming.

Subsequently, the Jordanian economy is stressed beyond belief and the city of over 4 million is filled with mostly unemployed refugees.

Jordan is predominately Sunni Muslim and its government is a constitutional monarchy. The current king, Abdullah, is a third-generation monarch educated in the West. King Abdullah's mother is British, and his eldest son just graduated from Georgetown University and is next in line to be the King of Jordan.

When most Americans think of the Middle East, many of us believe Israel and Saudi Arabia are our strongest allies, but this really is a mis-perception because our strongest and most dependable ally is Jordan and King Abdullah.

For the most part of the past 39 years, Elizabeth, Neal, and their children, Andrew and Shannon, have lived and worked in Germany, Belgium, Japan, Spain, and Jordan. When I asked them to share some of their experiences which might fall under the theme of 'Respond in Love,' Neal and Elizabeth took the

opportunity to go through years of photographs and memories, and out of that trip down memory lane, have come up with some wonderful stories of what, to them, are examples of how they have experienced this heartfelt, genuine, and truly human love: that deeper, soul-touching love which is not just valued by, for example, Unitarian Universalists, but is celebrated in some manner by every human in probably just about every community throughout the world. Please welcome....