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**North American  
Unitarian Association**  
*naunitarians.org*

**The NAUA Compass  
Newsletter**

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**May 2026  
Announcements &  
Events**

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**North American Unitarian Association** is a member service organization dedicated to supporting and promoting the practice of liberal religion by embracing freedom, reason, and tolerance—rooted in our commitment to the inherent worth and dignity of every person and all peoples.

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**Greetings, John!**

“What’s bringing you joy this spring?”

**Leisure**

*by William Henry Davies*

What is this life if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare.

No time to stand beneath the boughs  
And stare as long as sheep or cows.

No time to see, when woods we pass,  
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.

No time to see, in broad daylight,  
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,  
And watch her feet, how they can dance.

No time to wait till her mouth can  
Enrich that smile her eyes began.

A poor life this if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare.



**2026 NAUA Summit**  
Friday, Oct. 2 - Sunday, Oct. 4

In this season of growth and renewal, let's contemplate the theme for this year's Summit:

**Reimagining Liberal Religion**

How would you like to see liberal religion reimagined?

What Summit topics would you like to see related to this theme?

What else do we need to reimagine in order to live our values and create a better, happier, more loving world?

If you have any ideas or suggestions related to these questions, please forward them to [info@naunitarians.org](mailto:info@naunitarians.org).

This year's NAUA Summit will take place October 2-4, 2026. Our keynote presentation by Helen Pluckrose is scheduled for 9 AM PT on Saturday, October 3. While the Summit will be primarily virtual, we are evaluating a possible in-person option in the Chicago area for those who expressed interest. Please mark your calendar today!



In our last issue, we reported that our **keynote speaker at Summit 2026 will be Helen Pluckrose**. Helen is an independent author and journalist living in London, England. For the past decade Helen has been publishing and leading programs and initiatives that challenge authoritarianism and illiberal actions - both on the right and on the left.

To help us get to know Helen, we will be highlighting one of her blog posts from <https://www.hpluckrose.com/> and providing a Pluckrose quote each month in the Compass.

**This month's Pluckrose Blog to read: Liberalism as a Higher Order Value.**

This post was written in response to reader comments on her earlier post: *Do "Far-Left" and "Far-Right" Mean Anything Anymore?*

Liberalism as a Higher Order Value feels especially relevant as we proceed with our discussions about introducing a set of NAUA principles.

*"Liberalism should be regarded not as one value among many, but as the higher-order value that allows people with deeply different political values to disagree productively and resolve conflict without coercion or force."*

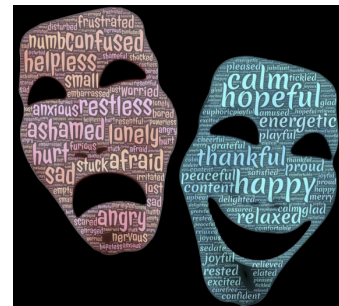


## Questions for Helen

In preparation for her keynote address, Helen Pluckrose has asked NAUA members to submit questions or concerns about her position on liberalism. If you have thoughts to share after reading Helen's [blog post](#), please email them to [summit@naunitarians.org](mailto:summit@naunitarians.org).

## Announcing the New Joys & Sorrows Drop-In Circle

Participants bring a joy, a concern, a moment of gratitude, or a sorrow from their lives to be witnessed by others in a spirit of care and respect. **First session takes place Sunday, May 24th, 4 PM PT / 7 PM ET.**



**No registration required.** You are always welcome to join whenever you feel the need for a space of reflection and connection.

**The zoom link is: <https://tinyurl.com/NAUACircles>.**



**Openings Available -  
Register Today!**

**[Circles@naunitarians.org](mailto:Circles@naunitarians.org)**

**Photography as Spiritual Practice Circle** - 1st Monday, Monthly,  
4:00 pm Pacific Time  
~Description at: <https://naunitarians.org/photography-as-spiritual-practice-2/>

**Discourse Circle - Respectful & Difficult Listening** - 2nd Sunday,  
Monthly, 4:00 - 5:30 pm Pacific Time  
~Description at: [https://naunitarians.org/discourse\\_circle/](https://naunitarians.org/discourse_circle/)

**SatChat Connection Circle** - Meets 2nd & 4th Saturdays, 1:00 pm  
Pacific Time  
~Join us for connection and community.

**Forum Circle** - Meets 1st & 3rd Sundays, 1:00 - 2:30 pm Pacific Time  
~Description at: <https://naunitarians.org/forum-circle/>

**Thursday Connection Circle** - 1st & 3rd Thursdays, 9:00 - 10:30 am  
Pacific Time  
~You are invited to join us for a four session discussion on Religious  
Liberalism

- Session 1: What is Liberalism, Really? (May 21)
- Session 2: The Strengths of Liberalism (June 4)
- Session 3: The Critique - David Brooks and the "Moral Vacuum" (June 18)
- Session 4: Can Liberalism Be Renewed? (July 2)

**\*\*Register for any of these Circles at [circles@naunitarians.org](mailto:circles@naunitarians.org)\*\***



## Why I Give to NAUA by Dr. Terry Anderson

I grew up in a strict (but loving) Baptist family where funds were few and prayers were plentiful. Every week Mother would fill our paper envelope with money – always a 10% (tithed) to drop in the collection plate on Sunday Morning. Even when my allowance was 25 cents a week, I willingly dropped a tithe in the plate. Fortunately, God allowed me to round down to the nearest penny.

Throughout my adult life, I have been a member of a Canadian Unitarian Fellowship and always found money for a pledge, though not always a full tithe. Like most Unitarians, we have other charity interests. When the UU Church left me, in 2022, I wouldn't say I felt guilty (nor excessively wealthy), but it was easy for us to adjust our charity obligations to include the NAUA.

One of the benefits of belonging to a mostly virtual congregation is that building costs are minimal, and the NAUA, like many smaller congregations, is not responsible for the care and feeding of a full time Minister. But that is not to say that the programming, technical and communications support come with no costs. I am sure as you read this newsletter, you benefit from the work of our first part time employee, have enjoyed talks and workshops for which our speakers receive an honorarium, and found community and fellowship using paid for Zoom accounts. You have also likely been both informed and entertained by browsing the Liberal Beacon and the [naunitarians.org](http://naunitarians.org) website.

Perhaps the greatest return on our contributions has been the friendships that we have built through participating in NAUA-sponsored activities. Being a participant is great, but working together on a committee is an even deeper way to build national and international friends.

I also have great expectations for the NAUA for which we are prepared to invest. I would like to see us credential ministers, provide all-ages curriculum, be able to afford world class speakers and facilities at our annual Summit, and much more. A personal aspiration is that every Unitarian member and congregational group has a fair opportunity to compare the services they receive from the NAUA to those provided by other national and international affiliates, and that many conclude that they are better served by supporting the NAUA for its principles, values and services.

That is why we make an automatically withdrawn gift to the NAUA every month. Join me.

DONATE

**Suggestions for new NAUA programs, or changes to existing programs, are always welcome.** Please email your suggestions to [info@naunitarians.org](mailto:info@naunitarians.org) or speak directly to one of [NAUA's board trustees](#).





## **Photography as Spiritual Practice Circle**

**Monday, May 4th, 4 PM PT / 7 PM ET**

This Circle is for those who love expressive photography and experience the act of making photographs as meaningful in itself. Through our lenses, we can enter moments of contemplation, flow, and deep presence with the world around us. [Read More....](#)

The Circle will be led by Lorraine Day, current president of the Bellingham Photography Club, and a known local artist.

**Registration is required at [circles@naunitarians.org](mailto:circles@naunitarians.org)**

## **NAUA Drop-In Conversation Circle**

**Wednesday, May 6th,  
4:00 PM PT / 7:00 PM ET**

**Open to All**

**No Registration Required**



**What's on your mind today? What are you curious about?  
Let's explore what matters to you and share perspectives  
from far and near.**

This Circle is designed for NAUA members and friends to gather, share ideas, spark meaningful conversations, and deepen connections. Our gathering takes place on the first Wednesday of each month, from 4:00 - 5:30pm PT / 7:00 - 8:30pm ET. Everyone is welcome.

Join in creating a vibrant, supportive space for dialogue and reflection. The zoom link is: <https://tinyurl.com/NAUACircles>

For questions or to register for reminders, email us at [circles@naunitarians.org](mailto:circles@naunitarians.org). We hope to see you there!

[Download iCalendar entry for this event](#)  
[Add event to Google Calendar](#)

**The Discourse Circle:  
Respectful & Difficult  
Listening**

Sunday, May 10th  
4 PM PT / 7 PM ET



The Discourse Circle is a new discussion group designed to encourage honest, thoughtful communication. [Read more...](#)

**Our first topic: “What does respectful communication look like when we can't see eye to eye?”**

**Registration is required at [circles@naunitarians.org](mailto:circles@naunitarians.org)**





**May NAUA Academy Session:  
"What Have Mystics Been Trying to Tell Us?"**

Tuesday, May 12th  
4:30 PM PT / 7:30 PM ET

In 1945, Aldous Huxley published "The Perennial Philosophy." He had observed that most major religions had a mystical "tradition." The core doctrines of these religions did not overlap very much, but the mystics associated with these religions had a lot of overlap in how they described their mystical experiences. Huxley tried to discern what these testaments from mystics had in common. Subsequently, other philosophers and academics have offered their own analysis of what this "perennial" philosophy consists of. In this talk, we will explore what the mystics from the various religions and other sources have been trying to tell us.

The zoom URL for this event is [tinyurl.com/nauaacademy](https://tinyurl.com/nauaacademy).

[Download iCalendar entry for this event](#)  
[Add event to Google Calendar](#)

REGISTER NOW



**Presenter Bio:** Ken Ing is a retired computer programmer who lives in Poulsbo, WA. This is the 4th presentation he has done through the NAUA Academy. Prior presentations were “Left vs Left” (Sept 2023), “I Before We, Except Overseas” (March 2024), and “Boom or Doom—Is Unleashing Artificial Intelligence Wise?” (Feb 2025).



## **NAUA Board of Trustees Meeting** **May 13th, 12 PM PT / 3 PM ET**

If you are interested in joining or observing a board meeting, please read [the board meeting participation policy](#) on our website before emailing our board secretary for the Zoom link: [secretary@naunitarians.org](mailto:secretary@naunitarians.org).

Note: Past board meeting minutes can be found on our [website](#).



**Monthly Worship Service: "That Sudden Insight -  
How Epiphanies Can Change Us"**

Saturday, May 16th

10:00-11:30 AM PT / 1:00-2:30 PM ET

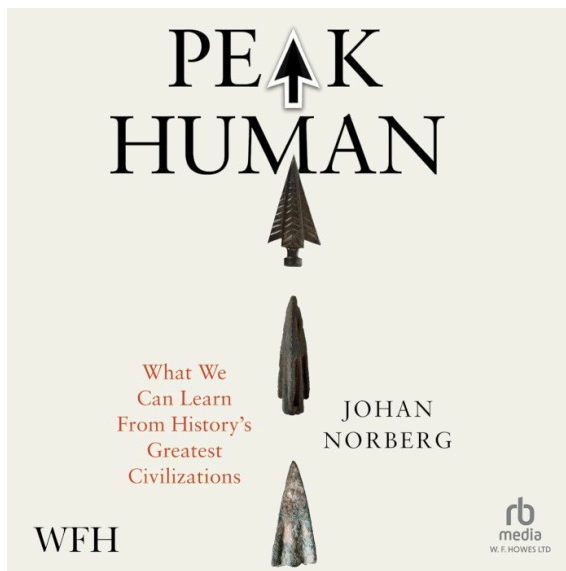
What is an epiphany - sometimes referred to as a peak moment or an ah-ha instant? What can we do to respond to such unexpected moments of insight? How might such moments help in this age of uncertainty? Rev. Alex Holt will address these questions in our May worship service.

The breakout rooms after this service should be particularly enlightening as we hear perspectives from people throughout North America. Service begins at 10:00 AM PT (1:00 PM ET)

Zoom access at <https://tinyurl.com/NAUAService>

[Download iCalendar entry for this event](#)

[Add event to Google Calendar](#)



**NAUA Book Club: "Peak Human: What Can We Learn from History's Greatest Civilizations?"**

Thursday, May 28th  
4:30 PM PT / 7:30 ET

The NAUA Book Club meets on the fourth Thursday of each month starting at 7:30 PM (ET) / 4:30 PM (PT). All are welcome. The NAUA Book Club choice for May 28, 2026 is **"Peak Human: What We Can Learn from History's Greatest Civilizations?"** by Johan Norberg.

From Amazon:

*All golden ages are marked by periods of spectacular cultural flourishing, scientific exploration, technological achievement and economic growth; yet no two are the same. Their beliefs, societies and place in the wider world all vary. Despite this, all previous golden ages have ended, whether it be because of external pressures or internal fracturing; too much hubris or too little wariness.*

*Looking at seven of humanity's greatest civilisations—ancient Athens, the Roman Republic, Abbasid Baghdad, Song China, Renaissance Italy, the Dutch Republic and the Anglosphere—historian and*

*commentator Johan Norberg seeks to distil their strengths and shortcomings in answering the question: how do we ensure that our current golden age doesn't end?*

*As insightful as it is riveting, Peak Human is at once a paean to our incredible progress and a warning that we cannot afford to be complacent.*

If you are interested in attending, please email Ed Hudak at [bookclub@naunitarians.org](mailto:bookclub@naunitarians.org).

[Download iCalendar entry for this event](#)  
[Add event to Google Calendar](#)

**IARF Four-Part Course  
"Human  
Consciousness" Now  
Complete  
Recordings Available**

In this four-part series, NAUA Board Trustee Mark Reimers explored various aspects of human consciousness as seen through two distinct lenses: the religious and philosophical traditions of humanity, and the recent scientific studies.



The recordings are now available for the first three sessions and (soon) the fourth and last one:

- Session 1: February 7 (completed, [recording available](#))
- Session 2: March 7 (completed, [recording available](#))
- Session 3: April 4: completed, [recording available](#))
- Session 4: May 2: "Types of Consciousness"

IARF past session recordings and registration for future sessions is available for free to all NAUA members. Go to [IARF.net](http://IARF.net) and choose NAUA as your member organization. Then register for access to past recordings and future sessions!

[Become a Member](#)

