



Soul Matters

What does it mean to be a
people of WELCOME?

Worship Resources Packet

September 2017

Contents

Press Control and click on the topic heading to go directly to that section

Calendar Connections	2
Chalice Lightings/Opening Words.....	3
Meditations & Prayers	7
Readings.....	11
Rituals.....	15
Music.....	16
Stories for All Ages	17
Sermon Seeds	18
Recommended Sermons.....	24
Closing Words	28
Reach Out For Support & Connection.....	30

Calendar Connections

So many connections between our theme of Welcome and the holidays and holy days in September! Muharram, Mabon and Rosh Hashanah invite us to welcome new beginnings. Yom Kippur asks us to open ourselves to forgiveness and letting go. Rumi's birthday celebrates a spiritual guide who saw divine invitation everywhere he looked. Hispanic heritage month offers an opportunity to welcome in wider diversity and justice for immigrants. Suicide prevention month calls us to let in and be more aware of the pain of others. Labor Day calls us to welcome, honor and build on the sacrifice and struggle of those who have gone before us. September 11th asks us to welcome memory and vulnerability. John Murray's sermon celebrates the spirit of radical welcome and wide embrace that sits at the center of our faith. International peace day and world gratitude days ask us, "How might a radical welcome of peace and gratitude change the world?" And don't underestimate Hobbit Day and Talk Like a Pirate Day's important invitation to lean into silliness and a bit more adventure!

Such richness this month. So many points of connection to play with. So many ways the theme helps us engage September's holidays and holy days anew!

Click on the name on each event for more information or inspiration.

Interfaith:

- [Rosh Hashanah](#) - Jewish New Year - Sept 20-22 *
- [Muharram](#) - Islamic New Year ("Month of Remembrance") - Sept 22 *
- [Mabon/September Equinox](#) - Wicca - Sept 22 *
- [Yom Kippur](#) - Jewish Day of Atonement begins - Sept 29 *
- [Rumi's birthday](#) - Sept 30

Unitarian Universalist:

- Universalism Day: [John Murray](#) preaches first sermon in US (1770) - Sept 30

National & Cultural:

- [Hispanic Heritage Month](#) (Sept 15 - Oct 15)
- [Suicide Prevention Month](#), World Suicide Prevention Day is Sept 10
- [Labor Day](#) – Sept 04 (*first Monday)
- [International Literacy Day](#) - Sept 08
- [Grandparent's Day](#) - Sept 10
- [9-11 Remembrance](#) - Sept 11
- [International Peace Day](#) Sept 21
- [World Gratitude Day](#) - Sept 21

For Fun and On the Fringe:

- [Johnny Appleseed Day](#) - Sept 26
- [Talk Like a Pirate Day](#) - Sept 19
- [Hobbit Day](#) - Sept 22

Chalice Lightings/Opening Words

We bid you Welcome

by Richard S. Gilbert

We bid you welcome, who come with weary spirit seeking rest.
Who come with troubles that are too much with you,
Who come hurt and afraid
We bid you welcome, who come with hope in your heart.
Who come with anticipation in your step, who come proud and joyous.
We bid you welcome, who are seeker of a new faith.
Who come to probe and explore, Who come to learn.
We bid you welcome, who enter this hall as a homecoming,
Who have found here room for your spirit. Who find in this people a family.
Whoever you are, whatever you are, Wherever you are on your journey,
We bid you welcome

Come, Yet Again, Come

by Anne Slater

Full poem at: <http://www.uua.org/worship/words/opening/154891.shtml>

...And we come, from rich heritages of liturgy and pomp;
We come, from burning legacies of angry gods and threats of hell-fire.
We come, with exuberant and joyful hearts, eager to witness to others...
We come, in the bloom of youth, ready to explore new truths;...
We come, with grey in our hair and experiences to share...
We come to the place we never knew before was home.
We come to the place that has been home for most of our lives.

Invitation

by Shel Silverstein

If you are a dreamer, come in.
If you are a dreamer, a wisher, a liar,
A hope-er, a pray-er, a magic bean buyer.
If you're a pretender, come sit by my fire,
For we have some flax golden tales to spin.
Come in!
Come in!

In Sweet Company

by Margaret Wolff

Full poem at: <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/thedivinefeminine/2012/01/in-sweet-company/>

We sit together and I tell you things, Silent, unborn, naked things
That only my God has heard me say. You do not cluck your tongue at me Or roll your eyes...
You stay with me in the dark.
You urge me into being.

You make room in your heart for my voice...
I see my future Self in you...
Just enough to leave
The familiar in the past where it belongs. I breathe you in and I breathe you out
In one luxurious and contented sigh.
In sweet company
I am home at last.

Come, Come, Whoever You Are Opening

by Melanie Morel-Ensminger

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/opening/285353.shtml>

Come, come, whoever you are - you are welcome here!
No matter your age, your size, the color of your eyes, your hair, your skin—you are welcome here!
No matter how you came here,
if you came alone, or with others—
you are welcome here!
No matter whom you love, or how you speak, or whatever your abilities - you are welcome here!
Whether you come with laughter in your heart, or tears in your eyes—you are welcome here!
If you come here with an open mind,
a loving heart, and willing hands,
then you are indeed welcome here!

Welcoming Back the New Church Year

by Janet Parsons

The flame of our chalice this morning
is a symbol of the warmth and brightness of our connections.
The flame lights our way back together again
From our separate summer lives,
and it lights our way forward
As we welcome this new church year of promise and renewal.

Welcome to This Common, Sacred Space

by Amy McKenzie Quinn

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/opening/5450.shtml>

Welcome to this common, sacred space.
Common, because we are all welcome.
Sacred, because here we transform the ordinary
and attend to the profound.

We carry with us our regrets, doubts, fears, stories, laughter;
may they inspire our worship.
Above all, may we each meet what we need most to find,
On this day, in this common, sacred space.

Autumnal Welcoming

by Sarah Gettie McNeill

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/opening/autumnal-welcoming>

Come in, from the crisp morning air outside,
come in, wearing the autumn sunlight on your face,
come, carrying the turning of the seasons in your heart.
Whatever and however the greatness of life is speaking to you now,
you are welcome here in our circle of friends.

Heart Full or Heart Empty

by Krista Taves

(Can be shared as responsive reading or single voice chalice lighting)

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/opening/5455.shtml>

Leader: Whether you have come here with heart full or heart empty, with spirits high or low, rested or tired, hopeful or despairing,

Congregation: *Whether we have come here out of habit, conviction, loneliness, or curiosity,*

Leader: You belong here because you are here, and all that you have and all that you are is welcome here.

All: *This morning we are, together, the heartbeat of this congregation.*

Strange and Foolish Walls - Responsive Reading #662

(can be shared as responsive reading or single voice chalice lighting)

The years of all of us are short, our lives precarious.
Our days and nights go hurrying on and there is scarcely time to do the little that we might.
Yet we find time for bitterness, for petty treason and evasion.
What can we do to stretch our hearts enough to lose their littleness?
Here we are – all of us – all upon this planet, bound together in a common destiny,
Living our lives between the briefness of the daylight and the dark.
Kindred in this, each lighted by the same precarious, flickering flame of life, how does it happen that we are not kindred in all things else?
How strange and foolish are these walls of separation that divide us!

On the brink of a new year (*Rosh Hashanah inspired*)

by Lois Van Leer

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting/brink-new-year>

We light this chalice on the brink of a new [church] year
Letting go of what has been
Open and hopeful for what may come
Renewed, restored, ready
To live Life fully anew
May we move forward with intention.

For Every Time we Make a Mistake (Yom Kippur - inspired)

by Maureen Killoran

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting/every-time-we-make-mistake>

(May be read responsively)

For every time we make a mistake and we decide to start again:
We light this chalice.

For every time we are lonely and we let someone be our friend:
We light this chalice.

For every time we are disappointed and we choose to hope:
We light this chalice.

Let Go (Yom Kippur - inspired)

by Lois Van Leer

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/opening/let-go>

Let go
Of all that binds you
Of all that burdens you
Of what you carry
Of all that shames you
Of fear
Of trespasses and transgressions
Of woundedness
Let go of guilt
Let go of anger
Let go of small mindedness and pettiness
Of ways of being that no longer work for you
Of compulsions that consume your living
Let go of what you cannot change
Let go of regret
Of that which haunts you
Let go of pain
Let go of ways in which you missed the mark
Let go

Welcoming Each Other into the Whole House: Our House is So Big (Adapt for opening words)

An acceptance speech that declares "Our house is so big" and invites us all to not go back into our tiny separate rooms

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AejUt7Tdexl&app=desktop>

Meditations & Prayers

For Belonging

by John O'Donahue

<http://www.uuabookstore.org/Been-in-the-Storm-So-Long-P17812.aspx>

May you listen to your longing to be free.

May the frames of your belonging be large enough for the dreams of your soul.

May you arise each day with a voice of blessing whispering in your heart ... something good is going to happen to you.

May you find harmony between your soul and your life.

May the mansion of your soul never become a haunted place. May you know the eternal longing that lies at the heart of time.

May there be kindness in your gaze when you look within. May you never place walls between the light and yourself. May you be set free from the prisons of guilt, fear, disappointment and despair.

May you allow the wild beauty of the invisible world to gather you, mind you, and embrace you in belonging.

Lead

by Mary Oliver

Full poem found here: <https://www.neopoet.com/kailashana/blog/840-am-2-jun-2011>

...the next morning
this loon, speckled
and iridescent and with a plan
to fly home
to some hidden lake,
was dead on the shore.
I tell you this
to break your heart,
by which I mean only
that it break open and never close again to the rest of the world.

Marginal Wisdom

A meditation on welcoming complexity *by Leslie Takahashi*

Source: "Becoming: A Spiritual Guide for Navigating Adulthood"

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/marginal-wisdom>

They teach us to read in black and white.

Truth is this—the rest false.

You are whole—or broken.

Who you love is acceptable—or not.

Life tells its truth in many hues.

We are taught to think in either/or.
To believe the teachings of Jesus—OR Buddha.
To believe in human potential—OR a power beyond a -single will.
I am broken OR I am powerful.

Life embraces multiple truths, speaks of both, and of and.
We are taught to see in absolutes.
Good versus evil.
Male versus female,
Old versus young,
Gay versus straight.

Let us see the fractions, the spectrum, the margins.
Let us open our hearts to the complexity of our worlds.
Let us make our lives sanctuaries, to nurture our many identities.

The day is coming when all will know
That the rainbow world is more gorgeous than monochrome,
That a river of identities can ebb and flow over the static, stubborn rocks in its course,
That the margins hold the center.

Feel Tension and Welcome It

A body meditation *by Arjuna Ardagh*

<http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/practices/practices/view/26605/feel-tension-and-welcome-it>

Scan your body with awareness.
Seek out a place of tension or discomfort,
And rest there with your attention.
Feel this place exactly as it is.
Feel it, be with it, just as it is.
Feel it not so that it will go away,
But with an invitation that it may stay forever.
Kiss the tension with the softness of awareness.
Bring the breath all the way into this place,
As though you are pouring water into a dry sponge.
Wait, linger, until the flower opens,
Until your awareness is completely there.
Move on to another place of tension,
And then another.
Discover the lotus growing in the mud.

The Welcome Table (video meditation)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJXqROWK_As

Would You Harbor Me (video meditation)

Sweet Honey in the Rock

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0XBXJjoXJ4>

At One

by Victoria E Safford

(for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur; Welcoming ownership, restoration and healing...)

Source: "Walking Toward Morning"

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/one>

Imagine this.

On the days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, every fall, every year, the people make their peace with anyone they have wronged or slighted or injured or in any way neglected in the past twelve months. The task is not to patch things up, smooth things over, reach a compromise, or sweep mistakes and uneasy memories under the rug; the task is not to feel better. The task is ownership. The goal is truth, for its own redemptive sake. I did this. I said this to you, and it was wrong. I neglected this. I botched this. I betrayed you thusly.

I demeaned you, whether you ever knew it or not.

This is the truth in which both of us are living. I ask you to forgive me.

Imagine how many deep breaths you would need to take. Imagine how many doors you'd have to knock on, how many phone calls you'd have to make, how many letters, how many lunches and coffees, how many awkward moments with your children and your parents, and with strangers (that cashier to whom you spoke so sharply). Awkward is irrelevant. The task is not about comfort, it is about truth, about wholeness and holiness. Restoration.

Imagine this.

Someone has been preparing all year to speak with you, to write to you, to ask you a hard question. Perhaps in some way not quite conscious, you have even known this, and you have been preparing too. Finally, you answer the door or the phone, or open the letter with shaky hands, and there it is, what you thought you'd been longing for but really have dreaded: someone is asking your forgiveness. The task is not about comfort, it is about truth. Awkward is irrelevant. You get to choose now, you have to choose, whether and how you will participate in restoration. Abandon the pleasant piety that claims knee-jerk forgiveness as the unquestioned moral course. You get to choose which way will be right in this case, between you as persons and with all your gods. What response will make the world more whole?

Imagine. Something yearns in us to come round right. Something creaky, rusty, heavy, almost calcified within us tries—in spite of us and of all our fears and self-deceptions—to turn and turn and creak and turn again and come round a little truer. Something in us stretches toward conversion.

Imagine healing, wholly, from within.

The Welcoming Prayer

A contemplative tool/practice to welcome in and accept negative feelings

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/philfoxrose/2013/10/the-welcoming-prayer/>

Described by Richard Rohr: <https://cac.org/paradox-weekly-summary-2016-08-27/>

Online guided meditation of the welcoming prayer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5h3HcGeAkY>

A Blessing for a Friend on the Arrival of Illness (A meditation on welcoming illness and a life turned upside down)

by John O'Donohue

Full poem found here: <http://bealightcfsawareness.blogspot.com/2011/02/blessing-for-friend-on-arrival-of.html>

Audio reading by author: <https://soundcloud.com/onbeing/a-blessing-for-a-friend-on-the>

Now is the time of dark invitation...
You feel that against your will
A stranger has married your heart.
Nothing before has made you
Feel so isolated and lost.
When the reverberations of shock subside in you,
May grace come to restore you to balance.
May it shape a new space in your heart
To embrace this illness as a teacher
Who has come to open your life to new worlds.
May you find in yourself
A courageous hospitality
Towards what is difficult,
Painful and unknown....
May you use this illness
As a lantern to illuminate...

The Road Home (video meditation)

by Stephen Paulus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbwhSP3Zlq4&list=RDAarowtnr-hs&index=10>

Tell me where is the road I can call my own,
That I left, that I lost, so long ago.
All these years I have wondered, oh when will I know,
There's a way, there's a road that will lead me home.

After wind, After rain, when the dark is done,
As I wake from a dream, in the gold of day,
Through the air there's a calling from far away,
There's a voice I can hear that will lead me home.

Rise up, follow me, come away is the call
With (the) love in your heart as the only song
There is no such beauty as where you belong
Rise up, follow me, I will lead you home.

The Lost Thing

An award winning short film and book that offers a multilayered meditation on the meaning of welcome and role of how one is invited to belong.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILUxUrjpyg>

Review: <https://witheredviolets.wordpress.com/2011/03/05/dirt-and-otherness-in-the-lost-thing/>

Readings

The Longing for Home

By Starhawk

from *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex, and Politics* (Beacon Press); Also #36 in "Lifting Our Voices"

We are all longing to go home to some place
we have never been—a place half-remembered and half-envisioned
we can only catch glimpses of from time to time.

Community.

Somewhere, there are people to whom we can speak with passion
without having the words catch in our throats.

Somewhere a circle of hands

will open to receive us, eyes will light up as we enter,
voices will celebrate with us whenever we come into our own power.

Community means strength

that joins our strength to do the work that needs to be done.

Arms to hold us when we falter.

A circle of healing.

A circle of friends.

Someplace where we can be free.

To be Human is to Belong

by John O'Donohue

To be human is to belong. Belonging is a circle that embraces everything; if we reject it, we damage our nature. The word "belonging" holds together the two fundamental aspects of life: being and longing.

Being and Longing, the longing of our Being and the being of our Longing. Belonging is deep; only in a superficial sense does it refer to our external attachment to people, places and things. It is the living and passionate presence of the soul. Belonging is the heart and warmth of intimacy. When we deny it, we grow cold and empty. Our life's journey is the task of refining our belonging so that it may become more true, loving, good and free.

We do not have to force belonging. The longing within us always draws us towards belonging and again towards new forms of belonging when we have outgrown the old ones. Postmodern culture tends to define identity in terms of ownership: possessions, status, and qualities. Yet the crucial essence of who you are is not owned by you. The most intimate belonging is self-belonging. Yet your self is not something you could ever own; it is rather the total gift that every moment of your life endeavors to receive with honor. True belonging is gracious receptivity. n

Guest House

by Jhalaluddin Rumi (Coleman Barks, trans.)

This being human is a guest house.

Every morning is a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
[S]he may be clearing you out
for some new delight.
The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.
Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

The Fine Art of Being a Good Guest

by Jeffrey Lockwood, from [A Guest of the World](#)

The most important thing that I've learned in traveling to more than twenty countries is the art of being a guest. And I'm a particularly fine visitor at the supper table. I've consumed live fish in Inner Mongolia, not-quite-coagulated blood sausage on the Tibetan plateau, shredded pig's ear in China, grilled lamb fat in Uzbekistan, horse steaks in Kazakhstan, vodka made from fermented mare's milk in Siberia, vegemite in Australia, goat in Brazil, and snails in France. I don't have an iron stomach, by any means, but I do have the will to be a virtuous visitor.

We are all visitors—even when we are home. Our time in any relationship or place is ultimately limited. We are passing through; nobody stays forever. How might we act if we consider ourselves guests in the lives of friends and family? Being a good guest is rather simple in principle but occasionally zovirax challenging in practice.

One begins by demanding nothing more than the bare elements of life and dignity, which every host is more than delighted to exceed. The good guest then simply allows the other person to be a good host—to share his gifts, to play her music, to tell his stories, to show her places, and to serve his foods. Finally, a guest should cultivate and express genuine gratitude. It need not be effusive or exorbitant, only sincere.

We might also think of ourselves as uninvited, but not unwelcome, guests of the planet. And I think the rules for being a good guest of the world are just the same: Ask little, accept what is offered, and give thanks.

A Litany of Wholeheartedness

by Rev. Dawn Skjei Cooley

<https://dawncooley.com/category/liturgical-pieces/>

Responsive part in italics

Because there have been times when shame has crushed our ability to be wholehearted
We let go of who we ought to be and embrace who we are.

Because we have not always had the courage to be imperfect
We let go of who we ought to be and embrace who we are.

Because we have struggled to have compassion for ourselves or others
We let go of who we ought to be and embrace who we are.

Because we have been afraid of our own vulnerability
We let go of who we ought to be and embrace who we are.

Because we are sometimes too scared to live authentically
We let go of who we ought to be and embrace who we are.

Because we want to be whole-hearted people, confident in our worthiness and our belonging
We let go of who we ought to be and embrace who we are.

Welcoming the Start of the Religious Education Year

by Ruth E Gibson

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/reading/5893.shtml>

ALL: We come together as a living church.

WORSHIP LEADER: We come together from different places as unique individuals. Our paths and the ways of our going are diverse, yet we share our journey.

CONGREGATION: We come together in gladness, knowing that here we are welcome as we are and that here also the best possibilities of our spirits are encouraged to grow.

PARENTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH: I am glad to bring my children to this church which is for us a larger family. Here we come to understand that we are all part of an even larger family of life on earth, which is our home. In our church we can discover what it means to be related.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH: I am glad I came into a family of love. I am glad to be part of this church family, and glad to be part of a world where there is so much to discover and to do.

TEACHERS OF THE CHURCH SCHOOL: I am glad I have the opportunity to work and play and learn with the youngest people in our church. Your questions invite my wonder, your trust encourages my hope. So I will strive to give each of you the kind of affection and respect which fosters your ability to question and to trust.

OTHER ADULTS: We all rejoice in the children and youth who are with us on life's journey. As we cherish you, we pledge ourselves to share with you the living wisdom of our religious tradition which is your heritage. We welcome you into our fellowship. As you grow, we hope to find you beside us in the long and loving work of creating goodness in the world.

CONGREGATION: As members of a church family we promise to stick together, to support each other, as all good families do, through thick and thin, through joy and sorrow, through tears and laughter, through work and play and all the choices and challenges life's journey brings.

WORSHIP LEADER: As children of one Creative Spirit we affirm our relationship to the larger family of life. We affirm our faith that we have within us the power and wisdom to join in the creation of a world of justice, peace and joy.

ALL: Let us strive to understand ourselves and one another, and to extend the spirit of goodwill as far as our love can reach.

Visitors in the Struggle for Racial Justice (When welcomed into the struggle...)

by Aisha Ansano

Full reading found here: <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/reading/visitors-struggle-racial-justice>

“Think about [white people engaging racial justice] in terms of this metaphor: You're visiting a foreign country where the customs are very different from what you are used to, and the language is different, and some of the things they do are not only different but make you feel deeply uncomfortable. As a guest in that country, it is not for you to say that the things that people who live there are doing are wrong. Instead, your role is to learn, to pay attention and try to understand how things work, and to adapt. But if you do something that goes against their norms, it's also your role as a guest to not insist that they let you do things however you want to do them. It is your role as a guest to pause and consider what you're doing. White people tend to be visitors to the struggle for racial justice, ones that aren't forced to be there but can choose to come in and leave whenever they like. People of color reside in the struggle for racial justice by virtue of their race. As people who are constantly in the struggle, people of color have the right to make claims on what they find okay and not okay, what they see as helpful and not helpful...”

I Want to Pray with You

by Maria McCabe

Full poem found at <http://usquu.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Readings-from-the-May-7-Service.pdf>

I want to pray with you.
But first m'hijitos, can we talk?...

I want to pray with you.
But do you know m'hijitos?
Sometimes I am afraid my prayers
are asked to take a different elevator than yours.
Shunted to God's service entrance,
the line for people without passports...

It means so much to me to pray with you!
I pray that we will learn each other's language.
I challenge you!
Perdón — I forget my manners...
I invite you.
Can you learn mine?

Rituals

A Meditation and Ritual of Forgiveness (a ritual for Yom Kippur)

Ritual by Jay E Abernathy, Jr

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/ceremony/143238.shtml>

“In this moment of silence let us remember the wrongs we have endured, the imperfections that we have perpetuated, that we may forgive them and ourselves, and forgive yet again... For like our anger, the flames may burn and destroy, but like our love, the flames may also cleanse and purify. Let us undertake the work of forgiving ourselves and each other, that we may begin again in love...”

Water Communion Services and Resources

Water Communion Service *from Unitarios Universalistas de Puerto Rico*

http://www.uupuertorico.org/Examples_eng/Water.htm

“Each of us comes to this sacred space today to dip into the well that nourishes our hungry spirits. Each of us comes with our own cup of goodness to pour into the well...”

A Ritual for Ingathering/Water Communion *by Rev Eric Cherry*

Full service found here: <http://www.uua.org/worship/words/ceremony/145150.shtml>

Excerpt: “We gather [today] to... remind ourselves of the home we share, a home that we come back to, whether after a long or short absence, a home we welcome all to make their own... We gather ritually this morning—carrying gifts of our summer—symbols of the water that we have been present with, and which has been present to us. These symbols may call to mind light summer showers, thunderstorms, dewy mornings, and misty evenings. ... and who we were with while there, even if we were alone...”

Water Communion Blessing of Teachers *by Charlie Dieterich*

Full blessing found here: <http://www.uua.org/worship/words/blessing/teacher-hand-blessing>

“It is our tradition to mix in some water saved from our previous year’s Water Ceremony, adding it to this year’s gathered waters. In that way, the past is carried on with the present...So it is with generations. Each new child brings new ideas and new perceptions to our community. Those who help our children grow—our teachers—are the bridge between the old and new. And so it is fitting that we call forward our teachers, who guide our children to the house of tomorrow, and bless their hands for this sacred work..”

Lifting Water Communion above Privilege and Trivia:

Some Do’s and Don’t to help Water Communion be Truly Welcoming

Rev. Amy Zucker Morgenstern

<https://sermonsinstones.com/2013/06/13/lifting-water-communion-above-privilege-and-trivia/>

(be sure to read through the comments below the article)

Music

Soul Matters Musicians Recommendations

We get numerous recommendations each month from the generous musicians who belong to our sharing circle. Their choral and hymn recommendations for the theme of “welcome” can be found on this spread sheet:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1iFO4ULVGYNJqvfsfY2f78S9rW1w3UIGdiGt2l-Q65fc/edit?usp=sharing>

Other Recommendations

Love Is The Water (Water Communion)

Brother Sun

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BBbgLS87do>

From You I Receive, To You I Give

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k7a0Lei2OCA>

Orange County UU Choir: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-C1kY3Pxi0>

Home

Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeros

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4306i99LMXo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tSTLv8cYBms> (imagine your choir or whole congregation singing it together!)

Wayfaring Stranger

Rhiannon Giddens

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1Z4PAZX9Bs>

“I’m going home...”

The Road Home

Stephen Paulus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbwhSP3Zlq4&list=RDAarowtnr-hs&index=10>

“Tell me where is the road I can call my own,

That I left, that I lost, so long ago.

All these years I have wondered, oh when will I know,

There's a way, there's a road that will lead me home...”

Stories for All Ages

The Welcome Challenge

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/signs/session10/287883.shtml>

Save a space for an imaginary visitor as you invite the children to the Story for All Ages. Then, invite the congregation to imagine and share how they might welcome different kinds of visitors, using The Welcome Challenge from Tapestry of Faith “Signs of our Faith”

Baucis and Philomon

<http://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/68/fairy-tales-and-other-traditional-stories/5096/philemon-and-baucis/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baucis_and_Philemon

Greek story of welcoming the strangers who turn out to be the gods and receiving gifts for their radical hospitality.

Mullah Nasruddin Feeds His Coat

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session6/123344.shtml>

Coyote and Welcoming the Gift of Friendship

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session6/118305.shtml>

Sermon Seeds

Angles, Ideas & Twists To Get Your Sermon Started!

Article: Staying Present and Open to Life

<http://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/staying-present-open-pain-mindfulness-0816124>

Explores the spiritual practice of welcoming and receiving our experience rather than clinging, rejecting or trying to change it.

Blog: 50 Ways to Open Your World to New Possibilities

By Lori Deschene

<https://tinybuddha.com/blog/50-ways-to-open-your-world-to-new-possibilities/>

Video Talk: Welcoming Vulnerability - Tara Branch

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kc8WGMuF3KA>

Reflection: An Invitation to [welcome] Heartbreak and the Call of the Loon

Parker Palmer

<https://onbeing.org/blog/an-invitation-to-heartbreak-and-the-call-of-the-loon/>

Reflection: A Candid Welcome; 10 Reasons You May Not Feel Welcome in a UU Congregation

Rev. Meg Riley

<http://www.uuworld.org/articles/candid-welcome-uu>

A list of welcoming and unwelcoming beliefs from a UU perspective. Engages the question, Is UUism about believing anything you want?

Video Clip: Welcoming each other into the whole house: Our House is So Big

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AejUt7Tdexl&app=desktop>

An acceptance speech that declares “Our house is so big” and invites us all to not go back into our tiny separate rooms

Article: A Commitment to Multicultural Worship By Christian Schmidt, Kristin Grassel Schmidt

<https://www.uua.org/worship/lab/commitment-multicultural-worship>

“In every worship service at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley, you’ll hear diverse voices, sources, and viewpoints. The congregation is committed to being a multicultural community, and honors that commitment in every service in a measurable, noticeable way: at least one worship component — a prayer, reading, chalice lighting, reflection, etc.— is something that was created by a person of color...”

Video: Wilderness Journey:

The Struggle for Black Empowerment and Racial Justice Within the UUA 1967-1970

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yDsD3mEtwjM>

The story of the struggle for black empowerment and racial justice within the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), 1967-1970.

Essay: We Must Change by Rosemary Bray McNatt

<http://www.uuworld.org/articles/uu-must-change>

“We must admit that Unitarian Universalism has a specific, sometimes alienating culture, and we must change it...”

Book: Centering - Navigating Race, Authenticity, and Power in Ministry, Edited by Mitra Rahnema

<http://www.uuabookstore.org/Centering-P18206.aspx>

“In October 2015, a group of distinguished UU religious professionals of color gathered together in Chicago to embark on a radical project... It started with the premise that discussions of race in Unitarian Universalism have too often presupposed a White audience and prioritized the needs, education, and emotions of the White majority. The goal was to reframe Unitarian Universalist anti-oppression work by putting the voices, experiences and learnings of people of color at the center of the conversation...”

Book: Belonging: A Culture of Place by Bell Hooks

https://www.amazon.com/Belonging-Culture-Place-bell-hooks/dp/041596816X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1497917277&sr=8-1&keywords=Belonging%3A+A+Culture+of+Place

“What does it mean to call a place home? Who is allowed to become a member of a community? When can we say that we truly belong? Traversing past and present, *Belonging* charts a cyclical journey in which Hooks moves from place to place, from country to city and back again, only to end where she began—her old Kentucky home... In these critical essays, hooks finds surprising connections that link of the environment and sustainability to the politics of race and class that reach far beyond Kentucky.”

Book: Voices from the Margins - Editors: Jacqui James, Mark Morrison-Reed

<http://www.uuabookstore.org/Voices-from-the-Margins-P17223.aspx>

"This collection of reflections and aspirations invites us to listen to voices that have been silenced in the past. This kind of listening is vitally important to our religious movement. In order to create a beloved community--one that shares a powerful love and shapes a common purpose--we must know one another. In order to know one another, we must hear each other's stories, see the world through each other's eyes." - Rev. Peter Morales, from the Foreword

Book: Community: The Structure of Belonging, by Peter Block

https://www.amazon.com/Community-Structure-Belonging-Peter-Block-ebook/dp/B00F9FL9JW/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1497797382&sr=8-1&keywords=Community%3A+The+Structure+of+Belonging

“Modern society is plagued by fragmentation. The various sectors of our communities -- businesses, schools, social service organizations, churches, government -- do not work together. They exist in their own worlds, as do so many individual citizens, who long for connection but end up marginalized, their gifts overlooked, their potential contributions lost... What Block provides in this inspiring new book is an exploration of the exact way community can emerge from fragmentation: How is community built? How does the transformation occur? What fundamental shifts are involved? He explores a way of thinking about our places that creates an opening for authentic communities to exist and details what each of us can do to make that happen.”

Interview with the author(excellent): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CwahGcEiAr0>

Book: Black Pioneers in A White Denomination by Mark Morrison Reed

<https://www.uuabookstore.org/Black-Pioneers-in-a-White-Denomination-P16859.aspx>

Tells the stories of pioneering black ministers in Unitarian Universalism and their efforts to call us to embody real welcoming.

Book: Blessing the World: What Can Save Us Now by Rebecca Ann Parker and Robert Hardies

https://www.amazon.com/Blessing-World-What-Can-Save/dp/1558965157/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1497494945&sr=8-1&keywords=what+can+save+us+rebecca+parker

“All human beings have experienced the impasse and anguish of violated trust. We all know the pain... of being told that we are not welcome...” - Rev. Dr. Rebecca Parker

“I found myself crying as I read many of the essays. Yet, as the title of the collection suggests, ultimately, the reader comes away with hope and, at least for me, a renewed dedication to engage in making the world a blessed place that is open and welcoming to all people.” - a review

Book: Eternal Echoes: Celtic Reflections on Our Yearning to Belong by John O'Donohue

Excerpt: “Each one of us journeys alone to this world and it is our nature to seek out belonging... The experience of each of us is opaque and inaccessible to outsiders. Yet no individual is sealed off or hermetically self-enclosed... The deepest nature of the soul is relationship. Consequently, it is your soul that longs to belong; it is also your soul that makes all belonging possible. No soul is private or merely mortal... [The soul's] more profound intention is the awakening of the Great Belonging which embraces everything. Our hunger to belong is the desire to awaken this hidden affinity. Then we know that we are not outsiders cut off from everything, but rather participants at the heart of creation. Each of us brings something alive in the world that no one else can. There is a profound necessity at the heart of individuality. When your life awakens and you begin to sense the destiny that brought you here, you endeavor to live a life that is generous and worthy of the blessing and invitation that is always calling you. In post-modern culture there is a deep hunger to belong... it seems we are in the midst of a huge crisis of belonging. When the outer cultural shelters are in ruins, we need to explore and reawaken the depths of belonging in the human mind and soul...”

Essay: The Power of Welcome in an Age of Loneliness by Jennifer Bailey

<https://onbeing.org/blog/jennifer-bailey-the-power-of-welcome-in-an-age-of-loneliness/>

“We’re living in what’s been termed “the age of loneliness”...One of our biggest sources of resilience in combating loneliness is what psychologists call “common humanity”: the degree to which you see your struggles as part of the human experience. “To feel less lonely in your stress, two things help,” writes Stanford psychologist Kelly McGonigal. “The first is to increase your awareness of other people’s suffering. The second is to be more open about yours... [so] Over the past two months, I have gotten in the habit of breaking bread with strangers over dinner tables small and large all across the United States...”

Reflection: Everything Belongs: The Three Boxes (True communities of welcome require “re-ordering”)

by Richard Rohr

Full piece found here: <https://cac.org/the-three-boxes-2016-12-06/>

Excerpt: “Whenever we’re led out of normalcy into sacred, open space, it’s going to feel like suffering, because it is letting go of what we’re used to. This is always painful at some level. But part of us has to die if we are ever to grow larger... The role of the prophet is to lead us into sacred space by deconstructing the old space; the role of the priest is to teach us how to live fruitfully in sacred space.

The prophet disconnects us from the false, and the priest reconnects us to the real at ever larger levels. If “priests” have been largely unsuccessful, it is because there are so few prophets. And to be honest, most ministers confuse the maintaining of order with re-order!...”

Reflection: Welcoming Diversity in Community by Richard Rohr

Full piece found here: <https://cac.org/diversity-in-community-2016-04-22/>

“We really have to begin having relational friendships that stretch us... If we want sustainable communities, we must always welcome the “other” and learn to see our neighbor as ourselves. Without it, we do not have community at all, but just egoic enclaves...”

Video: Learning to Welcome Conversations about Race

Jay Smooth, TEDxHampshireCollege

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MbdxeFcQtaU&list=PLrubwoNQcGdT3fOBsyFGouycB4VsL1NT7&index=2>

Reflection: The Story of Whiteness by Sarah C Stewart

Full reflection found here: <http://www.uua.org/worship/words/reading/story-whiteness>

“Whiteness has been used throughout the histories of America and Europe to praise desirable groups of people and exclude undesirable groups. But “whiteness” is not an ethnic group, a cultural group, or a nationality. In the United States, the Supreme Court legally defined what it meant to be “white” in a pair of decisions in 1922. In other words, whiteness was created by law to let some people in and keep others out...”

Reflection: The Legacy of Slavery, Rev. Ken Collier

<https://uurevken.blog/2015/09/11/racism-the-legacy-of-slavery/>

A reflection on our responsibility to create a truly welcoming world.

Excerpt: “It is true that I am not responsible for the misdeeds of my ancestors, but there is more to responsibility than that. We are also responsible to one another. We are responsible to the culture we live in and hand on to our descendants, to make this world a better place than we found it, and to our children to raise them to be humane, loving, and generous adults. It is in this sense that I feel a responsibility. I am responsible to the future that I help to create to pass on to it a reality that is less hate-filled and violent than the one I inherited from my parents. The world that everyone in America has inherited is one that is filled with racism and racial violence.”

Quote: Shane Paul Neil

“I’m on my way to a job where I am the only black person in my office. I work with people who either don’t know or don’t care about Alton Sterling or Philando Castile. They are going to ask me “How are you this morning?” and the simple truth is that I can’t be honest. I can’t say that I’m scared and angry and that I want to take a mental health day. I can’t say that I and people like me subconsciously fear for our lives on a daily basis.”

Quote: Rev. Charles J. Stephens

“Rosalynn Carter reminds us, “People with mental problems are our neighbors. They are members of our congregations, members of our families; they are everywhere in this country. If we ignore their cries for help, we will be continuing to participate in the anguish from which those cries of help come. A problem of this magnitude will not go away. And because of our spiritual ideals, we are compelled to take action... Being hospitable simply means showing respect...”

From a sermon “Hospitality and Mental Illness”: <http://uucastine.org/sermons/hospitality-and-mental-illness/>

Quote: Do A Hospitality Audit

Reverend Nancy Pellegrini, from a sermon entitled Radical Hospitality

“One of my professors at seminary admonished those of us studying to be ministers to learn to make friends with those who are most unlike you. He said they will teach you the art of embracing the other, the disliked, the disgraceful and the discarded. He said make it a point to see that such people are a part of your life. He encouraged us to set up hospitality audits at the end of the year to figure out who we spent the most time with, who sat around our dining room table. He pointed out that this would be an indicator of our spirituality determining whether we truly made space for the other.”

Quote: The Faith of the Flaming Chalice and the Welcome Table

Reverend Nancy Pellegrini, from a sermon entitled [Radical Hospitality](#)

“I learned one brief way of sharing the essence of Unitarian Universalism from fellow minister Rob Hardies. This explanation involves looking at the two symbols of our faith—the flaming chalice and the welcome table. From the Unitarian part of our heritage we affirm the sacredness within, believing in becoming our best and highest selves. This inner spark is symbolized by our flaming chalice. From the Universalist part of our heritage we affirm that all persons are accepted and loved. This is symbolized by the table in our congregations where all are welcome.”

Scripture: Itivuttaka 65 -Buddhism

“There are three kinds of persons existing in the world: one is like a drought, one who rains locally, and one who pours down everywhere. How is a person like a drought? He gives nothing to all alike, not giving food and drink, clothing and vehicle, flowers, scents and unguents, bed, lodging and light, neither to recluses and brahmins nor to wretched and needy beggars. In this way, a person is like a drought. How is a person like a local rainfall? He is a giver to some, but to others he gives not.... In this way, a person is like a local rain- fall. How does a person rain down everywhere? He gives to all, be they recluses and brahmins or wretched, needy beggars; he is a giver of food and drink, clothing... lodging and lights. In this way a person rains down everywhere.”

Scripture: Hebrews 13.1 - Christianity

“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”

Video: Hospitality’s Secret: Stop Sitting in Your Tent! - Jewish

<http://www.q-dcast.com/abraham/>

The moral of the story: Being a people of welcome means getting out of our tent!

The 20-Something’s Guide To Celebrating Rosh Hashanah

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/the-20-somethings-guide-to-celebrating-rosh-hashanah_us_57eea71ce4b024a52d2ec40b

Demystifying Yom Kippur

http://www.chabad.org/multimedia/media_cdo/aid/3072339/jewish/Demystifying-Yom-Kippur.htm

Quote: Archbishop Desmond Tutu

“To forgive is not just to be altruistic. It is the best form of self-interest. It is also a process that does not exclude hatred and anger. These emotions are all part of being human. You should never hate yourself for hating others who do terrible things: the depth of your love is shown by the extent of your anger.

However, when I talk of forgiveness I mean the belief that you can come out the other side a better person, a better person than the one being consumed by anger and hatred. Remaining in that state locks you in a state of victimhood, making you almost dependent on the perpetrator. If you can find it in yourself to forgive then you are no longer chained to the perpetrator. You can move on, and you can even help the perpetrator to become a better person too."

Three Sermon Seeds about Belonging in the Universe

Quote: *Thomas Berry*

"We bear the universe in our beings as the universe bears us in its being. The two have a total presence to each other and to that deep mystery out of which both the universe and ourselves have emerged."

Poem: "Star-Breath" by Joyce Rupp

With the first sigh of the evening star
my heart responds to a distant touch,
a wisp of recognition, a waft of joy.

Life-giving breath of the galaxies sails through the heavens
into my grasping, yearning spirit,
uniting me in the morrow of my soul.

Star-breath washes over me
like god-breath
filling the soul of a new creation,
awakening my soul's withered bones,
lifting them into lightness and dance.

I open my small, isolated self to the stars
and am once again healed of my disparity,
the falsehood of a separate identity.

Quote: *Chief Seattle*

"You must teach your children that the ground beneath their feet is the ashes of our grandfathers. So that they will respect the land, tell your children that the earth is rich with the lives of our kin. Teach your children what we have taught our children--that the earth is our mother. Whatever befalls the earth, befalls the sons [and daughters] of the earth. If [people] spit upon the ground, they spit upon themselves. This we know. The earth does not belong to [us]; [we] belongs to the earth. This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons [and daughters] of the earth. We did not weave the web of life; [We are] merely a strand in it. Whatever [we] do to the web, [we] do to [ourselves]..."

Recommended Sermons

Belonging to the Universe

Rev. Barbara McKusick Liscord

<https://uucm.org/visitors/take-a-look/>

“You are born alone and die alone and yet you are supported and sustained by a great universal love...”

Radical Hospitality

by Marilyn J. Sewell

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/sermon/radical-hospitality>

“Radical hospitality. Radical means “out of the ordinary,” “revolutionary,” even. So what would it mean to receive someone—a stranger—with a presence that was not just polite, but to receive them with revolutionary generosity?...”

Love Calls Us On: From the Service of the Living Tradition UUA General Assembly 2016

Rev. Dr. Bill Sinkford

<http://www.uua.org/ga/past/2016/worship/slt>, Begins at 1:26:20

Welcoming and confronting the illusion of our innocence in order to truly welcome beloved community.

A Lesson in Contradictions

Leslie Mac, from the Black Lives of UU closing ceremony at GA 2016

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKUaO4EBjQ8&t=3867s>, homily begins at 28:00

Explores the journey of Black Lives of UU and the reality of being a black Unitarian Universalist in the UU faith.

The Welcome Table

Rev. Dr. Robert M. Hardies

<http://www.all-souls.org/node/1579>

“My question for us is this: what does it mean to be a people of the welcome table in an age of the wall? This is the question we will all face again and again in the years to come... In our resistance, we must not succumb to the temptations of self-righteousness. We must not succumb to the false belief that threats to the welcome table are solely external to us. Let us once and for all confess that the cultures of racism patriarchy, xenophobia and transphobia shape our souls too, even as we seek to resist them... The welcome table calls us now not only to ministries of resistance but also ministries of reconciliation...beginning with the people that are closest to us... and begin the conversation with your story... and invite their story with openness...”

Welcoming Vulnerability

Rev. John T. Morehouse

<https://uuwestport.org/sermons/rev-john-t-morehouses-sermons/vulnerability-and-acceptance-october-23-2016/>

“Yesterday I had the good fortune to attend the installation of my colleague... In the sermon preached by Rev. Robin Bartlett, she told us of a new institution in many schools a ‘buddy bench’. A buddy bench is a bench on the playground where kids who don’t have anyone to play with can sit and wait for someone else to come and sit by them who also doesn’t have someone to play with. It’s a vulnerability zone. And kids use it all the time. Kids who used to loathe recess, like me, now find friends. We all need

a buddy bench. Perhaps these seats are a buddy bench. Sitting down with someone who you don't know who needs connection, so they don't have to pretend to be interested in what's on their smart phone. Isn't that why we are here? To connect with one another, to create the beloved community. From the acceptance of each of other [and the welcoming of our own vulnerability] healing is possible..."

Ollie-Ollie-in-Come-Free

Rev. Justin Schroeder

<https://firstuniv.podbean.com/e/september-11-2016-homily-by-rev-justin-schroeder-ollie-ollie-in-come-free/>

"I love the religious impulse behind "Ollie-Ollie-in-Come-Free." It's like saying return from the cold, return to the fold, come on, come home. "Ollie-Ollie-in-Come-Free" is like an extravagant love calling you back into the circle with no penalty, no judgement..."

Thick and Thin

by Victoria Safford

<http://whitebearunitarian.org/thick-and-thin-05-28-17-sermon/>

"Last summer, Charles Grady, Unitarian Universalist minister, offered a related question. Charles said, Each Sunday in this room we are likely to hear a Call to Worship beginning with these words, "Come in! Come into this house made holy by our presence..." And each time I hear it, a little red flag goes up in a corner of my mind: "Do we really make holy (that is, sanctify) this space just by being here? Isn't that a rather prideful, narcissistic thing to say? Why do we think ourselves so special? Maybe we could do with a little humility instead. Perhaps we should turn it around: perhaps it is this special place, with all its dreams, joys, sorrows, work, music, aspirations, trials and celebrations, pent up inside these walls, that will make us, if not exactly holy, then at least strengthened and renewed, heartened in community for the business of living..."

Good Enough: The spiritual practice of welcoming yourself as enough

Rev. Jen Crow

<https://firstuniv.podbean.com/e/september-21-2014-sermon-by-jen-crow-good-enough/>

Never Forget – a Theology of Welcoming Forgiveness into Our Lives

Rev. Audette Fulbright

<http://www.uucheyenne.org/multimedia-archive/never-forget-a-theology-of-forgiveness/>

"When I first shared the title of this sermon, one person responded, "Never forget? That seems odd for a sermon on forgiveness. I thought it was forgive and forget." I could not have hoped for a better straight line. Yes, this is the old saw about forgiveness. Forgive and forget. But to add an assumption of forgetfulness to the necessity of forgiveness is a profoundly problematic way of looking at the subject – an active impediment rather than an assist. Besides, it lacks the basic virtue of being true: very few people actually do forget, even when they manage to forgive. So there's nothing much to recommend it, and many things wrong with it as a theology..."

Turning and Returning (on welcoming confession and repair: a Yom Kippur reflection)

Rev. Heather K. Janules

<http://www.winchesteruu.org/turning-and-returning-265.html>

"I know that speaking of sin and inviting people into confession is a tough sell to a Unitarian Universalist crowd. Many of us seek or remain within a Unitarian Universalist congregation because of our gospel of human dignity, our rejection of original sin and proclamation of human possibility... But what is lost

when we turn our spiritual attention only to what is good in the human spirit? How do we – all of us – leading messy human lives, find greater meaning in our experiences of guilt, of shame and regret, the places where we seek reconciliation and the making of amends? How do we bear witness to the spiritual space between human depravity and possibility and find the strength and support to grow from our imperfections? In his words, John Wolf claims such a space within Unitarian Universalism, reminding us that a Unitarian Universalist community, “calls no one a sinner, yet knows how deep is the struggle and how great is the hunger for what is good...”

The gift that Yom Kippur offers us every year is the question, “Knowing that we are mortal, do we also know that we are living?” Are there places where we need to return to ethical behavior? Do we have the courage to name the painful realities of our ever-diminishing lives? If we take these covenants seriously - our commitments to ourselves, to all of life and to the sacred – will we then turn towards a new person that dwells within us but currently has no voice?...”

Labor Day Sermon

by Derrick McQueen, Poverty Scholar and PhD candidate at Union Theological Seminary

<https://kairoscenter.org/labor-day-sermon-derrick-mcqueen/>

“But there is one thing missing in all the messaging we receive about Labor Day. We rarely talk about Labor. We rarely stop for a moment to think about each other as laborers in the vineyard who deserve to be recognized for our work. Speaking for myself, I can’t remember the last time I turned to my neighbor and said, “Thank you for the work that you do, I trust that you are doing your best to make the world a better place. And on this day, I celebrate you.” After all, that’s what the day was set aside for. In 1882 workers right here in New York City, the workers themselves decided to hold a Labor Day Parade. They highlighted each other’s accomplishments, union solidarity, and the great strides in workers’ rights since the Civil War. And even after the holiday was established federally on June 28th, 1894, the Sunday before Labor Day was unofficially designated as a time to spiritually recognize the importance of the laborer in bringing about the equity spoken of in so many sacred texts. My, how far we have strayed from this basic purpose of a Labor Day holiday...”

There is Power in the Union: A Theology of Labor

by Ashley Horan

<http://firstuniv.podbean.com/e/september-6-2015-sermon-by-ashley-horan-there-is-power-in-a-union-a-theology-of-labor/>

“Unitarian Universalism shares some things in common with the labor union movement both good and bad. Both focus on this world and this life and see humans as agents of change and architects of justice. They both lift up interdependence and power. But UUs tend to be the bosses and not the workers in our faith. We don’t have a deep relationship with the labor movement like we do with eco-justice or racial justice. Both movements are in decline and suffer from being mono-cultural and insular. We have both failed to build relationships with others...”

Give Them Not Hell - On Welcoming and The Military

by Rev. David Pyle

<http://celestiallands.org/wayside/?p=916>

“I cannot count the number of times I have preached or spoken to groups of Unitarian Universalists, and see the looks of incredulity when I say that I meet Unitarian Universalists all the time in the military, people who believe about life and faith just as we do, people called to live ethical and moral lives in community, who find truth to be larger than one scripture or one religion, and who are called to make a difference in the world. I meet them all the time and either they have never heard of Unitarian

Universalism or they attended one of our churches once, and as soon as they said they were in the military they were questioned, or ridiculed, or in some way told that they were not welcome in this faith tradition. This myth has some truth, but it is not that people in the military are not ready for us, it is that we are not ready for them...”

Closing Words

For Belonging

John O'Donohue

May you listen to your longing to be free.
May the frames of your belonging be generous enough
for your dreams.
My you arise each day with a voice of blessing
whispering in your heart.
May you find a harmony between your soul and
your life.
May the sanctuary of your soul never become haunted.
May you know the eternal longing that lives at the heart of time.
May there be kindness in your gaze when you look within.
May you never place walls between the light and yourself.
May you allow the wild beauty of the invisible world
to gather you, mind you, and embrace you in
Belonging.

A New Song, a New Harmony

Richard S. Gilbert

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/closing/a-new-song-a-new-harmony>

By our presence here with one another,
Hearing the harmony that is the music of the spheres,
May some of the harshness and discord of our human lives
Be transmuted into music.
A new song in our hearts may there be,
And a new harmony in our beings,
So that we shall return to our several duties
with fresh courage, and with eagerness and with rejoicing.
Amen.

Principles

Danez Smith

let us not be scared of the work because
it's hard
let us move the mountain
because the mountain must move
let us, oh lords above us and within
let us be useful to our neighbors
& tender their wounds
let us be more bandage than blade
unless the blade is needed
let us be a sword against what does not
bring us closer to home

let us be dangerous to that which fails us
and bring us a world good to us, all of us
all us all us
amen

Cheered by Our Community

Burton D Carley

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/closing/5970.shtml>

Cheered by our community,
blessed by our covenant,
uplifted in mind, and renewed in spirit,
go forth with courage and in peace to welcome the days to come. Amen.

You Are in the Story of the World

Ean Huntington Behr

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/closing/151355.shtml>

You are in the story of the world.
You are the world coming to know itself.
May you trust that all you will ever say or do
Belongs in the story of the world.

We Have a Calling In This World

by Jean M Rickard

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/closing/6055.shtml>

We have a calling in this world:
We are called to honor diversity,
To respect differences with dignity,
And to challenge those who would forbid it.
We are people of a wide path.
Let us be wide in affection
And go our way in peace.
Amen.

Rosh Hashanah Benediction

by Amy Zucker Morgenstern

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/closing/22641.shtml>

The Book of Life is open before us. It tells stories of sadness and happiness, despair and hope, stagnation and change, and a peaceful stillness that transcends both.

May you be written in the Book of Life. May you write your own name there, in shining ink stirred together from the tears of the past and the sweet flower essence of the hoped-for future. May you know who you have been and who you are and bless your future self with loving, brave intention.

L'shanah tovah—to a good new year.

Reach Out For Support & Connection

Join the Soul Matters **Inspiration** Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/soulmatterssharingcircle/>

Join the Soul Matters **Worship Leader Support** Facebook Page:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/soulmatterssharingcircle/>

Join the Soul Matters **Ministers' Support** Facebook Page:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/719788338192570>/<https://www.facebook.com/soulmatterssharingcircle/>

And don't forget about our monthly **online planning & implementation labs** for worship leaders. In the later part of each month, we host one lab for all worship leaders (lay and clergy) and another one just for ministers. Susan, our Soul Matters Director, sends out notices about the specific time and dates of the meetings well in advance.

Contact Susan (susan@soulmatterssharingcircle.com) for more information.



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