

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Manhattan

Convener Packet

Revised 08/2018

Each Sunday service is a creative, collaborative experience developed jointly by the speaker, the convener, and the music team. Communication among the participants is crucial to create a coherent and seamless worship encounter. We strive to awaken as many of the senses as possible, to reach people in different ways and invite them to experience the service, not simply observe it.

As convener, your responsibilities will vary depending on whether our minister is speaking, we are hosting a guest, or enjoying a lay speaker(s) from the congregation. In general, you are responsible to put together the order of service and make sure that the various elements of the service are included, while setting the tone for the service. Some speakers will give a lot of input into the elements of the order of service. Others will want you to plan everything except the central message that they are preparing. You may invite others in the congregation to offer any of the elements and will work with the speaker and music team to select music.

A few general guidelines:

- We are using monthly themes from Soul Matters. Jonalu will send you the Worship Packet from Soul Matters. You are welcome to use any of the resources here, including opening words, meditation, readings, and so much more. Another great resource is the UU WorshipWeb Collection of online resources, accessible here: <https://www.uua.org/worship>
- As we move towards a more anti-racist, multi-cultural world, consider readings and hymns from people of color and others outside the dominant white culture.
- Once a month, we are developing a Service for All Ages, during which school-aged children will participate for the whole service. These services should be shorter than usual, and service elements are likely to be shorter, as well. They will be most effective if we strive to engage more senses and include participatory elements.
- Towards the end of the month, before your date to convene, there will be a meeting of all conveners for the month, along with Renea Brown for the music team, Jonalu, and one of the Sunday Service Committee co-chairs. This meeting is an opportunity to discuss our connections with the theme, how we might want to develop the theme systematically and how it connects with special occasions during the month. It's helpful to have read the Soul Matters packet in advance of the meeting. The discussion ranges from the abstract ideas to the specific elements each convener intends to include.
- It's helpful to write out everything you have to say, including transitions, so that you can look to it if you forget what's next. This is especially true for the welcome, sharing joys & sorrows, meditative moments, and so on. You might think that transitions are easy and obvious, but these are inevitably the moments someone finds themselves forgetful or stammering. Writing a script will also help you avoid repetitive forms such as "Now we will...." Consider ways that

the elements align with one another. For example, you may be able to repeat the final line of a hymn just sung to begin the introduction to a reading, or pick up a strand from the Story for All Ages to introduce the offering. Of course, this suggests being well-acquainted with the elements as you plan.

- Each month, we select an appropriate visual representation of the theme to be present in the sanctuary. Be aware of these images because you may have opportunities to point them out or to make associations with them by creating or extending metaphors throughout a service.
- Try to keep the elements before the children leave fairly brief, so that they can get to their classes. Especially guard against long, complex readings before the children leave. If you have any questions about the appropriateness of a particular item, consult with Director of Religious Education, Sandy Nelson.
- You are welcome to invite others to offer readings, chalice lightings, etc. If someone has a brief personal story that relates, these can be particularly effective. New members are often good to call on to do chalice lightings, as a chance to be re-introduced to the congregation. Children may also be good chalice lighters.
- Feel free to vary aspects of the elements or the order of service as seems required. Don't hesitate to offer something unusual or creative if it fits with the theme, e.g., using a short video instead of a reading, or adding a skit to dramatize the message. Including a meditation or moment of silence is among the possibilities. And the order may be varied if it makes sense for the service.
- If you are convener on the second Sunday of the month, coordinate Helping Hands with Dixie Moreau. You will be introducing the speaker representing the Helping Hands beneficiary. Please be sure to indicate that any donations NOT marked to go to the fellowship will be given to the Helping Hands beneficiary.
- The example wordings at the end of this document are meant to give you an idea of how each service element can work. Do not take either the list of elements or the possible wordings as requirements, but please do think about what role they are meant to play before you alter the structure or choose substantially different wordings.
- The order (elements, titles, etc.) for the Sunday Order of Service must be submitted to Sue Turner (office@uufm.net) by Wednesday evening before the service (see below).

About elements in the order of service:

- *Bells:* Find a child or children to ring the bells to signal the beginning of the service. Usually, there are children anxious to do this.
- *Gathering Song:* A short song brings people together. Coordinate the leadership of this with the music team, unless you are comfortable leading singing.
- *Welcome and visitors:* Try to say something to make visitors feel welcome and to invite them to stick around for coffee. Remember that for some of them a UU service might seem pretty foreign, so it can be helpful to provide a little background. Give them the opportunity to get to know us later by making them feel welcome now. Sometimes, the theme for the morning is

introduced during this time. This is a time you may invite the congregation to welcome one another.

- *Announcements.* We do not invite people up to give announcements, except in very special, preplanned circumstances. Draw attention to what's written in the order of service, and read other announcements people have handed you (max 3 short sentences) that didn't make it into the order.
- *Chalice Lighting.* Select a reading or write words that fit with the theme of the service or with the season or otherwise are appropriate for the day. Find someone beforehand to light the chalice. You may prelight a votive candle before the service, if that makes it easier. Younger children may need to practice lighting the chalice before the service.
- *Hymns:* Coordinate hymn selection with the Music Committee, usually through Renea Brown. Her list of recommended hymns for the month's theme can be found at https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Be6_RiMNV7nVcrbmt11AvOQgGw1nYIOeOkZeYnUFGk/edit?ts=5b1c8aa7#gid=1398811017. She will also have information about additional music planned for the service, such as a choir anthem or special music. We generally have three hymns – an Opening Hymn after the Announcements, a second hymn before the reflection, and a Closing Hymn following the reflection. Feel free to use only some of the verses of a hymn, if that better suits the service.
- *Other Music:* Special music selections are generally determined well ahead of time. Consult with Renea Brown to see what is planned for your Sunday. If nothing is planned and you have a special request, Renea may be able to make it happen! Determine with the music team where music should come in the order of service. Generally, the choir sings before the children leave to encourage the participation of young people and teachers in the choir, though modifications may be made to the timing, if there's a good reason.
- *Joys & Sorrows:* As a community that cares for one another, we want to know about the significant events of one another's lives. We want to share so that we are known and supported. Together, our joys multiply and our sorrows diminish. We currently solicit joys and concerns on small slips of paper on the chairs. If Jonalu is present, she will collect them during the offertory and read them aloud. If not, please arrange for someone to; you can ask a member of the Sunday Services Committee. If you're comfortable reading them, that's great!
- *Story for All Ages:* If the theme for the morning has not yet been explicitly introduced, this is the chance to do it. We have many talented story-tellers in the congregation, so please consult the Sunday Services Committee or Jonalu if you want help with this. Picture books work if they are short and focused. If you plan an interaction with the children, carefully plan your questions, remembering that abstract concepts may not be easily grasped by our younger children. The more specific and concrete your questions, the better the answers will be. Participatory opportunities are wonderful, especially if adults can join in, too.
- *Special events:* From time to time there will be special events in the service, such as a New Member Welcome or a Child Dedication. Someone will let you know about these. In general, you will not have any responsibility for them beyond making sure that the right information is in the order of service.

- *Offertory:* Music Director Renea Brown will know who the accompanist is and help find out what the music will be. Sometimes, accompanists offer options. Introduce the offertory with words to encourage generosity.
- *Reading:* Readings may come from any source. Again, you're reminded that reaching beyond conventional white dominant cultural sources can enrich our perspectives. Readings may be replaced with a video (please coordinate this in advance with Doug Walter), a skit, a short reflection by you or someone else, or whatever else you think of!

Thank you again for convening! We know it takes work to get it together, and we appreciate the effort you will put in to it. Varied member participation in the services is part of what makes the fellowship thrive.

-The Sunday Services Committee

1. Convener Responsibilities

1.1. Advance Planning – Outside Guest Speaker

- 1) **Contact the speaker** to discuss the topic and order of service. The speaker may select his or her own readings and hymns, or ask you to make selections. Visiting ministers often have almost an entire order of service already established. If the speaker makes selections, ask for titles and authors for the Sunday Order of Service.
- 2) **Provide info about timing:** Visiting speakers who will be providing only the main reflection or talk may need help deciding on timing, expectations about the audience, etc. The "main event" can be anywhere between 20 to 40 minutes, depending on how many additional things are going on. 25-30 minutes of speaking is fairly typical; this will seem long to many visiting ministers.
- 3) **Provide info about the congregation:** if the speaker is not Unitarian Universalist, tell them a bit about UUism, including that we support freedom of thought in all matters, including religion. Encourage them to speak the truth as they see it, understanding that our services address a wide variety of topics people may not expect in church. If the topic is political, note that we welcome political issue advocacy, but not partisan politics.
- 4) **Ask the speaker for permission to audio-tape the service and post it online.**
- 5) **Provide the speaker directions** to the fellowship, if needed, and a phone number at which you can be reached if there is any problem. Check to see if home hospitality is needed for an overnight stay, if traveling any distance. Contact the Sunday Services Committee chair or minister for information, if needed.
- 6) **Contact Music Director Renea Brown** to coordinate selection of hymns and other music for the service. Working 2-3 weeks in advance is helpful.
- 7) **If yours is the second Sunday of the month**, discuss with the social action Helping Hands representative what the **Helping Hands** beneficiary is and what you should say to introduce them or their representative speaker.
- 8) **Choose additional readings**, words for introducing service elements, etc., as needed. Our hymnal has many good readings in the back, and you may also want to search

<http://www.uua.org/spirituallife/worshipweb/index.php> or other websites, use material from the Soul Matters packet, or find your own sources of poetry and literature.

9) **Recruit whoever you want to help you with any part of the service**– story, readings, chalice-lighting, etc.

10) **Contact the audio-visual equipment** person with any other special needs regarding audio/visual or other presentation needs. The fellowship has an LCD projector for Powerpoint, etc. Streaming video does not work well, but contact Doug Walter (A/V Chair) in advance, and he can often download for presentation during the service.

11) **Submit order of service** for the Sunday Order of Service to Administrator Susan Turner by Wednesday evening before the Sunday service. Provide the list of service elements you are using and information for each part (e.g., title/author or song title/artist, as well as performer or reader names), and a brief line or two about the speaker(s) and convener and Sue will format them, add announcements, etc.

12) **Prepare** your convening script.

13) **Contact** one of the the Sunday Services Committee Co-Chairs or the minister if you need help.

1.2. Advance Planning – Minister or Lay Speaker from the Fellowship

- Many of the guidelines above apply (items 6 on), though the minister will have ideas about the service elements. Don't consider those ideas final, but engage collaboratively.
- It may be helpful to meet together to brainstorm about the theme and divide responsibilities. Clarity around who is doing what will prevent problems.

1.3 Responsibilities on Sunday Morning

- Be there at least 20 minutes prior to the service to coordinate with other service participants.
- Check in with the audio equipment person to talk about timing of transitions and other service elements, so that they may be better prepared with cued music, microphones, etc.
- Check that the chalice is ready and pre-light the votive. Matches are on one of the shelves of the pulpit.
- Check that the heating or air conditioning and lights are set at comfortable levels.
- Introduce yourself to the speaker, if necessary, and provide assistance, as needed, e.g. water on the podium.
- Start on time even if there are stragglers.
- Conduct order of service.
- Introduce the speaker, unless it is the minister.
- Facilitate discussion, if any.
- End the service at 12:00 promptly
- Extinguish the chalice.

- If there is an outside speaker, ensure that they have a chance to get some refreshments and are invited to lunch.

1.3. Care and Feeding of the Chalice

- Use only smokeless, odorless liquid paraffin oil. This is kept in the lower cabinet to the right of the refrigerator in the kitchen. A small squeeze bottle of oil is kept on one of the shelves of the pulpit.
- Use funnel to fill small squeeze bottles and use those to fill the chalice.
- Keep level between 1/2 to 3/4 level in the reservoir.
- Keep wick fibers no higher than level with top of dip tube. This gives a flame of about 1 inch, which is enough. Any higher and it smokes. There is already evidence of smoke on the walls! This will require an expensive paint job sooner than necessary.
- We are using a short candle to light the chalice from the pre-lit votive.

2. Contacts

Sunday Services Committee Chair	Katie Kingery-Page (kingerypage@gmail.com), Rob Morrison (william.robert.morrison@gmail.com)
Sunday Bulletin	Sue Turner, 537-2349, office@uufm.net .
Music Chair	Renea Reasoner, reneareasoner@gmail.com
Minister	Rev. Jonalu Johnstone, Jonalu@sbcglobal.net
Director of Religious Education	Sandy Nelson, 341-0135, sandralounelson@yahoo.com
Social Action Helping Hands Coordinator	Dixie Moreau (Dixie.moreau53@att.net)
Sound System	Doug Walter (kbsi@cox.net)

3. Typical Order of Service Elements

Gathering Song

Welcoming words

Announcements

Lighting of Chalice/words for lighting chalice

Hymn

Choir or Special Music, when scheduled

Story for all Ages

Sing children to their activities

Helping Hands speaker, on 2nd Sunday

Offertory: words

Music

Joys and Sorrows

Reading

Hymn

Reflection/Main Speaker(s) -- may include Discussion

Hymn

Closing words

4. Example wordings for UUFM Services

4.1. WELCOMING

Good Morning!

(Wait for response)

I am _____, a member of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Manhattan. [If you serve a role, such as committee chair or member of the Board, this is a good time to acknowledge that.]

Welcome to the Unitarian Universalist fellowship of Manhattan.

4.1.1. Additional welcoming words

Whatever the faiths you have known, or the flags of your heritage — You are welcome here. Whoever you are, and whomever you love — You are welcome here.

And — whether you ran in here today on little feet, Or walked in briskly, Or ambled in, Or rolled in, You are welcome here.

We welcome you to the Manhattan Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

4.1.2. Other possible welcoming words

We welcome all with a warm heart and an open mind. Whatever your religious background or lack thereof, whatever your job or your past, whatever your race, gender, or age, whether you are gay, straight, or bi, and whether you are able-bodied or physically challenged, you are welcome here.

4.1.3. Other possible welcoming words

(possibly useful for times when we have a number of visitors)

We have both ministerial and lay-led services here, and for the latter we have members, friends, or guests of the fellowship speak on varieties of topics from their professional or personal experience. Today we are happy to be joined by _____

We have no required creed here. We believe in the liberal ideal that each person find his, her, or his own path, whether it is working towards inner peace, particular social justice goals, or other religious destinations. And so I welcome you, whatever path brought you here, and I ask you to join us today with an open heart and open mind, and greet you with the same.

4.1.4. Other possible welcoming words

Whether this is your first visit or four hundredth, you are welcome here. Unitarian Universalism strives to embrace and include all in a loving and caring community, at the same time as we try to create a world that is diverse, hospitable, joyous and just. Wherever you have come from, whoever you are, whoever you love, whatever your journey has been, it has led you here, and we're glad to have you.

4.2. GREETING OF VISITORS AND GUESTS

I extend a warm welcome to our visitors and guests.

4.2.1. Guest book, info, invitation to coffee

We invite visitors and guests to sign our Guest Book at the Welcome table. On that form you can request a complimentary subscription to our newsletter.

I/our greeters will be available after the service to answer any questions you may have about our fellowship activities and programs, or about Unitarian Universalism. Please join us for coffee and conversation in the Alsop Room, down the hallway to the left, immediately after the service.

Alternatively If you're curious about what we're about or what Unitarian Universalism in general is like, I encourage you to talk with people after the service. Everyone is invited to join us at noon for coffee in the Alsop Room, down the hallway to the left.

4.2.2. [Optional] GREETING OF NEIGHBORS

In the spirit of community, I ask that you take a moment to greet those seated around you.

4.2.3. [an option, especially if seats are filling up]

In order to fully welcome everyone into this space, I invite those of you already seated to move forward or closer together to leave room for those who continue to arrive after we have gathered. As you do, take this time to greet one another.

4.3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Before we begin the service, there are a few announcements. First, I draw your attention to the announcements printed in the order of service. (*hold up copy*).

Then read any last-minute written announcements that may have been handed to you. Read announcements really shouldn't be longer than a few brief sentences. If someone gives you a

*longer one, try to get it condensed before reading. **Do not invite people** to come to the microphone. Please include acknowledgement of any major recent or upcoming events [e.g., announcing the results of a recent fundraiser, or reminder of a significant event immediately following the service.] Announcements should only be of events inclusive of everyone and sponsored by the Fellowship, unless it is a correction of something printed in the order of service.*

4.4. "CALL TO WORSHIP" AND CHALICE LIGHTING

4.4.1. Call to worship — Barbara Hamilton-Holway

We gather here as individual people: young and old; male and female; temporarily able and disabled; gay, lesbian, bisexual and straight people, all the colors of the human race; theist, atheist, agnostic; Christian, Buddhist, feminist, humanist.

We gather here as a community of people who are more than categories.

We gather here — each ministering to the other, meeting one another's strength, encouraging wholeness.

We give thanks for this extraordinary blessing — the gathering together of separate, unique individuals as one whole, one body, our church.

Here may our minds stretch, our hearts open, our spirits deepen.

Here may we acknowledge our brokenness and be ever stirred by love's infinite possibilities.

4.4.2 Call to worship— Calvin O. Dame

Come. Let us be joined in seeking the aspirations of the heart.

Come. Let us be joined in giving voice to those melodies that can heal the wounded soul.

Come. Let us be joined in speaking the words that set us free.

4.4.3 Opening words -- Suzanne Meyer, adapted

We have come together today,

Not because we expect to find answers here,

But rather because we expect to be encouraged in our questioning. We have come together today,

Not because we are certain of our own righteousness,

But because we are continually searching for the right, the good, and the uplifting.

We have come together today,

Not because we seek absolution for our sins and failures,

But rather because we acknowledge our imperfections and seek the courage to address them

We have come together today,

Not because we need to be told what to think and do,
But rather because we aim to develop our own beliefs and the conviction to act on them.
We have come today so that we may question, search, and act together.

4.4.4 Opening words — William F. Schulz

Come into this place of peace and let its silence heal your spirits. Come into this place of memory and let its history warm your soul. Come into this place of prophecy and power and let its vision change your heart.

4.4.5 Opening words — Laurel S. Sheridan

Take from life its coals, not its ashes. Fan the flames of love and justice; join hands and hearts in common endeavor; and there will be no limit to what we can achieve together.

4.4.6 The Light of Truth — Richard M. Fewkes

May the Light of Truth illumine our minds. May the Spark of Love set our hearts on fire,
May the Flame of Freedom burn brightly within us, now and always.

4.4.7 Chalice Lighting Charles A. Howe (Can be read responsively)

We light this chalice to affirm that new light is ever waiting to break through to enlighten our ways: That new truth is ever waiting to break through to illumine our minds:

And that new love is ever waiting to break through to warm our hearts.

May we be open to this light, and to the rich possibilities that it brings us.

4.4.8 Chalice Lighting — Gordon B. McKeeman

"Let there be light!

Let it shine in dark places, in moments of pain, in times of grief, in the darkness of hatred, violence, oppression, where there is discouragement and despair.

4.4.9 Chalice Lighting —Anonymous

Wherever darkness is to be put to flight, "Let there be light!" We kindle our chalice, a bowl of light,

Reflecting that eternal light which

Shines always around and before us.

4.4.10 Chalice Lighting

I light this chalice as a symbol of Truth, that which we search for but are humble enough to know we do not yet possess.

If someone else is doing the Chalice Lighting reading, introduce them as simply as possible:

_____ will offer our chalice lighting.

4.5. HYMN INTRODUCTION

Please stand as you are able and join me in singing Hymn # _____

4.6. SHARING OF PERSONAL JOYS AND SORROWS

4.6.1

Now is the time in our service when we share those significant joys and sorrows we carry in our hearts and minds. By sharing heavy burdens they are lightened. By sharing joys they grow. This week....

4.6.2 Alternative wording:

Do not leave your cares at the door. Do not leave there your pain, your sorrow or your joys. Bring them with you into this place of acceptance and forgiveness. Place them on the common altar of life and offer them the possibility of your worship. Come then, and offer yourself to potential transformation by the creative process that flows through you and all life. Amen. —Norman V. Naylor

After sharing: We honor those joys and sorrows spoken and unspoken.

4.7. STORY FOR ALL AGES

[If there is a particular connection to the theme that you want to focus on, you can do that in the introduction to the story. Otherwise, use a generic introduction like those below]

4.7.1

At this time, children of any age, and even the young at heart, may come up to join _____ for a story, after which we will sing them off to their RE classes and childcare. Children, come on up front if you'd like....

4.7.2.

Our story is truly meant for everyone. At this time, we invite our youngest, and those young at heart to come forward to hear _____ [storyteller] tell about _____ [title of story].

4.8. SHARING OF GIFTS/OFFERTORY

4.8.1. Regular offertory

If yours is a helping hands Sunday, see 4.9.2 below

4.8.1.1 Example wordings— Michael A. Schuler (adapted)

If you are proud of this fellowship, become its advocate. If you are concerned for its future, share its message. If its values resonate deep within you, give it a measure of your devotion. This fellowship cannot survive without your faith, your confidence, your enthusiasm. Its destiny, the larger hope, rests in your hands.

We will now receive the gift of your offering.

4.8.1.2 Alternate Words for Offering -- Edward Everett Hale

I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something. And because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do. —

We will now receive the gift of your offering.

4.8.1.3 Alternate Words for Offering

The offering is a sign and symbol of our uniting together. Because we offer to this fellowship our time, treasure and talent we are able to do more together than we could ever do alone. In that spirit, we now receive our offering.

4.8.1.4 Alternate Words for Offering -- Kelly Richardson-McBee

As we prepare to take this morning's offering, may each of us look into not just our pocketbooks to see how much we have with us. Let us look into our hearts as well and see what is available there - how much love, how much generosity, how much faith, how much gratitude, how much hope - and let us take our offering from that account.

For the gifts which we have received - and the gifts which we, ourselves, are - may we be truly grateful.

4.8.2. Helping Hands offertory

(second Sunday of every month)

Just prior to Offertory, describe what Helping Hands is (e.g.,

Every second Sunday the fellowship dedicates its collections to go to a chosen, often local, beneficiary.

Then indicate the beneficiary group or organization, and introduce a representative of the beneficiary. The representative will then makes a brief presentation about the mission, accomplishments, and needs of the organization (you may stay near the pulpit, or merely be ready to get to the microphone again quickly). In general their presentation should be limited to 3-4 minutes.

*The convener then makes the offertory appeal, and **should always state the following***

All funds not explicitly marked as "for UUFM" will go to the Helping Hands beneficiary.

4.9. READINGS, MEDITATIONS, MAIN SERMON/TALK/REFLECTIONS 4.10. DISCUSSION OPENING

Discussion should be cleared in advance with the speaker. Consider how discussion will enhance or diminish the experience of participants. For example, if there has been an

emotional ending to the reflections, discussion may bring the congregation out of the mood that has been created. On the other hand, questions may deepen the presentation. The speaker may want to open discussion, if any, directly himself or herself, or may ask the convener to join him or her "on stage" to help direct sharing or field questions.

Choosing a good transition from the speaker to discussion can be very helpful for fostering good discussion. It may be appropriate to have a particular question to prompt the fellowship with.

E.g.,

Thank you, _____. We have about ___ minutes for further discussion of today's topic. Perhaps someone would like to start us off by sharing their experiences of _____.

4.10. CLOSING WORDS

4.10.1 — Burton D. Carley (adapted)

Cheered by our community, blessed by our mission, uplifted in mind, and renewed in spirit, go forth

with courage and in peace to meet the days to come. So may it be.

4.10.2 — Gordon B. McKeeman

The worship of the gathered community is now ended. Go in peace. Go in joy. Go in love to share in the ongoing worship of the community in dispersion. Carry with you what is precious to us all: reverence for all life, beauty that displays itself in love, deep, abiding peace.

4.10.3 -- Frances Reece Day, adapted

We came to this place to

To share, to learn, to speak, to listen,

And to grow together in the spirit of peace and harmony and love. Let us leave this place and enter other places the same way.