



# Guest at Your Table 2022-23

## *Worship Service Resources*

### ▶ Theme: Hope. Courage. Action.

Through the Guest at Your Table program, congregations provide vital support to those who need it most, including communities impacted by forced migration, climate disasters, and other human-made crises. This year has seen escalations of violence in places like Ukraine and Burma, devastation to communities around the world due to the climate crisis, and the increased need for solidarity with historically marginalized people seeking refuge within the United States.

UUSC's grassroots partners are asking us to seek hope, find our courage, and take action with them in this critical moment. May the worship resources gathered here offer inspiration and conviction to answer the call and live our Unitarian Universalist values in the world.



### Suggested Hymns and Readings

#### from *Singing the Journey*

*Hymns:*

#1004 Busca el Amor

#1008 When Our Heart Is In a Holy Place

#1018 Come and Go With Me

#### from *Singing the Living Tradition*

*Hymns:*

#77 Seek Not Afar for Beauty

#155 Circle 'Round for Freedom

#159 This Is My Song

#317 We Are Not Our Own

*Responsive Readings:*

#570 Prayer for the Earth

#579 The Limits of Tyrants

#584 A Network of Mutuality

### Chalice Lighting

#### ***"For Our Collective Liberation"***

**by Rev. Deanna Vandiver**

We light this chalice - symbol of our faith alive in this world - naming our vision of collective liberation, and daring to re-member each other into beloved community.

### Readings

[Video from the Loss & Damage Youth Coalition - narrated by Ineza Umuhoza Grace](#)



**“There Are Birds Here”**

by Jamaal May

<https://vimeo.com/uusc/gayt-reading-therearebirdshere>

*For Detroit*

There are birds here,  
so many birds here  
is what I was trying to say  
when they said those birds were metaphors  
for what is trapped  
between buildings  
and buildings. No.  
The birds are here  
to root around for bread  
the girl's hands tear  
and toss like confetti. No,  
I don't mean the bread is torn like cotton,  
I said confetti, and no  
not the confetti  
a tank can make of a building.  
I mean the confetti  
a boy can't stop smiling about  
and no his smile isn't much  
like a skeleton at all. And no  
his neighborhood is not like a war zone.  
I am trying to say  
his neighborhood  
is as tattered and feathered  
as anything else,  
as shadow pierced by sun  
and light parted  
by shadow-dance as anything else,  
but they won't stop saying  
how lovely the ruins,  
how ruined the lovely  
children must be in that birdless city.

*Jamaal May, “There Are Birds Here” from The Big Book of Exit Strategies. Copyright © 2016 by Jamaal May. Reprinted by permission of Alice James Books.*



### Sermon

#### ***"The Power of Every Voice"***

Join the Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt for a sermon that celebrates the annual Unitarian Universalist tradition of generosity and action that is UUSC's Guest at Your Table.

#### **Video of "The Power of Every Voice" by Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt**

*Please note, this sermon references both the video from the Loss & Damage Youth Coalition, narrated by Ineza Umuhoza Grace and "There Are Birds Here" by Jamaal May.*



"The power of every voice is critical in the work for human rights. And here we are once again in community, being invited into our annual ritual of hope and possibility that is at the same time a call to action."

*~ Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt, The Power of Every Voice*

### Stories for All Ages

#### ***"The Parrot and the Eagles"***

**Video of "The Parrot and the Eagles" told by Rev. Laura Randall and illustrated by Hannah Moy**

*Please note, this story contains a forest fire as a central plot point.*

Inspired by the Jataka tales, a collection of Buddhist stories from India, this is a story of honoring frontline leadership and choosing solidarity, highlighting the importance of imagination, teamwork, and doing the right thing even when the right thing might be scary.



Today I have a story for you called The Parrot and the Eagles.  
This story is adapted from the Jataka tales, a collection of Buddhist stories from India.

Once upon a time, a long time ago in an ancient forest, there lived a little, green parrot. This parrot loved the forest. She loved the great, big trees and the dappled sunshine. She loved her friends, the sloth and the ant-eater. She loved flying through the forest canopy and looking for yummy fruit in the branches. Sometimes, when she was feeling adventurous, she would even fly up and out of the forest. From up there, she could see the river, which ran through the valley like a silk ribbon, and the mountains which surrounded the forest, their tops disappearing into the clouds. Sturdy goats lived in the mountains and giant eagles built their nests there.

One day, the parrot woke up from a nap and found that her nest was surrounded in smoke! The forest was on fire! Quickly, the parrot flew up very high, and looking down saw that the fire was spreading quickly. Soon, it would consume the whole forest.

"Oh, dear," said a deep voice next to the parrot. "That is very sad."

Parrot looked over and saw that it was a giant eagle perched on a nearby mountain ledge who had spoken.

"It's a shame, really. It was such a nice forest," continued the eagle. "But don't worry, little parrot. You can stay in the mountains. You will be safe here."

"But my friends!" said the parrot. "Sloth and ant-eater and all the monkeys and deer! They can't escape! What will happen to them?!"

The eagle shrugged a bit with his large wings.

The parrot soared above the forest, fretting as the fire spread. And then she got an idea. She dove down into the river and then flew back up high, right over the fire. She shook her wings and a few drops of water fell onto the flames with a hiss.

Quickly, she dove back into the river and repeated the process again and again. Dive, splash. Fly, hiss!

All of this strange action caught the attention of some of other the eagles, who joined the first eagle on the mountain perch.



After watching several rounds of the parrot diving and flying, putting out a little flame here and there, one of the eagles shouted, "That will never work. Can't you see it's useless? Your wings are too small. You should give up."

Without slowing down, the parrot shouted back, "I may be small, but we are not small together. Together, we can stop the fire. Will you help me?"

The eagles shuffled nervously. Sure, it was a nice forest, but it wasn't like they lived there. And all this diving into rivers and flying over flames looked a little dangerous. The mountain ledge was safe.

Then one of the eagles dove off the ledge and into the river below, just like when she caught fish there. She rose out of the river, her wide wings shimmering with water and splashed it down onto the flames below. HISS!

"Yeah!" cried the parrot and she dove back into the river herself.

One by one the other eagles followed, diving into the river and carrying the water to put out the flames. It took all day and into the night, but finally the last orange flame disappeared and the smoke vanished into the clouds over the mountains.

The exhausted little green parrot slumped against her new eagle friend. "See?" said the parrot. "I knew we were not small together."

"You were right," said the eagle. "Together we were bigger than we ever imagined."

## **Benediction**

Be they pigeons or doves,  
may our offerings remind us that our commitments and our actions  
are how we live our Unitarian Universalism in the world.  
May we follow the leadership of those most impacted by injustice in making  
the world anew.

And may this practice serve as an immense blessing,  
like the release of a giant cloud of birds,  
that startles our spirits into remembering to hope anew.