



Guest at Your Table 2024-25

Worship Service Resources

▶ Theme: Expanding the Welcome Table

Since it began in 1975, the Guest at Your Table program has introduced generations of Unitarian Universalists to our grassroots partners working for justice around the world with your support. This church year, we are celebrating Guest at Your Table's 50th anniversary with the theme "Expanding the Welcome Table."

In these worship materials, you will find hymn and reading suggestions, a link to a video sermon from UUSC's Board Co-Chair, the Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti, and a Time for All Ages on the origins of the flaming chalice.

As we transition into our 50th year and five decades of partner-centered advocacy and activism, you will meet:



- ▶ Young climate activists in the Marshall Islands helping their communities heal from the destructive legacy of nuclear testing by the United States while envisioning a sustainable future for their people;
- ▶ LGBTQ+ leaders in Ukraine offering resources and companionship to the queer community impacted by Russia's full-scale invasion;
- ▶ Haitian academics researching racism's impacts on the experiences of migrants of color in the United States; and
- ▶ Trans organizers forming networks of safety and welcome for trans and gender expansive people forced to flee unsafe communities and states.

Suggested Hymns and Readings

From *Singing the Journey*

Hymns:

- #1013 Open My Heart
- #1018 Come and Go with Me
- #1023 Building Bridges

From *Singing the Living Tradition*

Hymns:

- #110 Come, Children of Tomorrow
- #317 We Are Not Our Own
- #360 Here We Have Gathered
- #407 We're Gonna Sit at the Welcome Table

Responsive Readings:

- #550 We Belong to the Earth
- #584 A Network of Mutuality
- #646 The Larger Circle



Chalice Lighting

"Vessels of Lifesaving Welcome"

by Rev. Michael Tino, [Worship Web](#)

The flaming chalice was first used by the Unitarian Service Committee as a symbol of life-saving refuge for people fleeing persecution in Europe. As we light this chalice, we invoke the love that called people to put their lives at risk to save others. May we be vessels of life-saving welcome.

Reading

"We Who Dwell on the Margins"

by Rev. Wendy Bartel, #154 from [Lifting Our Voices](#)

We who dwell on the margins
know about divisions, arbitrary and
intentional,
like land,
like class,
like culture

We make sharp borders around pieces
of our selves,
and we blur the edges
by being who we are,
by expanding the circle.

Beyond binaries, we multiply
possibilities—
languages, customs, practices,
rituals, and ceremonies—
not one narrative but stories shared.

Separation is illusion.
Love transgresses borders
between you, me, us, them,
between secular and sacred.



We need trust to strengthen our connection.

We must dare to cross
from my world into yours, from
your world into mine,
until we begin to weave a tapestry
of faith,
and wonder aloud:

Whose are we?
What is a nation?
Who can own the Earth?

Sermon

“Joy, Justice, and Commitment”

Join the Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti, UUSC Board of Trustees Co-chair, for a sermon that celebrates 50 years of UUSC’s Guest Your Table program with a personal reflection on the joy, justice, and commitment at the heart of UUSC’s global partnerships.

[Video of “Joy, Justice, and Commitment” by Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti](#)



“Trust that your commitment to bring alive our Unitarian Universalist values in your community parallels and dovetails with our similar work at the global level that is led by UUSC. Trust that the commitment to support vulnerable populations around the planet brings alive our UU commitment to inclusivity, accessibility, and the inherent worth and dignity of each human being. It’s through this trust and this knowing that UUSC creates an impact far greater than what any one of us could do alone.”

Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti, Joy, Justice, and Commitment



Stories for All Ages

Circles of Light by Janeen K. Grohsmeyer

Adapted from the story, "[Circles of Light: The Flaming Chalice.](#)"

In the dark nights and the darker days of World War II, guns blazed all over Europe and airplanes dropped death from the sky. Many people tried to escape from the war. These people were called refugees.

Some Unitarians in the United States decided to help the refugees and formed the Unitarian Service Committee. The committee members went to Europe to try to bring refugees safely out of the war. But the refugees came from many different countries. They spoke many different languages, like German, or Yiddish, or French, or Italian, or Polish, or Hungarian. Most of the refugees did not speak English. Most of the Unitarian committee members spoke only English. How could the Unitarians explain they were there to help? It was difficult for the refugees to understand them.

Dr. Charles Joy was in charge of the committee. He knew that the Unitarians needed a symbol everyone could recognize, no matter what language they spoke. It would have to be a picture, a symbol with no words. That way, anyone could understand the message: "We are here to help you."

Dr. Joy asked an artist named Hans Deutsch for help. Maybe an artist could draw the right kind of picture that could be a symbol for the Unitarians. The two men met in Portugal. Mr. Deutsch understood why a picture would be helpful. He had come from Austria. But now he was a refugee, because of the war. In Portugal, people speak Portuguese. Mr. Deutsch was used to speaking German.

Mr. Deutsch made a drawing of a chalice with a flame, surrounded by a circle. He showed it to Dr. Joy. The symbol really worked. Soon refugees all over Europe began to see this symbol wherever the Unitarian Service Committee went to find and help them.

When refugees saw the picture of a chalice, a flame, and a circle around the chalice that looked like it was protecting it, they knew they could trust the committee members. They did not need to speak English, or even know how



to read, to understand the symbol. The picture gave the message of hope, freedom, and love that the refugees were looking for.

After the war was over, Unitarians began using the flaming chalice and its circle as a symbol in worship.

We, as Unitarian Universalists, have all kinds of chalices. We light a chalice on Sunday morning in worship, and at other times when we gather in our faith home together. Some family homes use chalices during meals or on special occasions. Chalices come in lots of different shapes, sizes, and colors, just like Unitarian Universalists.

The flaming chalice is a faith symbol for the Unitarian Universalists. It is a symbol of bravery, caring, and love. It is a symbol of hope, freedom, and light.

Benediction

As we look to a future that recognizes
our deep mutuality,

may we always set an extra place at the table.

May we intermingle our stories of hardship and hope
as our definition of "neighbor" grows ever larger.

In our uncertain present, may we look to the legacies of justice-makers
and seek out new possibilities unfolding all around the world.

Blessed be and Amen.