

UUSC Solidarity Sunday

Resistance and Rising Together – UUSC and Solidarity

2026 Sample Worship Service

An annual spring program of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, UUSC Solidarity Sunday is a day of learning, commitment, and support for human rights. This year's service highlights UUSC's way of working in solidarity with communities impacted by authoritarian threats to human rights to advance justice and possibility in our times.

Chalice Lighting by Rev. Sheri Prud'homme

The flaming chalice was forged in resistance and hope.

The Unitarian Service Committee first used the image in 1940 in their work to defy the Nazis, bring refugees to safety, and help a broken Europe rebuild.

May this flame rekindle our commitment to a new solidarity, resisting injustice everywhere and rising together to create a world where all life can flourish.

Hymns and Responsive Readings

Hymns from *Sing Out Love*

We Will Rise Together

The Tide is Rising

We Will Carry Each Other

Hymns from *Singing the Journey*

#1023 Building Bridges

#1028 The Fire of Commitment

#1074 Turn the World Around

Hymns from *Singing the Living Tradition*

#112 Do You Hear?

#134 Our World Is One World

#298 Wake, Now, My Senses

Responsive Readings from *Singing the Living Tradition*

#578 This Great Lesson

#579 The Limits of Tyrants

#584 A Network of Mutuality

Story for All Ages

Tai Shan and His Friends Learn about Solidarity by Rev. Sheri Prud'homme

Tai Shan is a panda bear. He and his friends at school were learning about another kind of bear – polar bears – who live very far away in a place called the Arctic. It was very upsetting to Tai Shan and his friends to learn that the sea ice that the polar bears needed to be able to live and to hunt their food was melting due to climate change. The panda bears were familiar with the way climate change was hurting their own bamboo forests high in the mountains of China, but the plight of the polar bears sounded much more extreme to them. Polar bears swimming beyond exhaustion and starving was awful to imagine!

Tai Shan and his friends decided they had to do something! They spent half the school year raising money to buy food and supplies to take to the Arctic to help the Polar Bears. They learned a lot about how to make connections, organize, keep track of things, and raise money. Finally, as the school year ended, they had raised enough funds to arrange for a delegation from their class to take an enormous quantity of bamboo and several ice makers to the Arctic to help the polar bears.

Tai Shan set off with five of his classmates on the voyage. It was tremendously exciting to be traveling to someplace so far away from their own homes and ways of life. It took a long time, and the trip was often uncomfortable. When they arrived at the Arctic, they found that they were not alone, other animals from other places in the world were also arriving to help the polar bears. Foxes, leopards, turtles... you name it. The turtles were weaving platforms they hoped would hold the polar bears while they hunted. The leopards were creating harpoons they hoped would help the polar bears catch seals farther from the remaining sea ice. The foxes were building compounds of modular houses where they hoped the polar bears could live together on some of the more substantial sheets of sea ice. And everyone had brought some kind of food to share. There were piles and piles of things all around that the animals had brought and hoped would be helpful.

The dazed panda delegation looked at their enormous pile of bamboo and their ice makers, and they weren't sure what to do next. A large polar bear walked by and rolled his eyes at them. A mother bear with two cubs steered her young ones in a wide path around the pandas. They started to feel awkward and embarrassed. It was sinking in quickly that what they had thought would be helpful back home might not be helpful at all here in the Arctic.

A smaller polar bear, not quite full grown, noticed Tai Shan and his friends. She hadn't seen other bears before, and she was curious. She came over and introduced herself. "Hi, I'm Anoki" she said. "Hi, I'm Tai Shan, and these are my friends. We've come a long way with things we want to offer to you and the other polar bears. We are upset by what's happening to you. But we're beginning to think what we had thought would be helpful when we were making plans with our class at school, isn't so helpful after all."

Anoki laughed long and loud when she learned the enormous pile of bamboo was something to eat. But her laughter was not unkind. She explained that polar bears eat seals and other mammals from

the sea. Tai Shan explained that in the mountains of China panda bears eat bamboo. No one even mentioned the ice makers because the size of sea ice was something altogether much bigger than any of the pandas had been able to imagine, and clearly the ice makers would be no use at all.

Anoki and Tai Shan and his friends talked for a while until Anoki asked if they would like to come home to her den with her and meet her mother. Tai Shan and his friends agreed. They brought along some bamboo to eat. They walked a long, long way over the sheet of sea ice to Anoki's home. After some initial shock and uncertainty on Anoki's mother's part, she welcomed the panda bears into her den. It wasn't meant for so many bears, but they all managed to squeeze in. The bears talked for a long time. The pandas munched on their bamboo. The polar bears ate meat from the sea mammals they caught that day. Anoki and her mother shared more about the melting sea ice and what life was like for the polar bears. Tai Shan and his friends shared about life in the mountains of China and how their forests were getting smaller and their bamboo struggling to grow abundantly with the changes in the climate. When Anoki's mother told them about the platforms the turtles were building, they laughed together about the impossibility of one of those structures holding up a full-grown polar bear hunting. When Anoki told them about the compounds of modular houses the foxes were building, the panda bears agreed right away that was absurd. Panda bears, like polar bears, were mostly solitary creatures when they were full grown, so they understood each other easily on that one. The panda bears understood then that their own offerings were cute and pathetic. But Anoki could also sense their genuine desire to be of help.

It had occurred to Anoki in recent months that it would be easier for all the polar bears if they could organize themselves to use the existing sea ice more efficiently and equitably. So, she had a lot of questions for the pandas about how they had made connections, organized in their communities, kept track of things, and raised money. The pandas shared what they had learned and were glad their experience could be helpful to Anoki and her mother. As they talked into the night, they also understood more and more deeply how climate change was harming both the pandas and the polar bears, and that working against climate change in their own places would help the other bears even though they were far away.

The next day Tai Shan and his friends shared warm good-byes with Anoki and her mother, and they agreed to stay in touch. The panda bears headed back the way they had come, stopping to pick up their enormous pile of bamboo – and their ice makers. They had a lot to tell their class back home about what they had learned about true solidarity – that it emerges from real relationships with those directly affected by an issue, listening to their knowledge and wisdom, working to meet the needs that *they* identify, learning to set aside one's own assumptions about what would be most helpful, and being *with* others in a shared struggle.

Whenever I think of this story of what Tai Shan his friends learned, it reminds me of the way that UUSC partners with small groups of people all over the world and in the U.S. who are working on things like climate change, advocating for migrants, defending democracy, and protecting the human rights of all people. UUSC starts by being in relationship and listening to what their partners say about what they need. UUSC funnels money from Unitarian Universalists all over the country to

their partners, and they also provide other kinds of assistance and support when they are asked to do so - like help with strategy, communications, or making connections with others doing the same kind of work. In this way, UUSC puts UU values into action in the world.

Prayers and Meditations

From *Liturgies from Below: Praying with People at the Ends of the World*, edited by Cláudio Carvalhaes

We gather to seek asylum from a world that sets neighbor against neighbor.

We gather to seek asylum from the temptation to draw and enforce boundaries that mean we can describe other people as not our problem.

We gather to seek asylum from the worldview that values us primarily as consumers, as wealth-generators, as units of production and consumption.

We gather to seek asylum from the binaries that bind and constrain us....

We name ourselves as asylum seekers.

We pray that in our seeking, we may create that asylum for which we yearn.

We pray that starting here, starting now, our seeking may crack open the empires that we resist and turn away from so that the whole world may be transformed into a place of safe asylum for all.

The Task of Religious Community by Mark Morrison-Reed

The central task of the religious community is to unveil the bonds that bind each to all. There is a connectedness, a relationship discovered amid the particulars of our own lives and the lives of others. Once felt, it inspires us to act for justice.

It is the church that assures us that we are not struggling for justice on our own but as members of a larger community. The religious community is essential, for alone our vision is too narrow to see all that must be seen and our strength too limited to do all that must be done. Together, our vision widens and our strength is renewed.

The Wellspring of Moral Action by Sharon D. Welch from [*Sweet Dreams in America: Making Ethics and Spirituality Work*](#)

The wellspring of decency is loving this life in which people die, people suffer, there are limits, and we make mistakes. The wellspring, then, of moral action is not utopia, not a counterfactual vision, not a declaration that the world could and should be otherwise. Rather, it is a deep affirmation of the joy, richness, and blessing that the world is. The ground of challenging exploitation, injustice, and oppression is not a

vision of how the world could be or will be in the future reign of God, or after the revolution. The ground of challenging injustice is gratitude, the heartfelt desire to honor the wonder of that which is; to cherish, to celebrate, to delight in the many gifts and joys of life.

Gentleness in Living by Richard S. Gilbert in *100 Meditations*

Be gentle with another—

It is a cry from the lives of people battered
By thoughtless words and brutal deeds;
It comes from the lips of those who speak them,
And the lives of those who do them.

Who of us can look inside another and know what is there
Of hope and hurt, or promise and pain?
Who can know from what far places each has come
Or to what far places each may hope to go?

Our lives are like fragile eggs.
They crack and the substance escapes.
Handle with care!
Handle with exceedingly tender care
For there are human beings within,
Human beings as vulnerable as we are,
Who feel as we feel,
Who hurt as we hurt.

Life is too transient to be cruel with one another;
It is too short for thoughtlessness,
Too brief for hurting.
Life is long enough for caring,
It is lasting enough for sharing,
Precious enough for love.

Be gentle with one another.

Suggested Sermon for reflection from Feb 1 in Minneapolis

Rev. Jen Crow - First Universalist Church of Minneapolis, [Come in From the Cold](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QnnvdZ-TGNg&t=3368s) (2/1/26)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QnnvdZ-TGNg&t=3368s>

The sermon speaks to what is required for solidarity and tells stories of how their congregation is showing up with mutual aid, protest, and direct action.

Suggested Sermon for reflection/excerpting

The sermon speaks to Rev. Eckart-Lee's experience answering the call for faith leaders to come to Minnesota and the lessons in solidarity she learned there.

Keeping Each Other Warm: Four Instructions for Solidarity by Rev. Phoebe Eckart-Lee

In late January, I found myself standing in the TSA line at Logan Airport before sunrise, heading to Minneapolis.

Looking around, I saw a surprising number of clergy in collars and scarves and sensible winter coats. Some were Unitarian Universalists. Some were Jewish rabbis, Episcopal priests, United Church of Christ pastors. We greeted one another in the TSA line with the kind of slightly bleary recognition that says: *Oh - you too?*

We were all responding to the same call.

The call had come from a multifaith coalition called MARCH—Multifaith Antiracism, Change & Healing. Organizers there were responding to a dramatic escalation in immigration enforcement in the Twin Cities region. Communities were experiencing raids, arrests, and a level of federal presence that many described as feeling like an occupation. MARCH asked clergy to come bear witness to the escalating federal occupation and immigration enforcement in their community.

The invitation to clergy echoed a moment many of us know from history: when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. called religious leaders to come to Selma in 1965. When injustice escalates, sometimes the call goes out for people of faith to show up, to witness. To stand with communities. To learn what is happening. And to build the relationships and skills needed to respond.

When I first heard the call, my thought was: *I can't go.*

The flight was expensive, the trip last minute. And I didn't think I knew anyone in Minneapolis.

As I talked it through with friends and colleagues, we asked each other the question many of us continue to ask:

What does solidarity require of us?

And then, my calculus changed when, within days of the initial call, I received an email from the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. They had created a fund so that UU faith leaders who felt called to go could get there.

Because of that support, I could say yes.

And as it turns out, I did know people in Minnesota after all. Once I mentioned the trip, a network of friends-of-friends emerged. I had a place to stay—with the parents of a friend’s friend—and suddenly a list of people I could call.

When we arrived in Minneapolis, our host picked us up and drove us straight to the largest Presbyterian church I have ever seen in my life. A huge, wood-carved sanctuary that seats fifteen hundred people. Hundreds of faith leaders gathered there that first day.

We sang together.

We listened to organizers and community leaders.

We received hours of context about what people were experiencing.

And the organizers were very clear: the first day was not about strategy. It was about relationship.

One of the most powerful moments for me was a panel of local organizers describing the work they had been doing: mutual aid networks, rides for children trying to get to school safely, grocery runs for families who were afraid to leave their homes.

One organizer bravely said, “We have no idea what we’re doing.”

Communities were responding in real time to rapidly changing circumstances. There was no playbook for exactly what they were facing.

What they had were relationships, trust, and a willingness to keep showing up for one another.

Many of the clergy attending had traveled from warmer places. I grew up in California, and despite a decade in New England I still feel underprepared for winter.

During one of our trainings, an organizer stood up and said:

“Before we continue, we need to talk about the weather.”

They told us to go out into the church lobby, where ten tables were piled high with warm clothing.

Hand warmers. Thick socks. Jackets in every size. Long underwear. Hats and gloves.

With only a couple days’ notice, the community gathered hundreds of coats and winter supplies for us.

They told us: “Take what you need. You’re going to need it.”

And we did.

That gesture of care—so practical, so immediate—felt like an embodiment of solidarity.

It was love expressed through warm clothing.

Someone there said something that really stayed with me. They said:

“In Minnesota right now, an eviction can be a death sentence.”

Because the cold is not just uncomfortable there. It’s dangerous. It’s life-threatening.

Communities that survive harsh winters know something important:

You survive winter by keeping each other warm.

During the training on non-compliance to authoritarianism, our trainers offered us four instructions.

The instructions were:

1. Don’t freak out.
2. Don’t go over there.
3. Don’t have an idea.
4. Leave if you need to.

Simple. Direct. A little surprising.

At first they sounded almost humorous. But the more they explained them, the more it became clear that these instructions carry a lot of wisdom for moving in solidarity with one another.

The first instruction was: **Don’t freak out.**

Authoritarian systems rely heavily on fear. They rely on panic. If people are frightened enough, overwhelmed enough, they stop thinking clearly. They scatter. They turn on each other. They withdraw.

Fear is a very effective tool of control.

One of the most important ways we can resist authoritarianism is actually quite basic: we refuse to panic.

We stay grounded.

The trainers asked us to reflect on our spiritual lineages.

What are the stories that ground you in nonviolence?

What traditions shaped your sense of courage?

Who are the ancestors—spiritual or literal—who remind you how to stay steady when things become frightening?

It was a practice of remembering where we come from.

The organizers also asked us to think ahead about our spiritual support systems. Who would we call if we felt shaken? Who would pray with us? Who would remind us why we were there?

When fear rises, we need practices that help us steady ourselves and one another.

Take a breath.

Remember your lineage.

Lean on the people who help keep you steady.

Because calm, grounded communities are much harder for authoritarian systems to control.

The second instruction we received was: **Don't go over there.**

During protests or public actions, there are often distractions—situations that pull people away from the agreed-upon plan. Someone shouts something from across the street. A rumor spreads. Suddenly people feel the urge to move—to run toward whatever seems urgent.

But the trainers reminded us that when that happens, the safest and most effective thing is often to stay where you are.

Because the action has a strategy. The organizers have thought carefully about safety, about legal risk, about what message they want the action to communicate. When participants scatter or chase every new development, the whole thing can unravel.

So, the instruction is simple: don't go over there. Stay with the plan.

The trainers framed this instruction as a way of helping people keep their focus during an action. But I think it also reminds us that justice work becomes sustainable when it grows from local relationships.

The movements that endure are not built by people constantly running from one crisis to another.

They are built by people who stay rooted in their communities and keep showing up, again and again.

The third instruction was: **Don't have an idea.**

At first, that sounds a little strange. Aren't ideas good? Aren't movements built on creativity and imagination?

But what the trainers meant was something very practical.

In the middle of a tense situation, people suddenly start having lots of ideas about what everyone else should do. Someone thinks we should move this way. Someone else thinks we should shout something different. And the result can be chaos.

So in the context of a coordinated action, “don't have an idea” really means: don't suddenly improvise your own plan in the middle of a collective strategy.

But the trainers pushed it further than that: the truth is that people have been resisting oppression for a very long time.

There are organizers who have been doing this work for decades. There are communities that already have strategies, networks, and hard-earned wisdom.

So “don’t have an idea” can also mean: don’t reinvent the wheel.

Find out who is already doing the work and join them.

Movements become powerful when people build on what others have already created—when we recognize that we are part of a long lineage of resistance and care.

Not every moment requires a brand-new idea.

Sometimes the most important thing we can do is listen.

The fourth instruction was: **Leave if you need to.**

At first glance, it sounds like a simple logistical reminder. In an action, we all need to do our own risk assessment.

But the trainers framed it as something much bigger than that.

They reminded us that movements are sustained by **human beings**, and human beings have limits.

Some people will realize in the middle of an action that the situation feels overwhelming. Some people have health needs that require stepping away. Some people simply need rest.

And the instruction was clear:

If you need to leave, leave.

There is no shame in that.

Right now, many of us are consuming a constant stream of distressing news.

And sometimes the most responsible thing we can do is step back for a moment.

Leave the news cycle for a day.

Go on a walk.

Let your nervous system settle.

Because movements that expect people to run at full intensity all the time do not last.

The only way we sustain this work for the long haul is if people are allowed to take space and then return.

Leave when you need to.

And then come back when you are ready.

Sustainable justice work is not a sprint. It is a long journey. And caring for ourselves and each other is part of how we keep walking together.

The organizers gave us four positive words to remember this list of “don’ts”

1. Breathe—so that we don’t freak out when the world feels overwhelming.
2. Listen—so that we remain aligned with the strategies and relationships movements are building.
3. Trust—so that we follow the leadership of the communities most affected.
4. Consent—so that we take care of ourselves and each other for the long journey ahead.

And if you remember nothing else, take this from communities surviving an occupation in a Minnesota winter:

We survive the cold by keeping each other warm.

May it be so.

Call to Action!

We are living in a time of escalating injustice, but also one of powerful resistance and rising together to imagine and create new possibilities for our collective life together. Those in power seek to divide us, weaken our movements, and strip away fundamental rights – but we know that justice becomes more possible when we build solidarity together. Our faith in human dignity and the interdependence of all life, our belief in collective liberation, and our commitment to justice call us to act.

The UU Solidarity Initiative is a nationally coordinated effort of UU and UU-adjacent organizations to provide resources and opportunities to build strong communities of solidarity with immigrant communities who are under attack.

Join the UU Solidarity Initiative today!

<https://sidewithlove.org/uu-solidarity-initiative>

Authoritarianism thrives when people feel powerless. The UU Solidarity Initiative builds connection and collective power – to unite in solidarity, to act boldly, and to advocate for justice. First & third Fridays of the month, 11am PT, 12pm MT, 1pm CT, 2pm ET. [Register here.](#)

By joining the Solidarity Sessions you will receive:

- **First Fridays** will include top-level updates and time for connection and shared learning
- **Third Fridays** will be deeper dives into the administrative updates and the impact the changes they will have on folks seeking immigration relief. (Ex: Naturalization, DACA, asylum, TPS, victim's services, etc.)

Join today by going to <https://sidewithlove.org/uu-solidarity-initiative>

To make a gift in support of UUSC's partnership with Solidarity Network and UUSC's grassroots partners around the world, go to uusc.org/uusc-Sunday. Checks can be made out to UUSC. Please put "UUSC Sunday" in the memo line.

Many, many thanks!

Suggested Benediction "Hope for the Community of Earth" by Rev. Sheri Prud'homme

May faith in the spirit of life,
Compassion for the humanity in each other,
And hope for the community of earth
Be ours now and in all the days to come.

Resources for Further Reflection

["How We All Become Minnesota: Brittany Packnett Cunningham,"](#) Podcast We Can Do Hard Things – Amanda Doyle, Glennon Doyle, and Abby Wambach

["Live from The Great Northern,"](#) Podcast How to Survive the End of the World - Autumn Brown and adrienne maree brown

["Why I keep building bridges even when I'm full of doubt,"](#) by Hilary Hodge

["Solidarity Challenges the Status Quo: A Conversation with Leah Hunt-Hendrix and Astra Taylor"](#) with Rithika Ramamurthy

Book - [Solidarity: The Past, Present, and Future of a World-Changing Idea](#), by Leah Hunt-Hendrix and Astra Taylor (Pantheon, 2024)

Exploring Solidarity Religious Education Curriculum for All Ages

[Pre K – 2nd Grade](#)

[3rd to 5th Grade](#)

[6th to 12th Grade](#)

[Adults](#)