Worship and Resource Packet

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**Call to Worship**

Don’t leave your broken heart at the door:

Bring it to the altar of life.

Don’t leave your anger behind

It has high standards

And the world needs vision.

Bring them with you,

and your joy

and your passion

Bring your loving

and your courage

and your conviction

Bring your need for healing

and your powers to heal

There is work to do

And all that we need to do it

is here.

So let us come in

and then reach beyond the walls of this church

Let us fill this sanctuary with love

and then harness its power to stop oppression

Let us join together in worship

and together let us stand on the side of love.

*Rev. Angela Herrera*

We are called to gather in worship as a beloved community. We are called to set aside distractions and anxieties, that we might touch deeper springs and be renewed. We are called to seek and to share comfort for the hurts that afflict. We are called to desire more love, more justice, and life more abundant. We are called to truth, to mercy, to humility, and to courage. Let us answer the call with the yes of our lives.

*Rev. Kirk D. Loadman-Copeland*

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.

*Rev. Laurel S. Sheridan*

**Responsive Reading**

We gather in reverence for what is holy this day

Bringing many names for the sacred.

*From our common journey,*

*We join as one community,*

*One body of people,*

*Standing on the side of love.*

Among us: the weary, the sick, the heartbroken,

The joyful, the light of heart, the brave.

One people, in one circle of life,

Moved by the same spark.

*In covenant together,*

*we answer a call of justice,*

*speaking out against oppression,*

*reaching out to a wider world that*

*teaches us,*

*humbles and heals us,*

*as we work to heal it.*

We give thanks for this call, O Love, Our Source,

Though it is not always easy.

*We arrive through these doors with many private burdens,*

*With secrets and regrets.*

*We are in need of forgiveness*

*And in danger of despair*.

A greater spirit, a greater story, moves in this place,

One in which our world may be reborn

Again and again anew

Because the sacred dwells among us,

And blesses our yearning for wholeness.

*Let us have the courage to go out into the world and change it,*

*To bring the world into ourselves, and be changed.*

Let us speak out with courage,

And act with compassion*.*

*May our journeys—of the spirit, and of mission—*

*always be life affirming and for justice,*

*However we may know you—*

*As God, as Truth, as Love—*

*Let them be in your name. Rev. Angela Herrera*

**Prayers**

May I become at all times, both now and forever

A protector for those without protection

A guide for those who have lost their way

A ship for those with oceans to cross

A bridge for those with rivers to cross

A sanctuary for those in danger

A lamp for those without light

A place of refuge for those who lack shelter

And a servant to all in need

*Buddhist prayer of peace*

Universal Spirit of love, O God within each one of us, whose power reaches to the stars, whose love connects us one to another and to all creation -- we are one.

We cry out with the pain of this broken world. With all our capacity for love, we ask: why can't we wrap this world in love and bring healing? We confess that we are not always able to express the love we know is inside us. We feel constricted and hesitant, afraid that our love will be rejected or misused.

We pray for forgiveness, that we may learn to forgive others and accept their forgiveness of us. Help us let go of fear so we can move on, opening our hearts to one another. We pray for empowerment that we may learn to love more fully. Let our love shine forth from this sacred place that others may know that here they will find freedom, acceptance, community and love.

We give thanks for the blessings of love in our lives and for the chance we have to love again and always. May we feel the love inside us connecting with the love in each other and the stars. Amen. Blessed Be.

*Rev. Dr. Dorothy May Emerson (1997 UUMA Worship Materials Collection; altered)*

O Spirit of Life, we pray, not to request your presence, but to call ourselves into it, for the sustaining

peace, the wisdom, the silence are nearer than breath. You are the ground of being, the mover, the

fire, and the place of rest. Within us lies your strength.

These are our prayers:

For the wounded let there be comfort.

May the weary be gathered in strength.

Let the downtrodden be lifted up,

And may we have the courage to make it so.

You move through our lives, O Spirit,

And through us your work is done.

With clarity

let us give voice to compassion,

Without wavering

May we stand on the side of love.

Amen.

*By Rev. Angela Herrera*

**Readings**

*From Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.’s 1967 address to the anti-war group Clergy and Laity Concerned:*

When I speak of love I am not speaking of some sentimental and weak response. I am speaking of that force which all of the great religious have seen as the supreme unifying principle of life. Love is somehow the key that unlocks the door which leads to ultimate reality. This Hindu-Moslem-Christian-Jewish-Buddhist belief about ultimate reality is beautifully summed up in the first epistle of Saint John: “Let us love one another; for love is God and everything that love[s] is born of God and know[s] God.”

Strength to Love. Philadelphia Fortress Press, 1963 (1981, 1986). P. 5.

*From Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”:*

But though I was initially disappointed at being categorized as an extremist, as I continued to

think about the matter I gradually gained a measure of satisfaction from the label.

Was not Jesus an extremist for love: “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good

to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.”

Was not Amos an extremist for justice: “Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness

like an ever-flowing stream.”

Was not Paul an extremist: “ I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.”

Was not Martin Luther an extremist? “Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise, so help me God.”

And John Bunyan: “I will stay in jail to the end of my days before I make a butchery of my conscience.”

And Abraham Lincoln: “This nation cannot survive half slave and half free.”

And Thomas Jefferson: “We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal…”

So the question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be.

Will we be extremists for hate or for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of

injustice, or for the extension of justice?

Why We Can’t Wait. New York: Harper and Row, 1964. p 102.

*1 Corinthians 13:1-13*

If I speak in the tongues of men and angels, but have not love,

I have become sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

And if I have prophecy and know all mysteries and

all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains,

but have not love, I am nothing.

And if I dole out all my goods, and

if I deliver my body that I may boast

but have not love, nothing I am profited.

Love is long suffering,

love is kind,

it is not jealous,

love does not boast,

it is not inflated.

It is not discourteous,

it is not selfish,

it is not irritable,

it does not enumerate the evil.

It does not rejoice over the wrong,

but rejoices in the truth

It covers all things, it has faith for all things,

it hopes in all things, it endures in all things.

Love never falls in ruins;

but whether prophecies, they will be abolished; or

tongues, they will cease; or

knowledge, it will be superseded.

For we know in part and we prophecy in part.

But when the perfect comes, the imperfect will be superseded.

When I was an infant,

I spoke as an infant, I reckoned as an infant;

when I became [an adult],

I abolished the things of the infant.

When I was an infant,

I spoke as an infant, I reckoned as an infant;

when I became [an adult],

I abolished the things of the infant.

For now we see through a mirror in an enigma, but

then face to face.

Now I know in part, but then I shall know

as also I was fully known.

But now remains faith, hope, love, these three;

but the greatest of these is love.

**Inspirational Quotes**

“Love is all we have, the only way that each can help the other.”

- Eurpides

“We are all born for love. It is the principle of existence and its only end. “

-Benjamin Disraeli

“Love is to the moral nature exactly what the sun is to the earth.”

-Honore Balzac

“If you judge people, you have no time to love them.”

- Mother Teresa

“All, everything that I understand, I understand only because I love.”

- Leo Tolstoy

“Since love grows within you, so beauty grows. For love is the beauty of the soul.”

- Saint Augustine

**Questions for Theological Reflection**

How do you see justice unfolding and how can we be part of it?

How do we, as people of faith, respond to inequality and oppression?

How do we ensure that the divisions among us—racism, classism, ableism, sexism, heterosexism, and religious plurality—don’t prevent us from reaching for something better?

How do we act from both a sense of righteousness and humility?

What does it mean that listening is an act of love?

In what ways are you part of truly inclusive communities? In what ways do you fall short?

Where is there opportunity to create more inclusive community?

Do you ever think of yourself as a member of a class, i.e. “upper class,” “rich,” middle class,” “working class,” “struggling,” “poor.” etc.? If so, what categories describe your feelings? Why or why not? Do you hold shame in talking about these ideas out loud with others?

Can you think of times when you have contributed to being an “oppressor?” What about times when you were the “oppressed?”

Cornel West said, “Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public.” What does that mean to you? What does our love look like in public? How must we open ourselves up to make this possible?

Imagine what the world would look like the day after tomorrow if “the revolution—the great transformation” came–where economic disparity between the uber---rich and the majority who are struggling was bridged. Where scapegoating of LGBTQ people, immigrants, Muslims, and others was eradicated. What does this world look like to you?

Unitarian Universalism is a relational, covenantal religion. Who is embraced in our covenant? How? Who is excluded in our covenant? How?