

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fort Myers
Order of Worship
July 13, 2025
Loving Social Justice

*** Please rise in body or spirit*

Gathering Music

Jeff Letts, Organ
Lesley Peterson, violin

Welcome Jennifer

Good morning to all of you joining us live and on Zoom.

Welcome to the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fort Myers where our mission is to Love, Grow and Serve.

At UUCFM we are people of many genders and sexuality; gender diversity is sacred. It's the foundation of our denomination. We celebrate pride month all year long!

My name is Jennifer Grant and I am a Worship Associate and Past President of our congregation. I share today's pulpit with Andrea Joy, fellow Worship Associate and current President of our congregation. I am joined by our growing choir, Jeff Letts, our organist, Lesley Peterson, our violinist. And an incredible tech team that makes a blended service possible.

We would like to extend a special welcome to our guests this morning. We hope that you find a welcoming friend, or our words bring you spark. With the world we live in today, it is comforting to find a safe space, to be yourself and be accepted. Please complete a "Connection Card" found in the Narthex at the Welcome Table or virtually in the chat box. The most important gift you can give us is a chance to get to know you!! Members may use the card for a change in

contact information or a caring concern you want our Pastoral Care Associates to address.

Today's service will NOT follow the usual format - Don't worry we will still have the usual church elements. While our music director, Jon Dalton is taking this Sunday off, we are sharing joyful music throughout the service - This is a recurring theme when Andrea and I are in the pulpit - we are here to shake things UP!

You may have noticed that we have a limited number of printed versions of our order of service this morning. Social justice includes Climate justice. We wish to ensure that we are being responsible stewards of our planet's resources, by limiting the number of printouts we produce.

First Mix Up: We are going to get the announcements out of the way NOW! So we are not disrupting the flow of our service.

Please join us for coffee and conversation after the service in Hobart Hall. To your right as you leave the sanctuary.

There are Social Justice tables in Hobart with purple table cloths. An info table with flyers from SJ Sharing Partners, as well as Social Justice Committee T shirts for sale. We also have post cards designed for sending to your representatives, and a list of names and addresses. Please take and send post cards! There is also a table for seating, with purple mugs- sit if you want info or to discuss Social Justice specific issues.

Our Non-Monetary Sharing Partner is The Gulf Coast Humane Society. The congregation can help by donating pet food, blankets, towels, cleaning supplies, and other pet related items. As a no-kill facility, the pets of the Gulf Coast Humane Society remain in their care until they find their forever home.

Keep in mind- **No Organized** potluck next week! Our lovely kitchen volunteers have asked for the summer off, and potluck tends to be much more intensive for the kitchen volunteers. They will be providing us with coffee, but not going all out for potluck. If you still want to bring something

yourself to share, you will be responsible for putting it out and cleaning up after it. You will also have to keep in mind not to be in the way of our kitchen volunteers, who will be setting up coffee, when you bring your potluck dishes in. If anyone else wants to volunteer for hosting potlucks over the summer, that would be fabulous, and you should see Dorothy.

For those of you on Zoom, please stay after the service for some Zoom informal conversations.

Good morning to all of you joining us live and on Zoom.

Welcome to the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fort Myers where our mission is to Love, Grow and Serve.

At UUCFM we are people of many genders and sexuality; gender diversity is sacred. It's the foundation of our denomination. We celebrate pride month all year long!

My name is Jennifer Grant and I am a Worship Associate and Past President of our congregation. I share today's pulpit with Andrea Joy, fellow Worship Associate and current President of our congregation. I am joined by our growing choir, Jeff Letts, our organist, Lesley Peterson, our violinist. And an incredible tech team that makes a blended service possible.

We would like to extend a special welcome to our guests this morning. We hope that you find a welcoming friend, or our words bring you spark. With the world we live in today, it is comforting to find a safe space, to be yourself and be accepted. Please complete a "Connection Card" found in the Narthex at the Welcome Table or virtually in the chat box. The most important gift you can give us is a chance to get to know you!! Members may use the card for a change in contact information or a caring concern you want our Pastoral Care Associates to address.

Today's service will NOT follow the usual format - Don't worry we will still have the usual church elements. While our music director, Jon Dalton is

taking this Sunday off, we are sharing joyful music throughout the service - This is a recurring theme when Andrea and I are in the pulpit - we are here to shake things UP!

You may have noticed that we have a limited number of printed versions of our order of service this morning. Social justice includes Climate justice. We wish to ensure that we are being responsible stewards of our planet's resources, by limiting the number of printouts we produce.

First Mix Up: We are going to get the announcements out of the way NOW! So we are not disrupting the flow of our service.

Please join us for coffee and conversation after the service in Hobart Hall. To your right as you leave the sanctuary.

There are Social Justice tables in Hobart with purple table cloths. An info table with flyers from SJ Sharing Partners, as well as Social Justice Committee T shirts for sale. We also have post cards designed for sending to your representatives, and a list of names and addresses. Please take and send post cards! There is also a table for seating, with purple mugs- sit if you want info or to discuss Social Justice specific issues.

Our Non-Monetary Sharing Partner is The Gulf Coast Humane Society. The congregation can help by donating pet food, blankets, towels, cleaning supplies, and other pet related items.

As a no-kill facility, the pets of the Gulf Coast Humane Society remain in their care until they find their forever home.

Keep in mind- No Organized potluck next week! Our lovely kitchen volunteers have asked for the summer off, and potluck tends to be much more intensive for the kitchen volunteers. They will be providing us with coffee, but not going all out for potluck. If you still want to bring something yourself to share, you will be responsible for putting it out and cleaning up after it. You will also have to keep in mind not to be in the way of our kitchen volunteers, who will be setting up coffee, when you bring your

potluck dishes in. If anyone else wants to volunteer for hosting potlucks over the summer, that would be fabulous, and you should see Dorothy.

Call to Worship- Andrea

This morning our call to worship is in the form of a song, as expressed in this video rise up by Andra Day. This video has the lyrics on the screen, so please feel free to sing along!

Call to Worship

[Rise Up Andra Day video w/ lyrics](#)

 **Andra Day - Rise Up | Lyrics**

****Chalice Lighting Jennifer**

We light this chalice for love—
a love that sees the brokenness in the world
and still chooses to show up.

We light it for justice—
not as a distant dream,
but as a path we walk with trembling hands
and open hearts.

We light it in the name of hope—
hope that whispers in the face of cruelty,
"You are not alone. Keep going."

In this moment of struggle—
when fear shouts, when hate builds walls—
we gather not to turn away,
but to turn toward each other,
rooted in the faith that love can still rise.

May this flame be our promise:
To love boldly,
to work for justice tirelessly,
and to never give up on a world made whole.

****Covenant** by James Vila Blake

Love is the spirit of this congregation and service its law. This is our great covenant: To dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, and to help one another.

Centering Andrea

In times like these, our faith does not retreat.

It rises.

Unitarian Universalism is not a tradition that turns away from the world's pain.

It is a living faith rooted in covenant and shaped by generations of activists and prophets—people who believe that revelation is ongoing, that every person carries a spark of the divine, and that “giving life the shape of justice” is the work of our hands and hearts.

We do not affirm the worth and dignity of every person as a slogan—we live it as a mandate.

Our theology insists that love must be embodied in systems, structures, and policies that protect and uplift.

In the face of suffering and oppression, our faith responds with courage, not retreat.

Those words came in an email from the UU Side with Love.

I think we all understand how social justice issues play an important part in our UU faith, but I wanted to point out the very earliest setting of how that came to be, leading to how our flame and chalice became the symbol of our faith.

In 1939, the Nazis began invading Sudetenland, causing many to flee their

homes seeking safety. Unitarian minister, Reverend Waitstill, and social worker, Martha Sharp, were living in Wellesley, Massachusetts, when the two decided to live their faith and join the refugees in Prague, intending to contribute what they could to the persecuted peoples escaping war. In 1940, the Unitarian Services Committee— now the UUSC—was established to coordinate humanitarian efforts and offer aid to European refugees during World War II. In 1941, an Austrian artist, Hans Deutsch, was forced to flee Austria and ended up in Portugal, where he met Reverend Charles Joy, then executive director of the USC. The Service Committee was new, founded in Boston to assist Eastern Europeans, among them Unitarians as well as Jews, who needed to escape Nazi persecution. From his Lisbon headquarters, Joy oversaw a secret network of couriers and agents. Joy asked Deutsch to create a symbol for their papers, telling the artist that he needed "to make them look official, to give dignity and importance to them, and at the same time to symbolize the spirit of our work... When a document may keep a man out of jail, give him standing with governments and police, it is important that it look important." Deutsch created the flaming chalice design, which was made into a seal for papers and a badge for agents moving refugees to freedom. In time it became the symbol of Unitarian Universalism all around the world.

Our spiritual symbol of chalice and flame were born out of the need for recognition during times of great social justice crises. And so today, in the face of current suffering and oppression, the symbol of our faith shines, as we respond with courage, and refuse to retreat.

Stones of Intention Jennifer

Each week, we are invited to come forward and place a stone to symbolize your intentions, reflections, prayers, joys, sorrows, or milestones in your life.

Today, we focus our intentions on justice—not as an abstract ideal, but as a living commitment.

Some of us carry anger, grief, or frustration at the injustices we see in the

world—toward immigrants, toward the LGBTQIA+ community, toward people of color, and toward the Earth itself.

And yet, we also carry hope.

Andrea:

Hope that love can still move mountains.

Jennifer:

Hope that courage can grow in our community.

Andrea

:Hope that justice is not only possible—but already beginning, in small, persistent ways.

Jennifer:

As you come forward today, you may place your stone for a cause that moves you, for a person who inspires you, or for the strength you need to act with compassion and courage.

I want to place the first stone for our congregation – a safe haven for every human being – we are a safe place for immigrants, for people of color, for LGBTQIA+ community - for everyone. Love is at the center of our faith and our spiritual home.

Final Stone Andrea

I place final stones in prayers for Racial justice...

Gender justice...

and Climate justice.

And one last stone for all that remains unspoken within our hearts and minds and spirits

Sermon Together

Andrea:

We are our Grandmother's prayers
We are our Grandfather's dreamings
We are the breath of our Ancestors...
To continue...
We are the Ancestors of the Future!
What kind of Ancestors will we choose to be?

You may recognize those words from our hymn We Are. If you watched the recorded video of GA's service, you might recognize that final statement from there. This morning we are going to talk about ways in which we can step forward as Ancestors of the Future. Ways in which we can feel comfortable answering our grandchildren, when they ask us where we were When...

Choir leads singing

For each child that born
A morning star rises and sings
To the universe who we are

Jennifer:

Everyday a child is born who is marginalized or oppressed. Born into communities that face systemic discrimination, such as black, indigenous or other people of color.

Andrea:

Racial injustice is alive and well in Lee County.
In early 2025, in response to federal pressure against "race-based decision-making," the Lee County School District eliminated its DEI office, reassigning its director to "continuous improvement." This move sparked concern from community leaders, including the first minority school board member who warned, "How can you teach a child if you don't understand their background, their culture?"

Jennifer:

At Babcock Neighborhood School, parents filed federal civil rights complaints alleging students were called “monkeys” and “cotton pickers,” and even appeared in plagiarized, racially degrading images. The Lee County NAACP demanded leadership changes. At least four students' parents sued the school and staff. Recently, James Muwakkil, president of the Lee County NAACP, said that the group has postponed the filing of a federal civil-rights complaint with the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division in a breakthrough in the case.

Andrea:

The Fort Myers High School baseball scandal revealed a slur-laden group text from an assistant coach, followed by a team-wide walkout that left the two remaining Black players isolated on the field. The season was canceled, federal lawsuits were filed, and a Title VI investigation ensued

These school-focused events reflect a broader, unaddressed pattern of racial hostility within Lee County's educational settings.

Jennifer:

The Lee County NAACP and school district recently signed a civil rights settlement after data showed students of color were disciplined at higher rates, with more suspensions and expulsions than white peers. The agreement includes restorative practices, bias training, transparency in data, and public forums.

Andrea

How do we address this issue with Love?- We want to hear from you! How do you feel we should address these issues of racial discrimination and bullying? Melyssa will be coming around with a microphone to help amplify your voices, to share your ideas on this subject.

(Listen to and amplify those minority voices.

Call out Bigotry and hate speech

teach children kindness, fairness, and human rights

*Stand up for people being harassed, Intervene if safe to do so
support human rights organizations)*

Choir leads singing

For each child that born
A morning star rises and sings
To the universe who we are

Andrea:

Everyday a child is born who is marginalized or oppressed. LGBTQIA+ children grow up in unwelcoming families, communities, and environments.

Every day, queer/LGBTQ+ youth experience family abandonment and rejection after coming out to their families. This rejection can range from subtle forms, like when kids notice emotional distance or dismissal, to more extreme actions, such as being physically abused, verbally abused, or disowned, or even being kicked out of the home.

Jennifer:

According to research, "44 percent of LGBTQ+ youth in state custody report they were removed, ran away, or were kicked out of their homes for reasons directly related to their identity." This over representation in foster care and juvenile systems reflects a need for a societal shift in the ways we view rejection of LGBTQ+ youth.

Family rejection isn't simply about disagreement; it places youth in direct physical, emotional, and psychological danger.

Many of these children turn to substance abuse, suffer depression, and often become suicidal.

The Trevor Project 2024 national survey found that 39% of LGBTQ+ young people seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year — including 46% of transgender and nonbinary young people. LGBTQ+ youth of color reported higher rates than White peers. More than 1 in 10 (12%) LGBTQ+ young people attempted suicide in the past year.

Andrea:

Trans people across the United States are feeling increasingly unsafe—not because of who they are, but because of the climate being created around them. Over the past few years, hundreds of laws have been proposed and passed that directly target transgender people—especially trans youth. These laws restrict access to gender-affirming healthcare, limit what names and pronouns can be used in schools, and even criminalize simply using the bathroom that matches one’s identity. These laws send a dangerous message: that being trans is something to fear, control, or erase. Beyond the political impact is a deeply personal impact for all transgender individuals.

Jennifer:

Tomorrow is International Non-Binary People’s Day, a day to celebrate and raise awareness of non-binary people, who do not identify within the traditional gender binary. The term “non-binary” describes someone who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary folks may identify as being both a man and a woman or as falling completely outside these categories. Many non-binary people also identify as transgender, though not all do. Many consider themselves gender fluid, sliding into whatever feels right for Them.

Andrea:

While American culture may reinforce the notion that gender exists as a strict binary, we know there is so much more to it. Non-binary people show us every day that knowing one’s self and identity is a powerful thing that no one can strip away. However, all of those laws targeting Transgender individuals affect those who are non-binary, and non-binary will become the next buzzword with those politicians seeking to erase anyone who is not like them.

Jennifer:

How do we address this issue with Love?- We want to hear from you!

(Listen to and amplify their voices

Respect Pronouns

Be a role model for kindness and inclusion

Show them they can be their authentic selves around you OK

Take action at a local level to create safe spaces for them

Get involved with the fights ahead, speak out to your representatives regarding laws, support local organizations)

Choir leads singing

For each child that born

A morning star rises and sings

To the universe who we are

Jennifer:

Everyday a child is born who is marginalized or oppressed. Girls are growing up in extremely patriarchal societies.

What is happening right now in the United States for girls and women is deeply frightening—and it's not just isolated events, but a growing pattern of control, violence, and erasure. Since the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, millions of women have lost access to safe and legal abortion. In many states, girls who are survivors of rape or incest are being forced to carry pregnancies they never chose. Some women have nearly died because hospitals delayed care, fearing prosecution under new laws that criminalize doctors for performing lifesaving procedures. At the same time, there is a surge in efforts to restrict what girls can learn in school about their own bodies, their history, and their rights—limiting access to sex education, banning books by and about women, and silencing conversations about gender equality and consent.

Andrea:

In the broader culture, violence against women remains epidemic. One in three women will experience sexual or physical violence in their lifetime, yet survivors are still too often disbelieved, blamed, or dismissed. In politics, women's rights are being rolled back under the guise of "protecting

children” or “preserving tradition”—while the voices and leadership of women, especially women of color, are met with hostility, online harassment, and real-world threats. And young girls are growing up in a society where their worth is constantly measured against impossible standards, while their safety and autonomy are increasingly under attack.

Jennifer:

What makes this especially chilling is how normalized it’s becoming—how quickly people are told to “move on” or accept these losses as political disagreements. This is a coordinated effort to strip away the rights, dignity, and agency of half the population.

How do we address this issue with Love?- We want to hear from you!

(Encourage young women to pursue higher educations

Listen to their voices, support female owned businesses, artists, musicians, authors

Be a role model! Women, show that you have power and stand up to the patriarchal oppressions that you encounter. Men, show solidarity and refused to accept misogynistic words from Others.

Support organizations like Planned Parenthood to allow young women to have appropriate health care)

Choir leads singing

For each child that born
A morning star rises and sings
To the universe who we are

Andrea:

Everyday a child is born who is marginalized or oppressed. Children are born into poverty or economic injustice

In our country today, the reality of poverty and economic injustice is becoming harder to ignore, even as many try to look away. Over 37 million

people in the U.S. live below the poverty line, including one in six children. Families are working two or three jobs and still can't afford rent, food, or basic healthcare.

Jennifer:

Homelessness is rising in cities and suburbs alike, and millions of Americans are one emergency away from financial collapse. The wealth gap continues to widen at an alarming rate—while wages stagnate, corporate profits soar, and billionaires gain more political influence than ever. In many communities, people can't afford insulin, school supplies, or childcare—but they're told to “work harder” or “budget better,” as if poverty is a personal failure rather than a systemic crisis.

Andrea:

*How do we address this issue with Love?- **We want to hear from you!***

(Recognize the human dignity of those you see who have no homes

Donate to food pantries, volunteer at soup kitchens

Support or work at a shelter

Offer professional skills to help in job training

Assist in registering people experiencing homelessness to vote)

Choir leads singing

For each child that born
A morning star rises and sings
To the universe who we are

Andrea:

Everyday a child is born who is marginalized or oppressed. People who are born with, or develop, disabilities are faced with navigating inaccessible systems.

Ableism is real!

"Ableism is the process of favoring, fetishizing, and building the world around a mostly imagined, idealized body while discriminating against those bodies perceived to move, see, hear, process, operate, look, or need

differently from that vision.”

—[Rebekah Taussig](#), in *Sitting Pretty: The View from My Ordinary Resilient Disabled Body*

Jennifer:

So often we hear about a disabled person who has “overcome” their limitations, we see videos of people doing things their bodies don't appear to be able to do, posters about overcoming disability- those are fetishism of disabled people. Those are taking one individual's accomplishments, and turning them into a generalization. Turning them into an “Inspiration”, to uplift others and make you feel better. In reality it turns into victim shaming, allowing others to look at the disabled and say “why can't you do what that person did”, or even “you must be doing something wrong if you're disabled”.

Andrea:

Buildings will have steps, but no ramps or elevators. Buildings will have no accessible bathroom facilities, including no place to change adults who wear diapers, or claimed accessible restrooms don't have enough space to turn a wheelchair around. Store aisles are too narrow, or overcrowded with merchandise, for wheelchairs to maneuver through. A wheelchair user is moved without their permission. A person having an attendant or caregiver pushing their wheelchair is ignored, and people speak only to the person pushing the chair, as if the one in the chair is not capable of conversation.

Store lights are so bright and the music coming through the speakers is so loud that many people with neurodivergence (neuroSPARKLE or SPICE) must seek stores that have specialized hours for people requiring sensory accommodations.

People with intellectual disabilities are 7 times more likely to become the victim of sexual assault. People with disabilities can be forcibly institutionalized. Children with learning disabilities are told that they will never amount to anything.

A person's opinion is dismissed because they are on the spectrum. A couple must fight to maintain custody of their children because they have

intellectual disabilities.

Employers are legally allowed to pay people with disabilities below minimum wage. People with disabilities often have to rely on supplemental income. People with disabilities often have to choose between a good paying job or Medicaid coverage because of income regulations.

Jennifer:

How do we address this issue with Love?- We want to hear from you!

(Learn about how to make systems more accessible for those with disabilities

Listen to their voices. Hear the stories of the struggles of people with disabilities.

Support disabled owned businesses, artists authors, musicians

Speak out when you shop at a store that has no appropriate access, and educate about proper accessibility)

Choir leads singing

For each child that born
A morning star rises and sings
To the universe who we are

Jennifer:

Everyday a child is born who is marginalized or oppressed. Immigrants, refugees, or those without legal protection are born in the United States or migrate here looking for a safe place to call home.

Right NOW in our great state of Florida - Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier has created a temporary immigrant detention facility on an abandoned Everglades airfield about 45 miles west of Miami, nicknamed "Alligator Alcatraz." Alligator Alcatraz is cruel and inhumane, using the environmental dangers of the alligator and python infested water surrounding the facility, to restrict movement. The site lies in a protected, ecologically sensitive area, raising alarms among environmental groups and Native tribes like the Miccosukee and Seminole—whose ancestral

lands are impacted. Tribal leaders emphasize that the Big Cypress region is sacred land with historical and cultural significance, not a vacant spot to be exploited.

Andrea:

On June 27th a suit was filed in federal court seeking an injunction until a full environmental review and public-comment period are completed. State and federal officials dismissed the filing as "routine delay tactics." The facility began accepting detainees on July 2. People held without due process, under horrific conditions, in cages under heavy duty tents. Lack of water, not just for drinking but for bathing, poor toilet facilities, generators that fail- leaving, them without electricity, without AC, in incredibly hot and humid conditions.

This social justice issue combines Racial injustice on multiple levels, not only affecting those who are profiled and detained, but also those Indigenous peoples who have Sacred lands within the Everglades. This issue also creates concerns for climate justice because of the environmental impacts, and the lack of study of these concerns.

Jennifer:

Alligator Alcatraz raises moral and ethical questions about how we treat vulnerable people, especially: Asylum seekers fleeing violence, children and families in distress, and people with NO CRIMINAL RECORDS! This policy disproportionately affects Black and Brown immigrants, especially those from: Latin America. Haiti, and African nations. It reinforces systemic racism within immigration enforcement, continuing a long history of criminalizing migration and othering non-white communities.

Andrea:

How do we address this issue with Love?- We want to hear from you

(Support organizations such as Friends of the Everglades or Conservancy of Southwest Florida

Write or call your legislators to demand a stop to the facility

Participate in demonstrations

Language: Stop calling this a "detention center." Call it what it is: a

political prison. A migrant concentration camp. Words matter.)

Choir leads singing

For each child that born
A morning star rises and sings
To the universe who we are

Andrea:

Everyday a child is born who is raised in activist households. Children whose parents were involved in civil rights, LGBTQIA+ rights, labor rights, climate justice, or peace work. People who grew up learning the language of justice, equity, and compassion. People who have deep empathy and awareness.

Everyday a child is born with a strong sense of fairness and empathy, even if they don't belong to an oppressed group themselves. They become: Allies, Accomplices, and Advocates.

Showing love and bringing joy into social justice work is not just possible—it's essential. Joy sustains the movement, love gives it meaning, and together they transform what could be heavy, into something deeply human and hopeful.

Jennifer:

Here's what we can do.

- Build Relationships, Not Just Movements

Share meals. Break bread. Ask people for their stories, not just their needs.

Celebrate each other's languages, music, holidays, and traditions.

Center marginalized and oppressed voices—let love begin with listening and making space.

Andrea:

- Create Joyful Resistance

Use music, dance, poetry, and color at rallies and vigils.

Host community celebrations of cultures and stories—joy is resistance.

Make space for kids to play and people to laugh, even in the midst of struggle.

Jennifer:

-Practice Radical Hospitality

Offer sanctuary or support for those seeking it.

Create “welcoming teams” for the marginalized and oppressed in our town, church, or school.

Help folks navigate systems—court dates, job searches, health care—with compassion, not charity.

- Speak Out with Compassion

Write letters to the editor, sign petitions, call lawmakers—with stories and heart, not just facts.

Remind the public: marginalization and oppression isn’t a “problem,” it’s a human experience full of love, courage, and hope.

From this point forward, at every resistance and social justice protest, I want everyone (who is in town and able) to SHOW UP wearing their purple or green social justice UUCFM t-shirts and establish a meeting place – so our bodies can be our STRONG message against any type of injustice

Andrea:

- Bring it into Worship and Spiritual Practice

Light a chalice or candle for marginalized or oppressed people

Offer prayers, blessings, or meditations on courage, safety, belonging.

Include stories of immigrants in sermons or readings. Let love guide the narrative.

Through all of these things, all of these ideas, including the ones you yourselves presented, we become warriors for our democracy, and what is right.

I’d like to include here a quote from Robert Reich in a post I found this

morning:

In these ways, being a warrior for democracy enables us to remain hopeful and strong in these cynical times.

being a warrior for justice - for the rule of law, for equal political rights, for human rights- enables us to find meaning and purpose in these dark times.

Being a warrior against brutality, bigotry, and cruelty enables us to lead honorable lives in these dishonorable times.

Being a warrior against tyranny enables us to be on the right side of history.

As we examine all of these social justice issues from the Unitarian Universalist perspective, from a caring human perspective, from the perspective that every individual has inherent worth and dignity, we express ways in which we identify what kind of Ancestors of the Future we wish to be. By reaching out and creating ways in which we show our activist selves, we show our grandchildren who we are and who we were When...

Jennifer:

Our next video is a unique Juneteenth performance by Sweet Honey in the Rock, of the wonderful hymn that we based much of this sermon around, and you can follow along the video with *Hymn #1051*

Video: [We Are with Sweet Honey in the Rock](#)

 **Sweet Honey In The Rock - We Are (Juneteenth)**

Offering

Jennifer:

As we come together in the spirit of generosity, we are reminded that our gifts extend beyond financial contributions. Each of us carries unique talents and valuable time that can greatly enrich our community. Whether it's lending a helping hand, sharing a skill, or offering a kind word, your contributions in every form are threads that weave the fabric of our shared experiences.

One of the ways we live our spiritual values in the world is by making them real through the form of financial contribution. I invite you to enliven your commitment to this community and be generous in giving to support the work of this Congregation during this challenging time.

Every month we also donate funds to a local community organization who shares our values. Our Community Sharing partner this month is Visualtiy.

Steve Marcantonio, VP of Visuality to speak

(If Steve doesn't make it-

The mission of Visuality is to enhance and sustain the health and well-being of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer plus communities and allies by providing activities, programs, educational events, and services that create community, empower community members, provide essential resources, advocate for civil and human rights; and embrace, promote and support our cultural diversity.)

Andrea:

Your order of worship has information about Breeze, our new on-line giving platform, which will make it much easier for you to exercise your generosity. You have so many options to give. You may write an old-fashioned check and put UUCFM or Sharing Partner in the memo line, or use an envelope and check mark your choice and drop it into the offering basket. Envelopes can be found at the end of the pews, for your convenience. Or you can put cash or change into the basket.

All undesignated contributions not in envelopes will be received by Visuality. Unmarked envelopes will be designated to UUCFM.

During the Offertory, please place your Connection Card and offering in the bag, or follow the link in the chat box. The offering will now be generously given and gratefully received.

Offering Music

****Words of Gratitude**

By the work of our hands, and the work of our hearts, our love is made real. May we be grateful for all that is given, and grateful for all that is shared.

Andrea:

Our final video expresses our desire to turn the world around, to being a more Just world. The words are on the screens with the video, and you can follow in your books with Hymn #1051. With this song in our hearts we extinguish the chalice. Join the Muppets and Harry Belafonte in singing, and dance at your heart's desire

Video: Turn the World Around with Harry Belafonte and the Muppets (#1074)

 **Harry Belafonte and The Muppets - Earth Song (short version)**

****Extinguishing the Chalice**

Closing Words Andrea

All of these social justice concerns can weigh heavy on our hearts and minds and spirits. As Unitarian Universalists we feel deeply about the dignity and value of every being, and feel the distress of when that is not acknowledged by our society, by our government. Bringing all of these to the forefront today was intended not only to create awareness, but to help us find ways in which we can use our Love at the Center values to be Advocates and Activists. It is my wish that we leave this space this morning with a Hope for the future, a hope that we can find ways to advance.

I leave you with words by Robert F Kaufmann

We have come together to share our deepest concerns, speaking and singing words of inspiration and hope. We have committed ourselves to do what we can to ease the burdens of those who suffer, to stand for decency and compassion. We have pledged to work for a more wholesome environment for us and for all the generations that will follow.

But these are just words. The hymns we sing are just songs. All our

reflections are just idle thoughts. When we convert them all into loving and responsible action throughout the week, then and only then will this morning become what we want it to be—a time of worship.

Blessed be, Aho, and Amen

Jennifer

As we leave the Sanctuary, join once more in singing and dancing with the Muppets, greet your neighbors with joy in your hearts, and join us in Hobart Hall.

Postlude:

[Video: Turn the World Around with Harry Belafonte and the Muppets](#)

 **Harry Belafonte and The Muppets - Earth Song (short version)**