

## Opening Words

Come in from the cold:  
Make yourself a religious home,  
If only for these brief moments –  
In spite of time,  
Which shall soon bear us away from one another.  
Make this a family.  
Treat us as your own:  
Make us a religious family –  
If only in this space,  
Which we make sacred  
By our connections here and beyond.  
Come on in.  
Make yourself at home.  
Sing and love life.

*Andrew Backus*

“There are millions of Unitarians in America today, but not in Unitarian churches. There are millions of Unitarian [Universalists] who do not know its history. They do not know its basis. They do not know its purpose. They do not know that they themselves are Unitarian [Universalists]. If...[our] religion is to shape the world to peace and freedom, these people must be joined together to advance its cause.

Religions with worn-out creeds cannot do it. Ir-religion cannot do it. Confused religions cannot do it. If the strength of a free person's faith is to be the under-girding of the world tomorrow, a world so full of dangers, yet so rich in opportunities, and if the people of America must rise to take their place within this venture, then there must be hundreds of new churches, and multitudes of pioneers. This will come about partly if Unitarian [Universalists] will preach their faith, for there are many who are ready to hear it. But it will come about most surely if Unitarian [Universalists] are willing to live their faith....”

*A. Powell Davies*

### **In This Sacred Place**

Into this place may we come  
To share, to learn, to speak, to listen,  
And to grow together in the spirit of peace and harmony and love.

*Frances Reece Day*

We come to love a church,  
the traditions, the history,  
and especially the people associated with it.

And through these people,  
young and old,  
known and unknown to us,  
we reach out --

Both backward into history  
and forward into the future --

To link together the generations  
in this imperfect, but blessed community  
of memory and hope.

*Andrew C. Kennedy*

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.

*Kirk D. Loadman-Copeland*

### **Our UU Values**

We have come together today,  
Not because we expect to find answers here,  
But rather because we expect to be encouraged in our questioning.

We have come together today,  
Not because we expect to find perfect people here,  
But rather because we hope to find authentic people here.

We have come together today,  
Not because we are certain of our own righteousness,  
But because we are continually searching for the right, the good, the uplifting.

We have come together today,  
Not because we seek absolution for our sins and failures,  
But rather because we acknowledge that our imperfections and seek courage to make amends for those failures to ourselves and others.

We have come together today,  
Not because we need to be told what to believe and how to act,  
But rather because we need each other's encouragement to act according to our own beliefs.

We have come together today,  
Not because we are hoping to find God in a scripture or a ritual,  
But rather because we are hoping to discover the divinity within our hearts and within the hearts of others.

We have come together today,  
Not because we believe that holiness exists within these walls alone, but rather to have our hearts and minds directed to the holiness in the world.

For all of these reasons, we have come together today.

*Suzanne Meyer*

We are here that we might have life  
and have it more abundantly,  
so that we might share it with others.  
Come, let us join together  
as a generous people.

*John C. Morgan*

We gather this day to seek in the midst of our fragmented selves the unity which enfolds us all; to summon in the midst of the everyday that secret taste of danger, that peace which beckons beyond the trifles and deepens the human heart; to open our self-righteous selves to that judgment which we have tried not to hear. We gather to worship that which is greater than we and which is our highest calling; to offer a gift of time for whatever God wants unfolded to unfold in our midst.

*John H. Robinson, Jr.*

### **Reflection on the UUA Purpose and Principles**

We, the member congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association,  
covenant to affirm and promote:

The inherent worth and dignity of every person

We promote the first and most honored principle of our association by opening our pulpit to all. We affirm the dignity of every person when we value their thoughtful and heartfelt opinions enough to provide a forum to express them.

Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations

When our speech challenges the injustice and inequity we see and experience in the world, we are called to do so with compassion for the oppressor as well as the oppressed.

Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations

It is often through words that we demonstrate acceptance or rejection of someone else's spiritual journey. By choosing our words carefully when expressing our individual beliefs, we can encourage others on their chosen path by intentionally acknowledging the multiplicity of spokes to the spiritual center.

A free and responsible search for truth and meaning

How better to affirm and promote a free and responsible search than to provide a marketplace for those who are searching to share the fruits of their quest.

The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large

Free speech is the cornerstone of democracy. When repressive regimes seize power, speech is the first freedom they crush. When people rise up, it is because they are emboldened by speech that is free.

The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.

This is our challenge: to broaden the sphere of our influence, to build a community of those outside these walls. If today strengthens our convictions, then we have done well.

Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

We are intimately connected and profoundly dependent on one another. Not the least of what we need from one another is the infusion of new ideas, new ways of thinking, that help us to better understand each other and ourselves.

*Michael E. Sallwasser*

We come together for common purpose, to support one another and to proclaim the Good News of this liberal faith in this hurting world...

Let us promise us that our first words will be affirmation for one another, not argument.

Do we need to change ourselves, do we have to become something different to make a difference?

Who we are is not the question, the question is what we are called to do.

Our task is to know a religious life, a spiritual life ... with a commitment to make the Kingdom of God real in our world.

Either one without the other is incomplete...

We weave our lives into a tapestry made up of countless stories, where the warp and the woof hold both human triumph and human tragedy.

It is our faith that we weave into a tapestry of countless stories and that will bind us together and allow us to see pattern of community which can sustain us all.

We search for a time, and a way, to let hope and history rhyme.

Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord? Who shall walk on that holy ground?

We are the only ones. There is no else. There never has been.

Amen.

*Adapted from a sermon by William Sinkford (Where Race and Class Unite)*

As we gather together this morning,  
May we learn to recognize and affirm  
The pieces of possibility --  
The bits of good -- we bring.  
May we encourage rather than control;  
Love rather than possess;  
Enable rather than envy.

Allowing our individual gifts to weave a patchwork of peace:  
The soft deep blue of sensitivity and understanding;  
The red energy of creativity;  
The white heat of convictions;  
The risky, fragile green of new growth;  
The golden flashes of gratitude;  
The warm rose of love.

Each of us is indispensable  
If we are to minister to a broken and wounded world.  
Together, in our gathered diversity, we form the whole.  
So be it.

*Bets Wienecke*