

Crossing the Bridge for Justice

Selma Sunday: March 8, 2015

Sample Order of Service and Worship Resources

Chalice Lighting & Opening Words

In the vicious maltreatment of defenseless citizens of Selma, where old women and young children were gassed and clubbed at random, we have witnessed an eruption of the disease of racism which seeks to destroy all America. No American is without responsibility. The people of Selma will struggle on for the soul of the nation but it is fitting that all Americans help to bear the burden. I call therefore on clergy of all faiths to join me in Selma.

—Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., March 8, 1965, 50 years ago today

Responsive & Unison Readings from *Singing the Living Tradition*

#584 “A Network of Mutuality” by Martin Luther King, Jr.

#463 (My heart is moved...) by Adrienne Rich

#488 “Hold Fast To Dreams” by Langston Hughes

Reading

If Martin Luther King Jr. is right that the arc of history is long, but it bends toward justice, a new movement will arise; and if civil rights organizations fail to keep up with the times, they will be pushed to the side as another generation of advocates comes to the fore. Hopefully the new generation will be led by those who know best the brutality of the new caste system—a group with greater vision, courage, and determination than the old guard can muster, trapped as they may be in an outdated paradigm. This new generation of activists should not disrespect their elders or disparage their contributions or achievements; to the contrary, they should bow their heads in respect, for their forerunners have expended untold hours and made great sacrifices in an elusive quest for justice. But once respects have been paid, they should march right past them, emboldened, as King once said, by the fierce urgency of now.

—Michelle Alexander, [*The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*](#) (The New Press, 2010, p. 260)

Prayers

[“A Prayer for Hard Times”](#) by Rev. Christian Schmidt

[“We Are Not Done”](#) by Rev. Audette Fulbright Fulson

Hymns and Songs from *Singing the Living Tradition*

#6 “Just As Long As I Have Breath”

#95 “There Is More Love Somewhere”

#149 “Lift Every Voice and Sing”

Other Music

“Ella’s Song” by Bernice Johnson Reagon, Sweet Honey in the Rock

“Avila” by the Wailin’ Jennys

Inspiration and Ideas for Sermons and Rituals

- [“Who Are My People? A Black Unitarian Universalist on Selma and Ferguson”](#) by Kenney Wiley, October 15, 2014
- [“Selma’s Challenge”](#) by Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed, November 1, 2014
- “The New Civil Rights Movement” ([audio recording](#)) by Rev. Barbara Gadon and Brittany Ferrell, November 16, 2014
- 50 years ago marchers in Selma linked arms as they crossed the bridge; Today witnesses at Black Lives Matter ‘die-ins’ link arms. Let us link our arms in prayer (responsive reading) as we dedicate ourselves to cross the bridge for justice.
- Light candles with the intention of re-crossing the bridge to Selma and dedicate ourselves to justice today.
- Use rituals from bridging ceremonies to re-cross the bridge to Selma and Justice today.

Suggested Offering: The James Reeb Fund for Multicultural Ministries & Leadership

The James Reeb Fund for Multicultural Ministries and Leadership supports multicultural growth throughout the UUA and in Unitarian Universalist congregations. This includes supporting congregations doing voting rights work, racial justice organizing, and programs such as Finding Our Way Home, a retreat for religious professionals of color.

- [How to make a Selma Sunday Gift \(PDF\)](#)
- [Gift Information Form \(PDF\)](#)
- [Credit Card Donation Form \(PDF\)](#)

Invitation to Action

We Remember Selma: Black Lives Matter Vigils (see below)

Closing Words

The idea whose time has come today is the idea of freedom and human dignity, and so all over the world we see something of freedom explosion, and this reveals to us that we are in the midst of revolutionary times. An older order is passing away and a new order is coming into being. ... The role of the church [is] to broaden horizons, to challenge the status quo, and to question and break mores. ... The church has a major role to play in this period of social change ... [it must] remain awake through this revolution.

—Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., UUA General Assembly [Ware Lecture](#), 1966.

Take Action

Host a **Selma Sunday Vigil** from 2:30–3:30pm Central Time on March 8 to correspond with the time of the march in Selma. Bring “We Remember Selma” and “Black Lives Matter” and “Love” signs. Reach out to activists and faith leaders in your community and hold your vigil together.

See Standing on the Side of Love [Tips for Vigils](#). Send photos and captions to love@uua.org for posting to the Standing on the Side of Love Facebook page.

Resources above were drawn from the Ferguson Worship Packet, Ohio River Valley Clergy Group, uua.org/SelmaSunday, #BlackLivesMatter Worship Materials, Worship Web (uua.org/worship), and the hymnal Singing the Living Tradition.

For more resources, visit www.uua.org/selmasunday.