

Saturday Plenary Worship - June 27

Opening Hymn

Our Opening Hymn this morning will be *We Would be One*, #318 from *Singing the Living Tradition*. Please rise in body or spirit as we sing the tune *Finlandia*, written by Jean Sibelius with text by Samuel Anthony Wright.

*We would be one as now we join in singing
our hymn of love, to pledge ourselves anew
to that high cause of greater understanding
of who we are, and what in us is true.
We would be one in living for each other
to show to all a new community.*

*We would be one in building for tomorrow
a nobler world than we have know today.
We would be one in searching for that meaning
which binds our hearts and points us on our way.
As one, we pledge ourselves to greater service,
with love and justice, strive to make us free.*

Our Democratic Process – Paul Rickter

This afternoon, we will be practicing one of our seven principles ("The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process") by voting in the election of leaders in our Association, including the election of a new UUA President. To ensure that our democratic process works well, it's important for us to understand what we need to know as we head to the polling place.

First of all, please make sure you have the signed ballot stub of your credential card with you. This is how we verify that you haven't already voted by absentee ballot. Please try not to lose your ballot stub, but I can authorize you to get a new one if you have lost yours.

Second, the lines at the polling place are by the state your congregation is located in. So, if you live in Rhode Island and attend a Massachusetts congregation, you will need to be in the Massachusetts line.

Third, by the rules of the General Assembly Planning Committee, distribution of literature within xxx feet of the polling place is prohibited. If you are a volunteer for one of the candidates, please be aware of where you can and cannot hand out literature to voters.

Fourth, we will begin counting ballots as soon as the polls close. Results of the Presidential election will be given to the two candidates and posted outside the Plenary Hall and online as soon as they are known. I will formally announce the results at a worship service tonight at 8:00 immediately before the Ware Lecture.

And finally, please be aware that the polling place is staffed by hardworking UU volunteers who are trying to do the best job they can. If the line gets long, please be patient. If there is any problem with voting credentials, I or my assistant secretary will be there to try to sort it out as quickly as we can.

Thank you for your participation in the election.

Invocation/Chalice Lighting – Keith Arnold

This morning's worship service brings us into a space of contemplation and reflection, a pause before the business of the day. We turn to the symbol of our faith, the flaming chalice, to remind us of our unity of purpose. I invite you to respond to this musical chant, your words are:

Leader: Flaming Chalice, with your light,

Congregation: Flaming Chalice, with your light,

Leader: Reunite us, unify.

Congregation: Reunite us, unify.

Leader: Bring us to a common goal,
Direct our passion towards the whole

Leader: Flaming Chalice, with your light,

Congregation: Flaming Chalice, with your light,

Leader: Reunite us, unify.

Congregation: Reunite us, unify.

Leader: Higher service will we find
Not divided, but united.

Leader: Flaming Chalice, with your light,

Congregation: Flaming Chalice, with your light,

Leader: Reunite us, unify.

Congregation: Reunite us, unify.

Leader: Flaming Chalice, with your light,

Congregation: Flaming Chalice, with your light,

Leader: Reunite us, unify.

Congregation: Reunite us, unify.

Leader: Reunite us, unify.

Congregation: Reunite us, unify.

Homily/Closing Prayer – Tamara Payne-Alex

On election day, my grandmother, a bright capable woman who loved word puzzles and poetry, would swap out her farm jeans for pastel pants and matching floral blouse, brush on pink lipstick, and gather her large white handbag. With a sparkle in her blue eyes she would walk out to the big Ford LTD where my grandfather would be waiting still in his shirt sleeves and tie from work. The two would wave cheerfully as they drove off to the polls to cancel out each others votes.

You see my grandparents saw eye to eye on the rights of women and they shared an atheist religious perspective, but they had differing views on politics. For close to 60 years my grandmother voted the Democratic ticket, and my grandfather remained to the last a staunch Republican. Yet even knowing that they effectively cancelled out each others votes, year after year they still faithfully went to the polls. Voting was an act of love for democracy and for their country.

Today, as we discern which leaders are best suited to move Unitarian Universalism forward to meet the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow, we are exercising a faithful stewardship. We will seek wisdom in the words of our religious ancestors, we will discuss the future of our faith with members of our congregation, we will look into the eyes of our UU brothers and sisters to understand what brings them here and holds them here, and we will search the open and hopeful faces of our children for glimpses of their tomorrows.

With all that and more in our hearts we turn, then, to face the grace, generosity and courage of those willing to serve us as leaders. And while we see eye to eye on the inherent worth and dignity of every person and we agree that we are a part of the interconnected web of all existence, we will have different opinions on who will provide the leadership for our faith going forward. But, no matter how lively and spirited our discussions, today will be filled with good humor and good will. For voting is an act of love for democracy and for our faith.

I invite you to join me in prayer:

Spirit of Love and Hope that transforms gatherings into communities and thoughts and words into wishes and prayers, gently guide our hearts and minds today as we participate in choosing the next leaders for our beloved faith. Whether or not we actively cast a vote individually, our collective imagining of who we will be, what we will be, how we will be tomorrow infuses our lives today with such promise and possibility. We are grateful. Spirit of Wisdom and Peace, may we be our best selves in our discernment process, seeking out diverse perspectives and searching for our truths with openness and integrity. And may we know for certain that our love, our faith, our hope makes every vote cast a “yes” vote for our future together. May we be glad and rejoice in these things.

Blessed Be. Amen.

Love Will Guide Us - John Hubert

Our closing song will be Sally Rogers' ***Love will Guide Us***, from *Singing the Living Tradition*. Please rise in body or spirit and sing this song of peace and unity as we participate in our democratic process.

*Love will Guide us, peace has tried us
Hope inside us will lead the way.
On the road from greed to giving
Love will guide us through the long night.*

*If you cannot sing like angels
If you cannot speak before thousands
You can give from deep within you
You can change the world with your love.*

*Love will Guide us, peace has tried us
Hope inside us will lead the way.
On the road from greed to giving
Love will guide us through the long night.*