

Melanie Davis, PhD, CSC, CSE, CSES Unitarian Universalist Lay Speaker



Dr. Melanie Davis provides turnkey worship services that take listeners on spiritual journeys in words and music. She inspires self-reflection, self-acceptance, and spiritual growth.

Melanie eases your worship planning by providing opening and

closing words, readings, sermons and hymns. A gifted singer, she also performs preludes and musical interludes with your in-house accompanist or choir.

A lifelong UU, Melanie brings to your pulpit a deep understanding of and commitment to our religious movement, plus 15 years of lay speaker experience. She is the Unitarian Universalist Association's (UUA) Our Whole Lives Program Manager, and author of *Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education for Older Adults* and the UU Views on Sex pamphlet. She is in the UU Trauma Response Ministry.

She trains human services professionals through her firm Honest Exchange and is a partner in the New Jersey Sexual Wellness Center. She is co-president of the Sexuality and Aging Consortium at Widener University.

Melanie holds a BA in Mass Communications and minor in Women's Studies as well as an MEd and PhD in Human Sexuality Education. She is a Certified Sexuality Counselor, Sexuality Educator, and Educator Supervisor through the American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists. She is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Society for Community Ministries.



Story telling during Staff Chapel at the UUA, Boston, MA.

People are saying...

"In addition to having a firm grasp of our traditional UU liturgy, Melanie understands the experiential aspects of worship design. She pays particular attention to the needs of parishioners throughout the lifespan and includes elements for all ages to connect with the service theme."
Rev. Jennifer Kelleher, Minister (2013-2018), Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Somerset Hills, NJ

"By acknowledging the delicacy, complexity, intractability, and significance of your own struggles around racism, you inescapably but gently called on us to examine the role that race plays in our own lives, often unconsciously."
Rev. Paul Beckel, Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship, WA

"Your well-paced sermon was delivered with warmth, empathy and humor enhanced with music and poetry. It flowed seamlessly to make the experience memorable for everyone present."
Lynn McKay, South Fraser Unitarian Congregation, Surrey, British Columbia, Canada

"*Life Lessons in a Toolbox* was an amazing reflection on challenging times, and you offered an encouraging path forward. Loved your readings and musical selections!"
Carol Levin, UU Congregation of Somerset Hills, Somerville, NJ

"Your use of humor, solid intellectual understanding of your theme, and reference to varied religious traditions created a very engaging sermon. Your singing with our house band was music ministry at its best."
Peter Horton, Central Unitarian Church, Paramus, NJ

"You offered a magical package -- beautiful songs, a great story for the kids; and an inspiring sermon that was really worth hearing and remembering."
Jack Drucker, President, Unitarian Church of Montclair, NJ

"You really changed my way of thinking about faith. I do have faith in the power of love and caring we give and receive. I felt blessed hearing you on Sunday."
Linda Darks, Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship, WA

"I loved your frankness and honesty. There was an intimacy to your sermon that is rare in public speaking."
Visitor, Unitarian Universalist Church of Somerset Hills, NJ

Worship Services

All programs will be tailored to your Order of Service.

Life Lessons in a Toolbox

Buying an older home has meant many repairs and opportunities to revive skills my father taught me long ago. Who taught you valuable lessons, and what were they? Which long-dormant wisdom or skills might be useful in a changing world?

Coddiwomple!

The Old English word *coddiwomple* means “to travel purposefully toward an as-yet unknown direction,” much like this service, which threads sermon segments through up-tempo music on themes of spiritual exploration and the call of the road.

Driving Toward the Tornado

We may be fearful when facing a choice between the known and unknown, or stability and possible chaos. What's the secret to finding safety on the other side? Using a road trip across the US as a framework, Dr. Davis will share her learnings about bravery, fear, grief, resilience, joy, and renewal.

Searching for a Catalyst

What do you long for, and what inhibits you from accessing it? Learn how a search for truth and meaning can take you from a state of longing to a new state of being.

Sexuality Through a UU Lens

This service addresses the UUA's commitment to sexual justice and inclusivity and the Our Whole Lives sexuality education program's values of Self-Worth, Responsibility, Sexual Health, Justice and Inclusivity. OWL is co-published by the Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church of Christ.

This service is FREE to UU congregations.

Reconnecting with the Spirit of Life

When we reach a point of emotional and/or spiritual exhaustion, we cannot contribute meaningfully to efforts to end racism. This powerful service explores white privilege through white and African-American voices.

A UU Take on Faith & Miracles

Language can trigger emotional responses related to a listener's spiritual journey. *Faith* and *miracles* are two hot-button words relevant to the lives and beliefs of religious liberals. Anecdotes and scientific facts build appreciation of these constructs from a non-theist perspective.

Additional Services

Turnkey worship services for delivery by your minister or lay speakers.

Workshops, seminars, and OWL facilitator training.

Soloist for worship and celebrations.

Answers@MelanieDavisPhD.com

908-568-8349

Special-Occasion Programs

Ingathering

This service combines the traditional joining of waters from summer explorations with a look forward: What is each member's commitment to your congregation's mission in the coming year?

The Masks We Wear

This fall-themed service explores the masks we hide behind and the risks and benefits of being transparent with others.

Adaptable for use year-round.

Little Gifts, Big Expectations

Often, the best gifts are not what we ask for. This lighthearted Christmas-themed service looks at gifts that didn't match expectations but were perfect after all. Child friendly.

Engaging Intimately with Death

A friend's or loved one's terminal illness can lead us to feel fear, discomfort, and anxiety. Learn how to move past personal concerns in order to engage with others from a place of vulnerability, humility, humor, and service.

Stop Fixing; Start Listening

When crisis strikes, our most important ministry is to help those in distress find inner reserves of strength. Learn about the UU Trauma Response Ministry and gain compassionate response techniques you can use with others in your life.

This service is FREE to UU congregations.

Jumping into Change

Are you listening to what calls you? Be inspired by the voices of people who changed course in mid-life. From new careers to trapeze lessons and a political campaign, each shift required reflection, courage, and a willingness to take a leap.

The Abstract Art of Parenting

The Second Principal can be expressed in the parenting of and caring for children, oneself, siblings, aging parents, the Earth and her creatures. This service illustrates ways we can parent with compassion, creativity, and commitment.

Honoring Your Inherent Worth & Dignity

Unitarian Universalists covenant to affirm the inherent worth and dignity of all people but may neglect to affirm our own. Learn five ways to build self-esteem through affirming and realistic self-talk.

Jaguars, Sugar Daddies and Lonely Hearts: Shattering Myths about Sexuality and Aging

Older age can be a rich and enjoyable life stage, yet stereotypes and misunderstandings may decrease older adults' rights to sexual identity, sexual expression, agency and pleasure. This service promotes change through education and advocacy.