



Soul Matters

Living Love Through The Practice of Freedom



**Worship Research
June 2025**

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About Online Permissions, Multi-Platform Support & Referencing Resources

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A Reminder About Partial Texts and *Pointing not Publishing*: To honor legal and relational standards, we do not include the full pieces of authors’ works unless we’ve received explicit permission to do so. We want all users to understand that these worship packets are research packets not publications, which means we focus on pointing to where you can find fair use and publicly available pieces, rather than on publishing original writings and full resources. Our main service to subscribers is theme-based *curation* and *research*, done in the service of saving professionals and lay leaders time.

A Note About Author Titles: Many of the authors we refer to are ministers. Some ministers prefer to be credited with their title “Rev.”, others don’t, and still others are fine either way. Our practice is to follow whatever practice was used in the source material we reference.

Calendar Connections

View our full-year calendar [HERE](#)

June 2025

Click on the hyperlinked names of each event for more information or inspiration.

Interfaith

- [Pentecost](#) (Christian) - June 8, 2025 (more [here](#))
- [Shavuot](#) (Jewish) - June 1-3, 2025 (more [here](#) and [here](#))
- [Summer Solstice/Litha](#) (Pagan/Wiccan) - June 20, 2025 (more [here](#))

Unitarian Universalists

- Norbert Capek celebrates first [Flower Ceremony](#) - June 4 (1923)
- [General Assembly](#) - takes place June 18 - June 22, 2025.
- [Olympia Brown](#) was ordained - June 25 (1863)

National & Cultural Holidays

- [Pride Month](#)
- Anniversary of the [Pulse nightclub shooting](#) in Orlando - June 12, 2016
- [Father's Day](#) - June 15, 2025
- [Juneteenth](#) Emancipation Celebration - June 19 (more [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#))
- [World Refugee Day](#) - June 20 (more [here](#))
- [National Indigenous Peoples Day](#) (Canada) - June 21
- [St. Jean Baptiste Day](#) (Canada - Quebec) - June 24
- [Stonewall Uprising](#) - June 28 (more [here](#) and [here](#))

For Fun and On the Fringe

- [National Garden Week](#) - First week of June
- [National Trails Day](#) - First Saturday in June
- [U.N. World Environment Day](#) - June 5 (Sponsored by a different country each year)
- Celebration of [Senses Day](#) - June 24 (more [here](#) and [here](#))

Chalice Lightings & Opening Words

The Healing in Freedom *

Rev. Gretchen Haley

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

Freedom has a rhythm to it
a longing our bodies know
without words,
a movement away
from everything small and scared,
a waking up to possibility,
healing backwards, and forwards
Even now, we are beginning again –
unafraid of this much mercy, tenderness, pleasure
we come to lean in,
to learn the sound of liberation
like the sound of our names
receiving, and releasing
We come to be free
for more than ourselves
to call love the greatest liberty
to sing of loyalty, courage, and
kindness
to remember we are all
doing the best
we can
Despair hasn't gotten us yet,
nor overwhelm –
Which is, a kind of miracle -
surrounded as we are
by this much
beauty.
Come, let us worship, together.

Beacon of Freedom *

Rev. Tracy Johnson

Full piece at

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting/beacon-freedom>

[Permission Source](#)

We kindle our chalice flame this morning
Awakening the fire of our ancestors in our hearts
Beacon of freedom held out to light the way...

Let Us Remember *

Rev. Jay Wolin

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

As we come together
Let us remember
Those who have come before us
Both known and unknown
And sacrificed so we could have
The opportunities we have
Let us think about those yet to come
Both known and unknown
And the world we will leave them
Let us act with our values
The impact of which is
Both known and unknown
Let us move forward with hope
For a world we can imagine
And one we cannot fathom
As we light this chalice
Let it light the path
As we move forward
In worship together.
Together in freedom.

Beautifully Bound *

Rev. Scott Tayler

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

Notice now, this flame.
Seemingly so singular.
Flickering unfettered.
Dancing all alone.
Yet, pull back. Look with more attentive eyes.
And slowly the chalice cup comes into view.
And the air, while unseen, keeps the flame alive.
All of it a reminder,
that being lovingly surrounded,
and beautifully bound
is what sets us free.
May this be the gift
of our precious hour.
May we too pull back.
And see ourselves anew.
How tenderly tethered we've become.
And how wonderfully,
that has set us free.

Do Not Be Alone Right Now *

Rev. Karen G. Johnston

Full piece at

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/affirmation/do-not-be-alone-right-now>

[Permission Source](#)

Gathering together grows courage...

These things add up: your one thing & my one thing; his one thing & their one thing & her one thing...

Any liberation – all liberation — is collective liberation. My freedom is bound with yours and yours with mine...

A Protest and a Party * (For pride month)

Rev. Hannah Roberts Villnave

Full piece at

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/opening/protest-and-party>

[Permission Source](#)

People sometimes ask: Is Pride a protest

Or a party? And the answer is

Of course

Yes...

For Fathers & For Fatherhood * (For Father's Day)

Rev. Peter Friedrichs

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

For sleepless nights awaiting the curfew-breakers

For anxious hours as a driving instructor

For hours spent on sidelines, cheering

And watching school plays, sometimes “resting our eyes,”

For the pressures of bread-winning

And “wait ‘til your father gets home.”

For teaching moments and mentoring moments,

For making up answers when you just don’t know,

But are expected to because you know everything

For scrapes and boo-boo kisses and Band-Aids,

For hugs and kisses and silliness and play

For bedtime stories and early morning ice time

For all the after-shave and ties received as gifts

For handing over car keys and waves good-bye

For father-daughter wedding dances

And cradling grandchildren for the first time

For all the moments and all the meaning in the

role of a lifetime,

We light our chalice for fathers and for

fatherhood.

Meditations & Prayers

Prayer for Freedom *

Rev. Douglas Taylor

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

Gracious and Loving God, From Whom all things come and to Whom all things return,

We give thanks this morning for the opportunity to again gather together as a people of faith in search of meaning and grace and a path toward justice.

Some of us here today have barely made it through the week. Life has been hard and we need the presence and prayers of good people and of thee to sustain us on our journeys.

Some of us here today have arrive excited and curious, looking for new ideas and new opportunities to connect and to build something good and beautiful.

Some of us here today have heavy hearts for the suffer happening just beyond our front doors, for the poor, the immigrant, the incarcerated, the unhoused, the disenfranchised and disempowered.

We gather this morning as Unitarian Universalists seeking freedom and liberation for ourselves and for all people. We gather to be co-creators of a sacred space together guided by the deep values of our faith.

We recognize that a faith like ours needs to be enacted, it needs to be lived in action.

We know that freedom for one of us needs the freedom of all of us; that the freedom of our faith community needs the freedom of all the faith communities

We hear our own cries for relief amid our struggles are mingled and blended with the cries of immigrants like those who built this city years ago, and the immigrants who continue to show up today. It is the same cry from people incarcerated & dying in our county jail. It is the same cry from our transgender siblings and from people of color and from the poor and from all those abused and marginalized in our society today.

Hear our cries, oh God, be with us in our difficulties. Help us to find the courage to face the continuing injustices of our days.

Help us to reach out from our own heartache

and become partners in the transformation of our world.

Help us to know, despite the messy complexity of life, that we do not struggle alone, that liberation is possible, and that hope is a powerful response in the face of what seems impossible.

Be thou an ever-present strength on the journey, O God.

In the name of all that is holy,
May it be so.

Letting Go of Certainty *

Rev. Rebecca C. "Beckett" Coppola'

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

Let go of the idea that you know
what breathing
should feel like.

Just notice the breath as it moves
in and out
of the body.

Let go of certainty.

Be with the breath as it is.

Allow openness.

Allow curiosity.

Notice the mind.

Each thought that arises.

Allow openness.

Don't judge your mind.

Or your experience.

Be loving in your curiosity about each thought.

Let go of certainty.

Let go of any idea about what
you should be thinking,
accepting your thoughts exactly as they are.

Be with your self
as you are.

Be curious
about who you are.

Love

how you are in the world.

Gently take a deep breath,
maybe even a big sigh,
re-enter the present moment,
and the stream of your life.

We Imagine a Path *

Rev. D. Scott Cooper

Full piece at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/prayer/we-imagine-path>
[Permission Source](#)

We bow our heads in order to imagine... a path forward for those who cannot imagine any path forward, because of poor health, financial hardship, family crises, and other roadblocks...

We struggle to imagine a path forward for those who are forced to leave a homeland against their will and for those unable to leave a war-torn homeland despite their lives being in danger...

We come together to imagine a path forward for those of us despairing because we do not seem to know our country...

We imagine a path forward for those who feel lonely...

Truly, we know as we imagine these ways forward, and take one another's hands, the paths will lead to hope...

Ultimate Grace *

Rev. Ma Theresa Gustilo Gallardo

Full prayer at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/prayer/ultimate-grace>
[Permission Source](#)

Free us from our hindrances. Make invisible things visible; the voiceless heard; lay what is hidden before us; make the chained unbound...

O Universe, with stars in your hair, you have shown that great things emerge from humble beginnings, no matter how flawed and lacking. That one story, in a stable, in prison, in the cave, in destitution, in abject poverty, if lived in all sincerity can liberate from darkness the many..."

It Is That Time and That Place *

Rev. Dr. Qiyamah Rahman

Full piece found at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/poetry/it-time-and-place>
[Permission Source](#)

Now is the time to call on the memories of the ancestors who thought they could not walk another step toward freedom - and yet they did...?

A Call to Arms *

Rev. Marta I. Valentín

Full piece found at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/281510.shtml>
[Permission Source](#)

This is a call to arms. Arms that will hold those with broken and elated hearts, arms that will wrap themselves around beaten bodies... a call to remember that the freedom we've been given... has come on the backs of human beings others wish were invisible...

Blessing for Kin (especially relevant for pride month)

Rev. Sean Parker Dennison in Breaking and Blessing Found in [Breaking and Blessing](#), UUA meditation manual & Soul Matters "[Common Shelf](#)" Book
Also found in video/visual meditation at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yKrlGgAUJo>

Prayer for Juneteenth *

Addae Ama Kraba

Full piece found at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/prayer/prayer-juneteenth>
[Permission Source](#)

As believers in justice,
Woven into a single garment of life.
Making us one with the human family,
Let us rejoice for those who safely
passed through the shades of night
towards the daylight of freedom.
Spirit of all possibilities,
may we be blessed with true freedom...

Father's Day Meditation *

Rev. Rod Richards

Full piece found at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/fathers-day-meditation>
[Permission Secured by Soul Matters and UUA](#)

...We support and celebrate the fathers in our midst who give of themselves to their children, recognizing all the strength and wisdom and stamina and love and time and honest introspection that fatherhood requires... And we seek to honor wherever we find ourselves today across this vast spectrum of experience and to feel the compassion that embraces us within this silence.

Father's Day in Our Imperfect World *

Rev. Margo Rinehart

Permission Secured by Soul Matters

On this Father's Day, like all the others, we are here again reflecting on all the complexities of relationship, the paradoxes that challenge the simplicity of our understandings.

My father, angry and gentle; justice seeking and prosecutorial; ally and abandoning.

Raised in poverty but possessing the wealth of experience, the gifts of friendships, the tenacity of spirit.

Superman when he placed his arm between a dog's bared teeth and my five-year-old face.

The advocate when he escorted a guest from our home after a racist word had been used and defended.

The criticizer when he felt the need to see my mother's contributions as less than his own.

On Father's Day may we see all that they truly are.

The greatness and the grist.

May we feel the strength they gave to us.

May we repair any wounds remaining.

May we carry forth their dreams for us.

Poems That Can Serve As Meditations On Freedom

Cindy Comes To Hear Me Read

Jill McDonough

Full piece at

<https://www.slowdownshow.org/episode/2019/10/23/238-cindy-comes-to-hear-me-read>

I met her in prison... But now she's out!...

She has a car... Each day she sees the angry people.

Sweet, silly people,

mad—God bless them—at traffic. At other cars.

She laughs, she told me...

People around her, angry as toddlers. Whole

highways of traffic, everybody at the work of being free.

Perhaps It Would Eventually Erode, But ...

Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

Full poem at

<http://www.ayearofbeinghere.com/2015/10/rosemerry-wahtola-trommer-perhaps-it.html>

That rock that we

have been pushing up the hill...

what if we stopped? We are not

Sisyphus. This rock

is not a punishment...

It's something we've chosen

to push...

Now all I want

is to let the rock

roll back to where it belongs...

and you and I could,

imagine!, walk unencumbered...

Praise the Broken Promise of America

Alison Luterman

Text: <https://rattle.com/praise-the-broken-promise-of-america-by-alison-luterman/>

Spoken:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9wixXX2eG-8>

On the painful freedom of waking up to what is happening and staying focused on those still striving to free us from our painful present

Music

Suggestions For September 2024 - “The Practice of Freedom” from Soul Matters Music Resources Coordinator, [Adam O’Dell](#)

“For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.”

- Nelson Mandela

Dear Readers,

Though I knew this theme would be relevant at the start of our church year, I wish it didn’t have to be *this* relevant. I’m sure many of you, like me, are becoming overwhelmed with the civil rights violations and authoritarian orders making their way into the news on a daily basis. It’s enough to make you want to crawl into a hole and pretend it’s not happening. I urge you, as I urge myself, to remember why we do this work. Music has the power to renew spirits, bring communities together, and inspire lasting change. Music is not the change in and of itself, it is part of the complex human lives we live. I know many of our congregants disappear through the summer months, and we use much of that time to rest, relax, and plan ahead for the coming year, but we also have this time to build momentum, renew our resolve, and fight for the just world we know is possible.

This month, I have suggested music that both lovingly connects us to our community, and inspires courage to do the hard work of developing solidarity and systems to build a better world. Much of our church year has prepared us for this moment. The practice of freedom compels us to invite people in, to listen to them, to repair our relationships and communities, to be present, to tell our stories, to be inclusive, to trust each other, to express our joy, and to imagine a better world. We need all of these practices to create a truly free world.

As we go into this month, and into our summer programming, remember that our tradition is filled with music by those who have done the work before us, and those who work alongside us today. This month’s packet includes hymns and music of the Civil Rights movement, the Women’s rights movement, the LGBTQ+ rights movement, and a number of other struggles for freedom and equity throughout history. As always, consider the context and use these pieces with care, and remember that the freedoms of one affect the freedoms of all.

- Adam

Hymns

#	Title	Style Notes	Singability		Permissions
109	As We Come Marching, Marching	Protest, Stern	4	H/SL	See note
	words & music: donate to First Unitarian Church of Los Angeles by sending check, with Hodgins Press in memo line, Attn: Rochelle McAdam, First Unitarian Church of LA, 2936 W. 8th St., Los Angeles, CA 90005 and email link to her at rochelle@uula.org				
116	I'm On My Way	Spiritual, Upbeat, Joyful	4	R/SL	Public Domain, arrangement UUA permissions granted
148	Let Freedom Span Both East and West	Spiritual, March-like	4	H/SL	Public Domain
149	Lift Every Voice and Sing	Boisterous, Uplifting	4	H/SL	Public Domain
151	I Wish I Knew How	Gospel, Aspirational	3	SL	Public Domain
153	Oh, I Woke Up This Morning	Upbeat, Joyful	4	H/SL	Public Domain
155	Circle 'Round for Freedom	Circle Song, Prayerful	4	R/SL	Linda Hirschhorn
169	We Shall Overcome	Prayerful, Aspirational	5	H/R/SL	Public Domain
170	We Are a Gentle, Angry People	Protest, LGBTQIA+, Peace	4	SL	CCS, see below
	May be used through August 2031. If any words are changed, e.g. to address a current justice topic, contact alison@hollynear.com first for an OK. Please attribute: Used with permission, ©Hereford Music (ASCAP); words and music by Holly Near.				
184	Be Ye Lamps unto Yourselves	Chant-like, Meditative	3	SL	Public Domain
291	Die Gedanken Sind Frei	German Folk, Upbeat	4	H/SL	Music: Public Domain Lyrics: American Ethical Union
407	We're Gonna Sit at the Welcome Table	Persistence, Justice, Spiritual	5	R/SL	L & M: Public Domain Arr: UUA Permitted Granted
1015	I Know I Can	Gospel, Healing	3	SL	Credit Jeannie Gagne
1016	Profetiza, Pueblo Mío	Ballad, Haunting	3	H/SL	Rosa Martha Zárate Macias
1018	Come and Go with Me	Resilience, Anticipation, Spiritual	5	R/SL	L & M: Public Domain Arr: UUA Permitted Granted
1026	If Every Woman in the World	Gospel, Prayerful	3	H/SL	UUA Permissions Granted
1035	Freedom is Coming	Upbeat, Cheerful	2	R/SL	Public Domain
1040	Hush	Spiritual, Jazzy	4	SL	Words & Music: Public Domain Arrangement: UUA Permissions Granted

Singability Score Key

All congregations are different, but this score is intended to provide basic, subjective guidance on hymn selection and leadership, especially for hymns you or the congregation are less familiar with.

5 - Very Easy	4 - Easy	3 - Average	2 - Hard	1 - Very Hard	H	R	SL
Little to no help needed	Weak singers may need help (usually because of range)	Average singers may need some help	Guidance recommended	Best for soloist or small group	Use Hymnal	Teach by Rote	Use Song Leader

Permissions Key

Hymns where the permissions column is highlighted in GREEN typically do NOT require additional copyright for average UU congs.		
Hymns labeled "Public Domain" require no licensing or other further action to use for in-person worship, live streaming, or online recording/archiving.	Hymns labeled "UUA Permissions Granted" may be used for in-person worship, live streaming, and online recording/archiving, assuming you have legally obtained copies of the UU hymnals.	Hymns labeled "Permissions Granted" may be used for in-person worship, live streaming, and online recording/archive. The copyright owner may request an additional donation.
Hymns where the permissions column is highlighted in YELLOW require a copyright license, typically One License or CCS. It is your responsibility to obtain the appropriate license for in person worship, live streaming, and/or online recording/archiving.		Hymns where the permissions column is highlighted in RED require separate copyright permissions for use. Information for securing the copyright will be made available in this packet, but it is your responsibility to obtain permission from the holder.

For more information on permissions and licensing, please consult the [UUA Hymn and Reading Permissions](#).

Choral/Vocal Suggestions

Title	Composer	Voicing	Style Notes
Be the Light	Lea Morris	SATB/SSA	Soul, Folk, a cappella
I'm On My Way	Anthony Trecek-King	SSA	Rhythmic, Driving
Elijah Rock	arr. Jester Hairston	SATB	Resolute, Spiritual, a cappella
Circle Round for Freedom	arr. Rob Glover	SATB	Simple, Flowing
Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around	arr. Rollo Dilworth	SATB/SSA	Driving, Bluesy

Instrumental Suggestions

Title	Composer	Instrumentation	Style Notes
Hymn to Freedom	Oscar Peterson	Piano	Jazzy, Resolute
Before I'd Be a Slave	Undine Smith Moore	Piano	Fiery, Turbulent, Programmatic
Improvisation on "We Shall Overcome"	Carl Haywood	Organ	Sweeping, Triumphant

Music for Online Worship

These videos may be used in online and recorded worship services by Unitarian Universalist congregations. The music that follows does not require additional permission for online use. However, be sure to provide full attribution to the composers and lyricists on your screens, not just verbally, for each piece that you incorporate into worship.

These videos are intended to lighten the burdens imposed by online worship. They should not be used to justify decreasing the wages or positions of professional music staff.

- ["Abide with Me" \(Vimeo\)](#) (#101 in *Singing the Living Tradition*; music by William Henry Monk, verses 1-2 by Henry Francis Lyre, verse 3 by Rev. Erika Hewitt). Guitar and singing by [Lea Morris](#). [Pay-what-you-can to Lea](#).
- ["Now Let Us Sing" \(YouTube\)](#) (#368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*; anonymous). Taught and sung by Rev. Suzelle Lynch. Please make a Venmo donation to @Susan-Lynch-120.
- ["Woyaya" \(YouTube\)](#) (words & music by Loughy Amoa, Solomon Amarfio, Robert M. Bailey, Roy Bedeau, Francis T. Osei, Whendell K. Richardson, and Mac Tontoh; #1020 in *Singing the Journey*). Created by Paul Thompson (Music Director at the UU Church of the Palouse, Moscow ID). Please make a pay-what-you-can [donation](#).
- Elizabeth Alexander offers you ["This Is What Democracy Looks Like \(Vimeo\)"](#), a rally-ready protest chant performed by the Twin Cities Justice Choir, as well as [a range of other videos](#) on her website. [Make your pay-what-you-can offering](#).
- ["My Roots Go Down \(YouTube\)"](#) by Sarah Pirtle, who wrote this song during a UU women's retreat in the 1970s. Video by Rev. Christopher Watkins Lamb and Kara Shobe. [Read donation guidelines](#).
- ["Why Not Every Man? \(Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel\) \(YouTube\)"](#), Traditional Spiritual / arr. Adam Podd, featuring the First Unitarian Brooklyn Quartet. Produced and Edited by Adam Podd for First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn. Adam's PayPal ID: adampodd@gmail.com/Venmo: @adampodd
- ["We Will Not Stop Singing" \(YouTube\)](#) written by The Chapin Sisters (Lily & Abigail). Song copyright The Chapin Sisters, published by sad pony music and foggy mountain music (ASCAP). Arranged by Adam Podd, featuring the First Unitarian Brooklyn Choir (w/ Dennis Wees, Kiena Williams, Brandon Hornsby-Selvin, and Candice Helfand-Rogers). Adam's PayPal ID: adampodd@gmail.com/Venmo: @adampodd

Contemporary Suggestions

If you are streaming your services/are hybrid, please note that all copyright permissions are your responsibility to obtain.

- "We Will Not Stop Singing" by the Chapin Family
- "Liberation" by Joshua Long
- "Ex-Patriot's Song" by Lea Morris
- "Head Full of Doubt/Road Full of Promise" by The Avett Brothers
- "I Am Light" by India.Arie
- "Glory" by Common

***Important Note:** The artists listed above generally are the performers of the works and not always/necessarily the songwriters, please do your due diligence in seeking out crediting info. Many of the above songs can be found on JWPepper, MusicNotes.com and the Chords/Tabs for most of the above can be found here:*

[Ultimate Guitar](#) - [Ukulele Chords/Tabs](#) - [Free to Transpose](#) - [Chordify](#)

***Another Note About Contemporary Music:** For our small group packets, we put together a contemporary music playlist for each month. While these playlists are designed as personal musical meditations on the themes, some of the songs on these playlists could be used in worship.*

You can explore these playlists on our website, by clicking [HERE](#).

Music From the AUUMM (Association for UU Music Ministries) Online Database:

The wonderful leadership of the AUUMM have added our monthly themes to the AUUMM music database. It's a great way to get music suggestions from UUs all around the country. If you're still looking for more options, this is a great resource!

Soul Matters Music Leader Support

In addition to monthly music suggestions in our worship packets, we support subscribing music leaders with a monthly brainstorm call and Facebook group:

Monthly Online Musicians' Brainstorming Group

On the **second Tuesday of every month at 2pm ET/1pm CT/noon MT/11am PT**, Soul Matters musicians meet for an hour-long Zoom call to share additional music ideas and help each other with advanced planning. The discussions focus on music for 2 and 3 months ahead to allow lead time for music purchase and rehearsals. **Recordings** of these monthly music brainstorming calls are available [HERE](#).

No need to sign up in advance, just join as you are able using this Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5857099120>

Soul Matters Music Leader Support Facebook Group

We also have a Soul Matters Musicians Facebook group. This is for on-going sharing among Soul Matters musicians, as well as a place where we share announcements about packets, new music resources and music-related webinars. Click [HERE](#) to view and join.

Stories For All Ages

Wisdom Stories

*The below wisdom story comes from our June Elementary RE Packet.
So be sure to coordinate your use of them with your RE Leader.*

- **The Flower Communion Story** (Click [HERE](#) for the script)
Retold by April Rosario, based on [Norbert Čapek and the Flower Communion](#) and the story [The Flower Ceremony, A Plain and Simple Beauty](#)
- **The Beautiful Tiger, Christopher Buice**
<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/story/beautiful-tiger>
- **The Monk and the Strawberry**
<https://soberbuddha.com/the-monk-the-tiger-and-the-strawberry-a-story-about-living-in-the-present-moment/>

Story Books

*The below story book recommendations come from our June Elementary RE Packet.
So be sure to coordinate your use of them with your RE Leader.*

- **Stonewall: A Building. An Uprising. A Revolution**
<https://socialjusticebooks.org/stonewall-a-building-an-uprising-a-revolution/>
- **Opal Lee and What It Means to Be Free: The True Story of the Grandmother of Juneteenth**
<https://www.amazon.com/Opal-Lee-What-Means-Free/dp/1400231256>
- **The Longest Day: Celebrating the Summer Solstice by Wendy Pfeffer**
<https://www.learnedowl.com/book/9780147515568>

Sermon Seeds

Angles, Ideas & Twists To Get Your Sermon Started!

Don't forget to explore our small group packet for additional sermon seeds. It contains quotes and poems to enhance your sermon, as well as numerous sermon angles in the questions and the spiritual exercises.

Permissions Notes: In addition to the pieces we've noted as permissioned for online use (marked with an asterisk*), you can use the fair use sized quotes and fair use sized portions of longer pieces in your sermons/services. Pay attention to the hyperlinks we include within titles and authors' names; these hyperlinks provide the source material and direction for you to hunt down permissions on your own.

On Finding Freedom in Being Bound to Others

Quote - David Foster Wallace

The really important kind of freedom involves attention and awareness and discipline, and being able truly to care about other people and to sacrifice for them over and over in myriad petty, unsexy ways every day.

Quote - Michael Sacasas, "The Frailest Thing" blog

Freedom is not about being able to do whatever we want, when we want. It has nothing to do with listening to our heart or following our dreams or whatever else we put on greeting cards and bumper stickers. Real freedom comes from learning to get out of our 'skull-sized kingdoms' long enough to pay attention to the human being next us so that we might treat them with decency and kindness and respect.

Quote - Thomas Merton

There is something in the very nature of my freedom that inclines me to love, to do good, to dedicate myself to others. I have an instinct that tells me that I am less free when I am living for myself alone. The reason for this is that I cannot be completely independent. Since I am not self-sufficient I depend on someone else for my fulfillment. My freedom is not fully free when left to itself. It becomes so when it is brought into the right relation with freedom of another.

Quote - [adrienne maree brown](#)

i am learning that getting well in community is liberation. we are interdependent. when one of us attains freedom it elicits/rekindles that longing in each of us. when we learn to feel, when we learn to stand with each other in feeling, when we learn to tune into the wisdom of our bodies, to love ourselves, to love each other, we are doing the unthinkable, we are creating new worlds of possibility... it is our duty to fight for freedom. it is our duty to win. we must love each other and protect each other. we have nothing to lose but our chains.

Poem - To The People Who Have Mistaken Freedom For Liberation, Rev. Julián Jamaica Soto *

Full piece found at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/poetry/freedom-liberation>
[Permission Source](#)

To be free...You must know, not that you
can do whatever you want... You
must know instead, that inside you are entire
Universes [and]... you must fight for the entire
Universes inside of everyone else...

Reading/Poem - In Praise of Limits, Rev. Sean Parker Dennison

Full piece at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LeKCDisgKyc>

...Life without limit
and unfettered festers into
something that does more harm
than good takes more than can
be given becomes death's instrument.

Freedom that cannot perceive
that others must also be free
is not freedom at all, but entitlement,
greedy and overstuffed,
the libertine imposter of liberty.

Scripture Reflection - Freedom from [a Christian Perspective](#)

"Essentially Paul says you will be bound to something—be bound to Christ.

From Galatians: For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another."

So freedom does not mean free from others or free to do whatever we want whenever we want wherever we want. Freedom is an opportunity to act through love to fully commit ourselves to one another. Freedom is an opportunity to act through love to fully commit ourselves to one another. It is not freedom from people, from their joy or pain or fear or dreams. Freedom is freedom to love freely."

Quote - [Timothy Snyder](#)

We are told that we are "born free": untrue. We are born squalling, attached to an umbilical cord, covered in a woman's blood. Whether we become free depends upon the actions of others, upon the structures that enable those actions, upon the values that enliven those structures—and only then upon a flicker of spontaneity and the courage of our own choices.

Quote - Aboriginal Activists' Group

If you have come here to help me, then you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.

Quote - [adrienne maree brown](#)

the days are all too heavy
and then we lift together.

Quote - [Nick Montgomery and carla bergman](#)

'Friend' and 'free' in English come from the same Indo-European root, which conveys the idea of a shared power that grows. Being free and having ties was one and the same thing. I am free because I have ties; I am free because I am linked to a reality greater than me.

Quote - [anna blaedel](#)

what if freedom, instead of an impossible demand or a futurist fantasy, is what effloresces as we turn toward one another, bearing witness and practicing "withness," enfleshing the sacred through fierce and tender care, and practicing spirit as the wild love that makes possible what we are told is impossible - survival with joy, collective liberation?

On Imprisoning Ourselves

Quote/Article - [Nicolás Gómez Dávila](#)

Modern man is a prisoner who thinks he is free because he refrains from touching the walls of his dungeon

Quote/Article - [Virginia Woolf](#)

The eyes of others our prisons; their thoughts our cages

Poem - *Perhaps It Would Eventually Erode, But...* , Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

Full poem at <http://www.ayearofbeinghere.com/2015/10/rosemerry-wahtola-trommer-perhaps-it.html>

That rock that we
have been pushing up the hill...
what if we stopped? We are not
Sisyphus. This rock
is not a punishment...
It's something we've chosen
to push...
Now all I want
is to let the rock
roll back to where it belongs...
and you and I could,
imagine!, walk unencumbered...

Video - *On Feeling Obligated*

On being trapped in the inability to say no

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MXeYrjFQdHA>

Poem - *Cindy Comes To Hear Me Read*, Jill McDonough

Full piece at <https://www.slowdownshow.org/episode/2019/10/23/238-cindy-comes-to-hear-me-read>

I met her in prison... But now she's out!...
She has a car... Each day she sees the angry people. Sweet, silly people,
mad—God bless them—at traffic. At other cars.
She laughs, she told me...
People around her, angry as toddlers. Whole
highways of traffic, everybody at the work of being free.

Quote - *Melody Anderson*

I have noticed that beliefs work like blinders on a racehorse. They keep you focused in a specific direction. This can be great as long as you have a destination in mind. But what good are blinders when you are grazing in a beautiful meadow on a crisp, clear spring day? I wore my blinders so long I forgot I had them on!

Quote - *Bryant McGill*

Blame is very tricky in that it seems like a way out when it is really a form of imprisonment.

Poem - *Generous Assumptions*, Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

<https://ahundredfallingveils.com/2024/12/09/generous-assumptions/>

Quote - Marcus Aurelius

You are all worked up chasing after this and trying to avoid that. These things are not coming to you, so to speak, but you are going to them. Stop desiring the one and fearing the other, and they will stay where they are, and you will not be seen pursuing or fleeing them.

Quote - Erich Fromm, Escape from Freedom

Modern man lives under the illusion that he knows 'what he wants,' while he actually wants what he is supposed to want. In order to accept this it is necessary to realize that to know what one really wants is not comparatively easy, as most people think, but one of the most difficult problems any human being has to solve. It is a task we frantically try to avoid by accepting ready-made goals as though they were our own... Most people are convinced that as long as they are not overtly forced to do something by an outside power, their decisions are theirs, and that if they want something, it is they who want it. But this is one of the great illusions we have about ourselves. A great number of our decisions are not really our own but are suggested to us from the outside; we have succeeded in persuading ourselves that it is we who have made the decision, whereas we have actually conformed with expectations of others, driven by the fear of isolation and by more direct threats to... our comfort.

Quote - Erich Fromm, Escape from Freedom

The person who is normal in terms of being well adapted is often less healthy than the neurotic person in terms of human values. Often he is well adapted only at the expense of having given up himself in order to become more or less the person he believes he is expected to be.

Quote - [Sigmund Freud](#)

Most people do not really want freedom, because freedom involves responsibility, and most people are frightened of responsibility.

Scripture - Romans 7:15

For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.

Poem - Autobiography in Five Short Chapters, Portia Nelson

Full poem found at <http://www.dwlz.com/Motivation/tips26.html>

...I walk down another street.

Quote - [Henry David Thoreau](#)

We have become the tool of our tools

Quote - [Nicholas Carr](#)

Technology in general and automation in particular shape our experience of life and hence our sense of engagement and fulfillment. We're often too quick to believe that if we're "freed up" from hard work, we'll enjoy life more, but the opposite often turns out to be true. When things become too easy for us, we become self-absorbed and anxious. True freedom comes from accomplishing hard things, from being busy at some meaningful task in the real world. As I write in the book, "Automation often frees us from that which makes us feel free." I do think that, for economic and employment reasons, it's becoming harder for people to resist labor-saving technology. At the same time, though, we're seeing young people getting involved in small-scale agriculture and various handicrafts, often using more traditional, less automated tools. So all is not lost. Resistance is not futile.

Article/Interview - On The Glass Cage

<https://mbird.com/psychology/from-the-magazine-our-interview-with-nicholas-carr/>

There's also a dark side to these decisions. We can also use tools and technologies to isolate us from the world, to impoverish our interactions with one another, with the social world, with the physical world and so forth...

Quote/Poem - from David Whyte's poem, Sweet Darkness

You must learn one thing.

The world was made to be free in.

Give up all the other worlds
except the one to which you belong.

Sometimes it takes darkness and the sweet
confinement of your aloneness
to learn

anything or anyone
that does not bring you alive

is too small for you.

On Being Stuck in A Storyline

Quote - [Rebecca Solnit](#)

We are our stories, stories that can be both prison and the crowbar to break open the door of that prison; we make stories to save ourselves or to trap ourselves or others, stories that lift us up or smash us against the stone wall of our own limits and fears. Liberation is always in part a storytelling process: breaking stories, breaking silences, making new stories. A free person tells her own story. A valued person lives in a society in which her story has a place.

Article - What happens when you're living a story that someone else handed you?

<https://www.broadstreetreview.com/essays/what-happens-when-youre-living-a-story-that-someone-else-handed-you>

Quote - Anonymous Soul Matters Group Member

Part of what I like to be free from is my own perceptions. Many times I am 'sure' about the way things are, but I also practice imagining what would happen if I were wrong. What if I'm not really shy, but I'm actually fairly gregarious? What if I just think I'm over busy, and I'm actually just active and energized? How would the world be different if I were free from my own rigid ideas about the way things are?

TED Talk - Change Your Story; Change Your Life, Lori Gottlieb

https://www.ted.com/talks/lori_gottlieb_how_changing_your_story_can_change_your_life

Break free from the stories you've been telling yourself by becoming your own editor and rewriting your narrative...

Podcast - Healing 2.0: Change Your Story, Change Your Life: Hidden Brain Media

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/6HPwQ6cUsNsKhCBIOqfQSu>

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/healing-2-0-change-your-story-change-your-life/id1028908750?i=1000633134936>

Reading/Quote - [Rev. Matt Alspaugh](#)

In the field of counseling called “narrative therapy,” we’re encouraged to look at the stories we tell ourselves in a new light. We learn to separate the ‘thin’ stories from the ‘thick’ stories. Thin stories are those that don’t seem to have much detail or background. Thin stories tend to be the ‘single stories’ Adichie talked about.

Thin stories are often created and imposed on us by other people: parents, teachers, those in authority. Because of that authority, we accept these stories without question. So, for example, Mary may say she’s lazy, because one of her teachers told her she was lazy when she was a little child.

Thick stories, on the other hand, are built from the real evidence of life. They are rich with examples, full of detail. They explore inner motives, and outward forces that may have made the person act that way. In the practice of narrative therapy, people are encouraged to create alternative stories to their thin stories, and to thicken them, looking for the richness and detail in their lives.

So Mary, who considered herself lazy, may find that she is in fact very creative, and often used her intelligence to find ways around boring tasks, a practice that many teachers would have considered laziness. She might review her life, and find many instances where she broke the mold, rejecting wearisome, dreary work for novel, interesting tasks.

Essay - Why Telling Our Own Story Is So Powerful for Black Americans

https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why_telling_our_own_story_is_so_powerful_for_black_americans

Essay - Queering Fairy Tales, Rev. Erica Baron

<https://www.patheos.com/blogs/naturessacredjourney/2019/06/queering-fairy-tales/>

On Finding Freedom in the Now

Poem - This Freedom, Richard Brady

Full poem at <https://www.ayearofbeinghere.com/2014/11/richard-brady-this-freedom.html>

...This freedom—freedom with this moment,
just as it is.

Quote/Reading - Buddha

Don't get caught in the past,
because the past is gone.

Don't get upset about the future,
because the future is not yet here.

There is only one moment for you to be alive,
and that is the present moment.

Go back to the present moment
and live this moment deeply,
and you'll be free.

Poem - Forget About Enlightenment – John Welwood

Found at <https://www.mindfulnessassociation.net/words-of-wonder/forget-about-enlightenment-john-welwood/>

Open your heart to who you are, right now,
Not who you would like to be,
Not the saint you are striving to become...

Poem - Morning Chores, Alice Shirey

Full poem at <https://aliceatdawn.com/morning-chores/>

Morning chores ... mundane, monotonous;
the ordinary stuff of our ordinary days.
Necessary jobs using up (wasting?) our precious time.
The boring by-products of being alive on this earth.
But today ...
in the heavy, humid, morning air,
I slowed down and paid attention to what I was doing.
And in this slowing,
in this paying attention,
each act felt like a gift...

Short Talk - Take a Moment to Just BE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q5s5GulDdQg>

Sermon - Be Here Now: Spirituality and Distraction, Rev. Lyn Cox *(only for inspiration, not to be used in services)*

<https://uucss.org/sermons/sunday-23-september-2018/>

On Inner Freedom

Quote - [Ai Weiwei](#)

Freedom is a pretty strange thing. Once you've experienced it, it remains in your heart and no one can take it away. Then as an individual you can be more powerful than a whole country.

Essay/Article - Internal freedom

<https://thenegativepsychologist.com/internal-freedom/>

"External freedom is a seductive dream that leads us onwards and onwards. When things don't pan out for us we figure that we will have better luck next time, and so we keep at it. We keep hold of our agenda, and persist in our attempts to meet that agenda... If external freedom is the freedom to meet my agenda, then clearly internal freedom must be the freedom to drop my agenda. This is not how we usually see freedom at all, but a moment's thought will show that the freedom to drop my agenda can turn out to be a very valuable thing... A lack of internal freedom means that we are brittle, rigid, and more-or-less permanently out of synch with the world around us. Anxiety becomes a constant companion... We are too caught up chasing the illusion of external freedom to realize that true freedom lies in completely the opposite direction.

Article - Becoming Free: Cultivating Inner Freedom

<https://www.vibevaultfit.com/blog/how-to-be-truly-free-ncbsp-cultivating-inner-freedom>

On the five tools of inner freedom: self-awareness, radical Honesty & radical self-compassion, courage, belief in your worthiness.

Quote - [Viktor Frankl Institute](#)

What set apart those who embraced their inner freedom from those who lost it? Those who succeeded in not giving up on life had "spiritual support." Frankl explains what he means by this term. Most prisoners were like the living dead, experiencing life only as something past. Someone with no future has no goals in life. Hence, he no longer belongs to this world and has no task to do in this world. *The sense that one has a task ahead of him is the spiritual support that is necessary to maintain this quality of inner freedom that would prevent him from*

giving in to the environmental influences which caused apathy and irritation. Frankl embodied this rule by imagining that he was lecturing to people in a large auditorium about what he was experiencing right now – as he indeed did after his liberation. (p. 96-100) ...The spiritual strength by which people accessed their inner freedom even under such miserable conditions is evidence that they are capable of finding it anywhere.

Videos - Cultivating Equanimity: On the freedom from us & them thinking and entering a space that embraces the whole

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFxOWyxk5A8&t=2s>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4D6RrpauwLw>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PX8CY-1eOM0>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qocJp_jlnHI
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJAmwetSXvQ>

Book - The Untethered Soul, Michael Singer

<https://untetheredsoul.com/untethered-soul>

Interview with author: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IU_cwY-P-g8

Video - A Quieter Kind of Freedom

<https://aeon.co/videos/through-rituals-of-prayer-a-monk-cultivates-a-quietly-radical-concept-of-freedom>

Reflection & Poem - The mind is a cage. Here's the key, Andrea Gibson

<https://andreagibson.substack.com/p/new-poem-trusting-intuition-healing-grief-hope>

"I know I'm not the only one whose mind wants to trap them right now. The weight of everything—personal struggles, a world in pain, the fear that nothing will ever change—can make it hard to breathe. But I believe that there is another way. That loosening our grip on what we think we know will be exactly what saves us. Not just as individuals, but collectively. Imagination isn't an escape; it's an act of liberation, a door flung open to something wildly new. The freer we become inside ourselves, the freer our world will be..."

On Whether or Not American is a Free Nation (and how to make it so)

Article - Small Government, Big Chains: The Lie of Trump's Libertarian "Freedom"

<https://hartmannreport.com/p/small-government-big-chains-the-lie-6cf>

Book - [On Freedom](#), Timothy Snyder

Review found [HERE](#)

Related article [HERE](#)

Talk - On Positive Freedom, Timothy Snyder

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T_lLtL2u_Y

Talk - On the Future of American Democracy, Freedom & the Rule of Law, Timothy Snyder

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nw-ObXslUo4>

Interview - Curtis Yarvin Says Democracy Is Done. Powerful Conservatives Are Listening

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/18/magazine/curtis-yarvin-interview.html>

Related resources found [HERE](#) and [HERE](#)

Quote - [Franklin D. Roosevelt](#)

A necessitous man is not a free man.

Quote - [Isaiah Berlin](#)

Freedom for the wolves has often meant death to the sheep

Poem - Dear America, Lydia Mason

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-f5PBBF8xj0>

Book - The Hidden History of American Oligarchy: Reclaiming Our Democracy from the Ruling Class

Author interview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YibDwEDzU0k>

Article - The Purge of the Deep State and the Road to Dictatorship

<https://chrishedges.substack.com/p/the-purge-of-the-deep-state-and-the-440>

"The ultimate target for the Trump administration is not the deep state. The target is the laws, regulations, protocols and rules, and the government civil servants who enforce them, which hinder dictatorial control. Compromise, limited power, checks and balances and accountability are slated to be abolished. Those who believe that the government is designed to serve the common good, rather than the dictates of the ruler, will be forced out. The deep state will be reconstituted to serve the leadership cult..."

Interview - Heather Cox Richardson on American being in a Constitutional Crisis (starts at minute 37:15)

<https://katiecouric.com/video/video/rise-of-authoritarianism-united-states-heather-cox-richardson-interview/>

Article - Reinterpreting "Speak Truth to Power" in an Era of Authoritarianism and Post-Truth Politics

<https://antiauthoritarianplaybook.substack.com/p/reinterpreting-speak-truth-to-power>

"The assumption that truth has a self-evident, liberating power, that once people see the truth, they will act on it, must also be reinterpreted today. Truth must be repeated over and over again in order for it to cut through disinformation. But even then, truth alone doesn't set people free—power does..."

Video - On personal data as the battleground for freedom and power

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7HPHji262E>

Quote - [Jacques Ellul](#)

In my view, our Western political institutions are no longer in any sense democratic. We see the concept of democracy called into question by the manipulation of the media, the falsification of political discourse, and the establishment of a political class that, in all countries where it is found, simply negates democracy.

On Freedom & Pride Month

Quote - [Jes Martinez-Hunt](#)

Each holy moment of trans joy is a sacred spark of freedom that ignites when we live fully and unapologetically as ourselves. Through our laughter, community, creativity, and that quiet certainty of self-love, our joy is a burst of light. Trans joy breaks open the world's too narrow stories and offers something greater: a blessing, a radiant reminder that the fullness of who we are is our gift to the world.

Quote - [Rev. Juniper Meadows](#)

In a desperate time when anxieties are spiking and fear looms large, trans people finding the everyday, common joy of life is an act of real and righteous resistance. While too often misunderstood, we must understand that our presence in this world is a gift of permission to all we encounter to follow their hearts, to live their dreams, and to never settle for shame.

Article - I'm a Transgender Woman. This Is Not the Metamorphosis I Was Expecting

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/12/opinion/transgender-trump-america.html>

Interview - Trump's Anti-Trans Orders Are "Ultimately Going to Harm Us All"

<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/amanpour-and-company/video/trumps-anti-trans-orders-are-ultimately-going-to-harm-us-all-says-expert/>

Podcast - It's Not Really About Sports

<https://translash.org/podcasts/the-anti-trans-hate-machine/its-not-really-about-sports/>

Online Service - 2025 UPLIFT Trans Day of Visibility Service hosted by the UUA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2sVrqYN1XQ>

Blessing - A Blessing for the End of Pride Month, Rev. Greta Jo Seidohl

<https://www.instagram.com/apeculiarpreacher/reel/CulxhrGu8Ss/>

On Freedom & Juneteenth

Quote - [Jelani Cobb](#)

In that regard, Juneteenth exists as a counterpoint to the Fourth of July; the latter heralds the arrival of American ideals, the former stresses just how hard it has been to live up to them.

Interview - We're still not free yet, Bryan Stevenson

<https://www.cnn.com/2024/06/19/tv/video/amanpour-stevenson-juneteenth>

Book - How We Fight White Supremacy: A Field Guide to Black Resistance, Akiba Solomon & Kenrya Rankin

"A celebration of Black resistance, from protests to art to sermons to joy, offers a blueprint for the fight for freedom and justice... brings together voices such as Tarana Burke, Ta-Nehisi Coates, Harry Belafonte, Alicia Garza, Kiese Laymon, Imani Perry, Dr. Yaba Blye, Mahogany L. Brown, Aja Graydon, Christopher Rashad Green, Damon Young, and many, many more."

Quote - [Michelle Alexander](#) and [Leslie Alexander](#), from [Fear](#) in [The 1619 Project](#)

There's never been a time in the United States history when Black rebellions did not spark existential fear among white people, often leading to violent response. Even when resistance has been peaceful or purely symbolic... The reflexive impulse to respond to Black people with severe punitiveness is traceable to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when white people desperately sought to control a large unfree population who refused to submit to their enslavement. The deep-seated, gnawing terror that Black people might, one day, rise up and demand for themselves the same freedoms and inalienable rights that led white colonists to declare the American Revolution has shaped our nation's politics, culture, and systems of justice ever since. The specific forms of repression and control may have changed over time, but the underlying pattern established during slavery has remained the same. Modern-day policing, surveillance, and mass criminalization, as well as white vigilante violence "know-your-place" aggression, have histories rooted in white fear—not merely of black crime or Black people but of black liberation. Nothing has proved more threatening to our democracy, or more devastating to Black communities, than white fear of black freedom dreams.

On the Freedom Found in Black Joy *(For Juneteenth)*

Video - Black and Jubilant: Unpacking Black Joy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKBwJgQ-btc>

Quote - [Miracle Jones](#)

Black joy is a moment of reflection and happiness by which we are able to tell ourselves there is more to this life, there is more to this world than just pain.

TED Talk - The Revolutionary Power of Black Joy, Miracle Jones

https://www.ted.com/talks/miracle_jones_the_revolutionary_power_of_black_joy

Article - What Black Joy Means, Chante Joseph

<https://www.vogue.co.uk/arts-and-lifestyle/article/what-is-black-joy>

Poem - Joy Is The Justice We Give Ourselves, J. Drew Lanham

<https://emergencemagazine.org/poem/joy-is-the-justice-we-give-ourselves/>

Song - This Joy, the Resistance Revival Chorus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1TbDPwA09Bc>

Quote - [Kimchi](#)

[Black joy is] being unapologetically yourself, not having to be reduced.

Quote - [Helene](#)

[Black joy is] having the space to be able to wear my soul on the outside.

UUA Juneteenth Resources Page

<https://www.uua.org/occasion/juneteenth>

On Freedom Found in UU Theology & History

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_b0xHzv2so0MMVu8ZiSuYE7hJ2oz2_Ynd7JhjaodEmY/edit?usp=sharing

Recommended Sermons

Notes about these recommended sermons:

- **Permissions Secured:** All of the sermons below have received permission for your online use. Unless otherwise noted, they can be used/read in both live streaming and recorded services that are posted on YouTube or a podcast. ***However, to be extra cautious and in good relationship, we ask that you reach out to the minister to let them know you are planning to use their sermon. Also be sure to ask if they have any particular requests or guidance for how to do that.***
- **An Important Note About Editing:** If you want to make changes to the sermon for brevity or context, **you must reach out to the preachers directly for such editing permission.** Contact information of each of the referenced preachers is listed after the list of sermons.
- **We mostly list written scripts:** In order not to undermine UU preachers who depend on live and online guest preaching income for their livelihood, we mainly focus on sharing sermon texts (and sometimes audio clips), but not videos. When, on occasion, we include a video sermon, it will be from congregations that share those as part of their mission.
- **Note about hiring preachers for online guest preaching:** All of the texts listed below can be used and read in your worship services for free. And, in some cases, the preachers of these sermons are glad to be hired to guest preach and give these sermons at your congregation either by zooming into your service or sending you a video recording of them giving it. When this is the case, there is a note under the sermon title/link with the preacher's contact information.

Spiritual Freedom

Rev. Darcey Laine

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1t-1Dt5jQXILj4lpTGIGAMikeIKta9oOW/edit?usp=drive_link&oid=101245613595157190644&rtpof=true&sd=true

"Sometimes we see our limits like walls around our lives, and we spend so much energy, so much attention pushing against the walls, but we can also turn our attention to the freedom we have within those constraints..."

The Second Attempt

Rev. Rebecca C. "Beckett" Coppola

https://docs.google.com/document/d/11S71v_vu0MK9vzjTRRZN0qAnMz8yGfNz/edit?usp=drive_link&oid=101245613595157190644&rtpof=true&sd=true

"A culture where our work does not need to be perfect, and where we could instead focus on living authentically and wholeheartedly without worrying that we will be defined by our failures, by ourselves or anyone else, would benefit us all and take us one step closer to the world we are helping to build.

A world of creativity, of hope, and yes, of freedom.

Way Beyond Normal

Rev. Dana Worsnop

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/14-k0D28K-jsWTGLONBQrmwsRzW4GIHe4AIRKzNiILU/edit?usp=sharing>

"Average and normal as applied to humanity is really a modern concept. And we are liberated when we tear down the narrow gate of normal. When we live our lives Way Beyond Normal..."

Freedom and Other Ineffable “F” Words

Pastor Joshua Berg

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nbRYqTFQzbJGcl1hX29qsyozKJAPyRgi/edit?usp=drive_link&oid=101245613595157190644&rtpof=true&sd=true

“The faith I am referring to is faith in the power and ability to love sufficiently to effect change that is progressive and revolutionary enough to sustain a society that has hit a giant roadblock but, ultimately, is ever-moving forward toward more and equal freedoms. Joining together in great numbers with love, I have faith we can succeed...”

Rituals of Resistance - the Flower Ceremony

Rev. Tess Baumberger

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ABOTig43snvWbuDx2I7YI4uTHet9d9Db/view?usp=sharing>

“Çapek used symbols, stories, and rituals to give his congregation strength and hope during the Nazi occupation. He found ways to tell them to keep the faith, to resist the evil, to stay strong. I think the Flower Ceremony was one way he did this, making it a subtle yet powerful act of resistance...”

Featured Preacher Bios & Contact Information

- Rev. Darcey Laine: https://www.uucas.org/?page_id=202
- Rev. Rebecca C. “Beckett” Coppola: <https://www.kuf.ca/ministers>
- Rev. Dana Worsnop <https://unitarianuniversalistventura.org/about-uu-ventura/minister-and-staff/>
- Rev. Pastor Joshua Berg: <https://pacificunitarian.org/about-us/leadership/>
- Rev. Tess Baumberger: <https://uuessex.org/about-us/our-minister/>

Closing & Chalice Extinguishing Words

Now is the Time *

Rev. Tess Baumberger

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Now is the time for happiness,
To stand up, unbowed the shoulders,
Unbend the back, and look straight into the world.

Now is the time to finish mourning,
To cast off sadness and any sullen role
And claim the title of hero, heroine.

Now, now is the time to crack the steel
that cages all that should be free,
to guard their going in peace.

Now is the time to discover
each new molecule of the upturned self,
pressing its seeds into fertile earth.

May We Slip Through the Bars *

Rev. Scott Tayler

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

May we escape the expectations of others.
May we put down our regrets about the past and
our worries about the future,
so we can make our way back to the abundance
found in the here and now.
May we slip through the bars built by the cruel
voices in our heads.
May we walk through those doors
that were never locked in the first place.
And in fighting for the freedom of others,
may we find our own.
May it be so. Amen.

A Meadow of Delight

John O'Donahue

An excerpt from his poem [Beannacht](#)

And when your eyes
freeze behind
the grey window
and the ghost of loss
gets into you,
may a flock of colors...
come to awaken in you
a meadow of delight.

Prayer for the Morning *

Rev. Audette Fulbright Fulson

Full Piece at

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/prayer/prayer-morning>
[Permission Source](#)

Did you rise this morning...
with weariness and pain
and rage tattered from waving too long in a brutal
wind?...
Get up, child.
Pull your bones upright...
I know you wish the work were done...
But remember this,
tired as you are:
you are not alone....



Soul Matters

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