

A Guide to Creating Worship at FCU

First Church Unitarian, Littleton, MA

Rev. May 2023

Thank you! for helping to create the worship services that are the center of our life together as a religious community. This handbook is designed to offer some guidance on what the tasks are and where to find resources. We welcome your questions and suggestions for improvement!

We hope you enjoy the worship process.

Who's Who of Worship

Minister.....	Rev. Lara Hoke, minister@fculittle.org
Director of Religious Education.....	Thea Shapiro, dre@fculittle.org
Office Administrator.....	Bllu Catalano, office@fculittle.org
Organist and Music Director.....	Molly Lozeau, music@fculittle.org
Deacons.....	deacons@fculittle.org
Videography Team.....	Michael Bestgen, video@fculittle.org
Worship Associates.....	worshipassoc@fculittle.org

Contents

First Things First.....	3
Why This Work Matters.....	3
General Worship Guidelines: What Is Worship?.....	4
Terminology.....	5
Where Do I Start?.....	5
The Order of Service.....	6
A Typical Order of Service.....	6
The Elements of a Service.....	7
You are responsible for:.....	13
You are NOT responsible for:.....	13
Music.....	13
Technology.....	15
Ushers.....	15
Rehearsals.....	16
Deadlines.....	16
Checklist.....	17

Resources..... 18
Appendix A: Service Leader Words and Actions..... 19
Appendix B: Presentation Tips..... 22

First Things First

First, know that you are not alone. If you have committed to offer worship at FCU, we are committed to help you! We hope this document will get you started but if you have any questions not covered here please do not hesitate to contact the Deacons at Deacons@fculittle.org.

Why This Work Matters

Most of this guide has been devoted to how the work of worship gets done: it's a how-to book. This chapter reaches for the deeper meaning of the work. Why does it matter that this work be done?

Offering lay-led worship is a special kind of shared ministry, in which we support each other to put on the richest, most diverse, most thoughtful and inspired worship we are capable of.

Although lay-led services may be seen as a radical change in the way in which most churches offer worship, nonetheless it is directly in the tradition from which Unitarian Universalism springs. When the congregation invites its own members to join with the minister in creating worship, it is confirming the inherent dignity and worth of every person. It is saying that the spirit that creates worship is alive in all of us. It is the priesthood of all believers in action. All are worthy; all are welcome.

Each service finds a fresh voice in the pulpit, often speaking out of personal experience, often invoking a personal expertise or passion for a special topic. The free and responsible search for truth and meaning runs as broad as the concerns of the whole congregation.

A program of lay-led services takes the one thing the entire congregation does all together—worship every Sunday morning—and it does that thing all together. The integration of lay work and minister's work is both symbolic and real. We really do do it all together. Shared ministry means a richer worship life, richer both in the excitement of the communal preparation and in the public celebration on Sunday.

A trained laity provides a living lectionary, filled with original, contemporary, often urgent ideas for worship topics. A shortage of inspiration for worship topics and the ministerial burnout that can come with such a shortage are simply not a problem when everyone is invited to participate.

If we mean what we say when we pride ourselves on the variety of sources from which we draw our traditions, we can do no better than to draw directly on the most fertile source of all for our worship life: the people who make up our congregations.

Thank you for your participation!
Adapted from Building a Worship Associates Program by Rick Koyle

General Worship Guidelines: What Is Worship?

As Unitarian Universalists, we often speak about subjects of concern in our daily lives – matters of social, scientific, cultural or political import. How does worship centered on these issues differ from a secular presentation?

To worship does not mean veneration of a deity or ideal. To worship is to ascribe worth and value to something. Worship is where we, as a community, explore, define and seek what is of greatest value and deepest meaning to us.

Above all worship is an interactive pursuit. The observable participation may come in singing hymns, lighting the chalice and other activities, but worship is wholly dependent on individual internal participation. What we bring to worship determines what we will take from worship. You cannot feed your soul if you have left it at home.

Worship is different than secular presentations in several respects. Perhaps the most important difference lies in the purpose and goals of worship. Worship strives to inform, inspire and provide pastoral care for people at all stages of life. It therefore, needs to speak to people on intellectual, spiritual and emotional levels.

Successful worship attempts to move people in three dimensions—the horizontal, vertical and inner. The horizontal dimension is where we connect with each other and the greater world in compassion and love. The vertical dimension leads us to a sense of sacredness, awe and wonder. For some, this is toward God, for others toward the ground of ultimate concern. We place no strictures on the destination. The third dimension is the inner. Recognizing that religion, well done, is about transforming lives, we move into ourselves to examine what is of greatest worth to us and determine the ways we may live that out in the world.

As creators of worship it is not your job to do this work for others, but to offer a sacred space and time within which others might come to spiritual work. You will offer both comfort and challenge, speak your own truth, and raise questions of value.

Of course, the people of the congregation will represent all stages of life, coming with different experiences, expectations, joys and worries. No matter what the topic of your service, you must remember that someone in the room is struggling with the hardest loss they have ever faced while someone else is celebrating a great joy. Not every element can speak to each person equally, but remembering that all these people are present will help you shape a service that offers each person a point of connection. Even if you plan to speak extemporaneously or from notes, it is helpful to write out what you want to say and then set it aside. It not only helps with timing, but will help you to use inclusive, non-ableist language that will foster a sense of belonging.

In addition to church members, some in the congregation on any given day will be visitors and newcomers looking to understand Unitarian Universalism. To them, you are the face of our congregation. Inclusive worship that is well planned, well prepared and

well presented invites visitors to return whether or not they are passionate about the topic of the service.

Remember, above all, the congregation is on your side; they want you to do well and will do all they can to make that happen. Trust them!

Terminology

Service leader(s) - any lay person or group involved in any aspect of creating or presenting worship

Executive Team - the church leadership group including the Standing Committee (the governing body) and Deacons. ET members present the Community Matters announcements each Sunday

Deacons - the church committee tasked with guiding the spiritual life of the church.

Worship Associates – trained and experienced members available to assist with the mechanics of the Sunday service such as setting up microphones and lighting candles.

Where Do I Start?

If you have an idea for a service you are encouraged to contact the Deacons at Deacons@fculittle.org. They will help you with the process of submitting your idea as a proposal for inclusion on the worship calendar, let you know if the proposal is accepted and assign a date for the service. You may have a service in mind that you would like to present or you may have a particular skill that you would like to offer to others leading services - as a reader, musician, storyteller, etc. All these ways of worship are valuable and needed. The Deacons can help you get started and connect you with others involved in worship.

If you are taking the lead on a service, the Deacons will help steer you to the resources listed in this guide, help find the answers to any questions you have and be available as you need them. Among other things, they can help

- Coordinate with Molly on any special musical requests you have
- Coordinate with Thea on a Time for All Ages
- Coordinate with the tech team on technical issues
- Provide information on who is offering any of the Sunday morning helper tasks on the day of your service such as offering Community Matters, lighting the chalice, acting as Worship Associate, ushering, providing flowers or hospitality, or providing Lay Pastoral Care

You are also encouraged to schedule a meeting with the Minister to discuss any ideas, questions or concerns you have about creating a worship service.

The Order of Service

At FCU there is a typical order of service. Please do not feel constrained by it but rather use it as a guide while understanding that there are many detailed reasons why this is the typical order. Some of things to consider are:

- The service should have a shape that begins with allowing people to settle into a worshipful space and then builds to the main message and sends people out with hope or energy to connect with others.
- The children should be released to their classes approximately 15 minutes after the start of the service.
- The service must end as close to 11:00 as is practical. The teachers cannot dismiss students until the service concludes and having completed their lesson plan are left to entertain the children as best they can not knowing how long that will be required. Ending the service early is equally disruptive as the adults are moving about the church, and parents may be eager for classes to end so they can leave.
- We try not to put pieces of music played by the same musician back to back so that they have time to get set for the next piece.
- Once a month, during the Opportunity for Generosity the cash offering is given to a nonprofit organization a representative from that group may be invited to speak. You must allow 5 minutes for the speaker. The Deacons can tell you if your service falls on such a Sunday.

We strongly urge you to read the General Worship Guidelines section above which will further help you understand why the services take the form they do. If you have any questions about changes you are considering please feel free to contact the Minister.

A Typical Order of Service

Element	Offered by	Approx. Time
Ringing of the Bell	Assigned Congregational Leader	
Community Matters	Assigned Congregational Leader	3-5 minutes
Prelude	Molly	3-4
Call to Worship	You	1
Chalice Lighting	Assigned RE participant	1-2
Covenant	Congregation led by you	
Words of Welcome	You	2
Hymn	Congregation	3
Time for All Ages	Thea	5
Anthem	Choir	3-4

Lantern Lighting/Song of Blessing	Molly/Congregation	2
Opportunity for Generosity	You	3-8
Offertory	Molly	
Community Response	Congregation led by you	1
Candles of Caring	Intro by you, Congregation assisted by Worship Assoc. and Tech Team	5
Pastoral Prayer and Time for Silence	You	1-2
Musical Response	Molly/Congregation	1-2
Reflection	You	15-20
Hymn	Molly/Congregation	3
Closing Words	You	1
Postlude	Molly	2-3

The Elements of a Service

Ringing of the Bell

Description: the chimes call everyone to take a seat for worship to begin

Presented by: Assigned congregational leader

Timing: 10 seconds

Notes: You do not need to include this element but it is expected by the congregation so you will need to replace it with another way of bringing people's attention to worship

Community Matters (announcements)

Description: announcements of church events and opportunities for service

Chosen by: the Executive Team

Presented by: Assigned congregational leader

Timing: 3-5 minutes

Notes: You must include this element unless you have the prior permission of the minister or Executive Team. A member of the Executive Team who has signed up ahead of time will read the list of announcements prepared each week by the Church Office Administrator from those submitted during the week.

Prelude

Description: musical piece to settle everyone into worship

Chosen by: the musician(s) presenting it

Presented by: the musician(s) of your choice (see the *Music* section below)

Timing: 3-4 minutes

Notes: please see the section on *Music*

Call to Worship

Description: Short reading or inspirational words on the theme of the service

Chosen by: you

Presented by: you or someone you invite

Timing: 1 minute

Notes:

Chalice Lighting/Covenant

Description: lighting the central symbol of our denomination with inspirational words sets the frame for the service

Chosen by: the chalice lighters are chosen by Thea from among the RE participants. Words spoken are the church covenant.

Presented by: You invite the chalice lighter forward using only their first name and lead the congregation in the words of covenant printed in the order of service and displayed on the screens

Timing: 1-2 minutes

Notes: If someone has been assigned to light the chalice for the day of your service you must include this element or seek their prior permission. We strongly urge you to include this element as the shared symbol of our faith.

Words of Welcome

Description: A welcome to all attending the service

Chosen by: you

Presented by: you

Timing: 1-2 minutes

Notes: Along with words of welcome to the congregation and visitors, introduce yourself. If not already included in Community Matters, let people know where they can find more information, how to contact us, welcome those joining via Zoom and YouTube Live and ask people to silence their phones. See *Appendix A: Service Leaders Scripts*

Hymn

Description: a congregational hymn to instrumental accompaniment

Chosen by: you

Presented by: typically accompanied by Molly. You may invite another musician if you wish to have the hymn accompanied by guitar or other instrumentation

Timing: 3 minutes

Notes: The gray hymnal *Singing the Living Tradition* has several useful indexes at the back to help you choose hymns appropriate to your theme. You may also use hymns from the teal hymnal, *Singing the Journey*, or insert music and lyrics from another source such as the Spanish language hymnal, *Las Voces del Camino*, into the order of service. You may choose to include any number of hymns in your service. The congregation is invited to rise and begin singing. Molly typically plays a short introduction before the congregation begins singing.

Time for All Ages

Description: A story or conversation delivered through any appropriate media that communicates the message of the service to the children

Chosen by: Typically chosen by Thea based on your service description. If you have a particular story in mind please speak with her.

Presented by: Thea or a storyteller enlisted by her. If you wish to tell the story or have a particular storyteller in mind please let Thea know at least 2 weeks before your service.

Timing: 5 minutes

Notes: You must include this element in the service unless you have the prior permission of Thea or the minister. See the *Resources* section or speak with Thea for possible sources of stories.

Anthem

Description: a featured musical selection by the choir, May be by an invited group or soloist with the prior knowledge of the Music Director

Chosen by: the musician offering the piece. Molly is happy to consider requests for choral pieces with adequate notice

Presented by: choir or invited musicians. See the *Music* section below for instances when you may invite a musician.

Timing: 3-4 minutes

Notes: There may be instances when no anthem is available for a service. Recorded music is possible (see *Technology* section)

Lantern Lighting/Song of Blessing - non-multigenerational services only

Description: The Worship Associate lights the lantern and the children go to their classes with one child chosen by Thea carrying it. The congregation sings as the children leave

Chosen by: you. Typically the congregation sings a Song of Blessing to instrumental accompaniment as the children exit the sanctuary. You may choose an alternate way for the children to be accompanied out.

Presented by: you or the congregation as appropriate. If you choose to use the usual song the words are printed in the order of service and displayed on the screens.

May your mind be open to new learning

May your lips bring truth into the world.

May your heart know love, and may you do the work of justice,

As you go your way in peace, as you go your way in peace.

Timing: 2 minutes

Notes: While you are free to choose an alternate way to usher the children out, know that they are used to this song and miss it when it is not sung. You might explain to them why you have chosen a different way before dismissing them. If you choose an alternative, be sure to coordinate with Molly and update any necessary Google slides. This element is not

included for multigenerational services when the children remain in the sanctuary throughout the service.

Opportunity for Generosity/Offertory

Description: a free will offering to support the work of the church or a nonprofit organization

Chosen by: words are chosen by you, music is chosen by the musician

Presented by: If it is not a special collection Sunday, you will introduce the offering. Sample words provided in the *Service Leader Script* in Appendix A. When a special collection is taken someone from the Social Justice committee or the benefitting agency will introduce the offering. The ushers will come forward and move through the congregation, taking the collection. After the ushers have cleared the center aisle people may come forward to light silent candles placed on the chancel. Accompanying music is played by Molly or the musician of your choice (see the *Music* section below).

Timing: 3-8 minutes

Notes: Once a month, when the cash collection is given to a nonprofit agency, a representative from Social Justice or the agency will speak. You must allow an additional 5 minutes for the speaker. The Deacons can tell you if your service falls on such a day.

Community Response

Description: a congregational response to the offertory

Chosen by: you

Presented by: typically you will lead the congregation in saying the words printed in the order of service and displayed on the screens. You may choose other words or a piece of music. The usual words are:

We are grateful for the opportunity to give and serve and grateful for the gifts we have received. May this affirm the ministries of our church community both within and beyond these walls.

Timing: 1 minute

Notes: If you choose to use other words or a song, make sure you have coordinated with musicians and updated the Google slides to reflect the change

Candles of Caring

Description: members of the congregation are invited to share joys and concerns

Chosen by: you

Presented by: you, Worship Associates and the congregation. You will introduce the time of sharing. See Appendix A *Service Leader Script* for sample words. Congregants in the sanctuary will raise their hands, and a Worship Associate will bring the microphone to them while another Associate lights a candle up front. After all in the sanctuary have spoken, you will invite those on Zoom to share.

Timing: 5 minutes

Notes: You may choose to omit this section

Pastoral Prayer and Time of Silence

Description: a time for deepening the worship mood in acknowledgment of all that has been shared

Chosen by: you

Presented by: you. you may wish to invite people into a time of silence or offer words on the service topic for contemplation or prayer

Timing: 1-2 minutes

Notes: If you include this element please keep the invitation wide—including words such as prayer, meditation and contemplation—so that people of all theologies feel that it is a time for them

Musical Response

Description: congregational response to sharing

Chosen by: you. Typically hymn #123 *Spirit of Life* is sung, but you may choose a different piece of music or words

Presented by: congregation accompanied by Molly or led by you

Timing: 1-2 minutes

Notes: If *Spirit of Life* is sung, it is often accompanied by signing the words. If you choose a different piece, make sure Molly knows

Reading

Description: short passage or poem supporting the theme of the service

Chosen by: you

Presented by: you or someone you invite

Timing: 3-5 minutes

Notes: Optional. You are free to select readings from any source. You may also choose to support your theme with a video presentation or other media in lieu of a reading. See the *Resources* section for possible sources of readings. Please coordinate videos or other media with the Videography Team.

Reflection

Description: the main thematic presentation

Chosen by: created by you

Presented by: you or those you invite

Timing: 15-20 minutes

Notes: You may present this in one piece, or invite others to share the time with multiple shorter reflections. Rule of thumb: one page of single-spaced 12 point Times New Roman is roughly 5 minutes spoken. Recording yourself ahead of time is the best way to know how long your reflection or other pieces will take.

Hymn

Description: a congregational hymn to instrumental accompaniment

Chosen by: you

Presented by: typically accompanied by Molly. You may invite another musician if you wish to have the hymn accompanied by guitar or other instrumentation

Timing: 3 minutes

Notes: The gray hymnal *Singing the Living Tradition* has several useful indexes at the back to help you choose hymns appropriate to your theme. You may also use hymns from the teal hymnal, *Singing the Journey*, or insert music and lyrics from another source such as the Spanish language hymnal, *Las Voces del Camino*, into the order of service. You may choose to include any number of hymns in your service. The congregation is invited to rise and begin singing after the accompanist has played through the song once.

Closing Words

Description: a final thought to offer as worship ends

Chosen by: you

Presented by: you

Timing: 1 minute

Notes: May be original or drawn from any source. See the *Resources* section for possible collections of closing words. Often delivered from the floor in front of the chancel. If so, the Worship Associates will supply a microphone. The congregation is usually invited to connect through sending energy or holding hands as people are comfortable

Postlude

Description: a piece of music that allows time to absorb the message and prepare to leave worship

Chosen by: Molly or the musician presenting it

Presented by: the musician of your choice

Timing: 2-3 minutes

Notes:

The service is one hour, from 10:00 am to 11:00 am. Because teachers have planned lessons and cannot release their classes until worship ends we ask that you try to hold to one hour as closely as you can. The following are guidelines for how long elements generally take.

Just as you do not have to follow a specific order, you do not have to include all these elements and the number elements such as hymns, readings and reflections may be varied. The only elements you *must* include unless you have prior permission from the minister are:

- Community Matters (announcements)
- Time for All Ages
- Offering

The element we strongly urge you to include is:

- Chalice lighting

The *final and complete* Order of Service is due to Bllu, our Church Office Administrator (office@fculittle.org) by noon of the Wednesday before the service. This includes any supporting handouts you wish to have included in the order of service.

You are responsible for:

- Selecting any hymns you wish to include
- Selecting or creating the pieces that communicate your message – readings, reflections, videos, skits or other methods
- Writing a service description blurb for Community Matters and sending it to Bllu no less than 2 weeks prior to your service
- Communicating the order of service content to the Office Administrator by Wednesday noon prior to your service. Suggestions for a cover illustration are gratefully received.
- Ensuring that all slides which will be projected during the service are completed using Google Slides and delivered to the Tech team by Saturday prior to your service

You are NOT responsible for:

- Prelude, offertory music, postlude, featured music (see *Music* section)
- Finding someone to present the Time for All Ages or selecting the story. Thea is available most Sundays to tell the story. While requests and suggestions are welcome, she is happy to select a story on your theme. When not available to present the story, Thea will select another storyteller. Thea can tell you who is scheduled to tell the story on the day of your service. If you want to tell the story yourself or invite a particular storyteller please speak with her no less than 2 weeks prior to your service.
- Finding someone to give the Community Matters (announcements). There is a sign-up list and members of the Executive Team will be signed up ahead of time
- Selecting a chalice lighter. Thea selects chalice lighters ahead of time and can let you know who that is.

Music

Music is an important part of the service, enhancing your message in ways the spoken word cannot. The following musical resources are available to you. Please make all requests for music well in advance of your service. Allow at least one week for requesting a special piano piece and at least 3 weeks if requesting that the choir sing a particular piece.

Molly, our Organist and Music Director, typically offers the prelude, offertory, postlude and accompanies the hymns. She also leads the Church Choir in an anthem most

Sundays. Where you place the anthem in the service is up to you. It may serve as the prelude, offertory or postlude. If you have another musician you would like to invite to be part of your service, Molly can let you know what music is already planned for the day of your service.

If Molly is not going to be present the day of your service, she will likely have made arrangements for a substitute. Please check with her well in advance of your service.. If Molly has not made arrangements for a substitute musician, you have several options. Feel free to be creative...but remember that it is very important not to surprise others involved in worship.

For example:

- You can use recorded music videos to lead hymns or for an anthem. If you do, you will need to work closely with the videography team members who are assigned to your service. The videography team leader is Mike Bestgen, and he can get you in touch with the right persons on the videography team for your Sunday. The videography email address is video@fculittle.org. When using recorded music, be attentive to copyright issues. Note that the use of pre recorded, copyrighted material may render that portion of reply of the recording unviewable on YouTube.
- There are some pre-recorded hymns and anthems sung by our choir during prior services. You can ask the video team to extract some of these from prior services and play them for your service. Extractions of prior musical performances from FCU services takes time, access, and skills that most don't have. Get it done as early as possible via the videography team.
- You can recruit musically talented individuals or groups of FCU members to provide live music and singing. Some of these include members of the Firehouse Band (Eric Semple leads), members of the UU Ukles (Eric Semple leads), retired music director Carolyn McCreary, Rev Lara, Peter Ersland, Patti Sardella, choir members, and many others. Don't be afraid to ask around.
- You can have non-FCU musicians come and perform.

Note that there are no funds available to pay for musicians.

Whatever you do should be discussed in detail in advance with Molly, or Molly's chosen substitute and with everyone concerned.

Hymns: you are responsible for selecting the hymns and communicating them to the Office Administrator when you submit the order of service. If you know the hymns in advance of the full order of service please send them to Molly. You may select as many or as few hymns as you wish. If you are not familiar with a particular hymn but like its text, we suggest you connect with Molly or another musician to determine whether it is singable. Do not assume that because it is published in one of our hymnals that it can be sung by a congregation. Should you be bold enough to select a hymn from the Spanish language hymnal, allow extra time to teach the pronunciation.

Sending the names of any unfamiliar or tricky hymns ahead of time will allow the choir to familiarize themselves with it in order to better lead the congregation.

Technology

The sanctuary is equipped with a number of microphones, multiple cameras and screens for playing videos or displaying slides. The congregation includes those joining on Zoom or YouTube Live and the service is recorded and uploaded on YouTube. Guest speakers and performers should be made aware of this when the invitation is extended. Assistive listening devices are available from the ushers for those in the sanctuary. Someone from the Video Production Team is assigned to help with technology for each Sunday service.

The available microphones are pulpit mounted, floor stand, handheld and over the ear portable microphones. If you do not wish to present from the pulpit the technology helper of the day or Worship Associate can assist you with the other microphones. It is best to do a sound check before the service to ensure the proper sound levels so coordinate a time for this with the tech helper keeping in mind that the choir rehearses beginning at 9:15.

Typically slides are displayed on the screens with words to common elements such as the church covenant, hymns and the Time for All Ages, There is also a placeholder slide for times of transition. The slides are prepared using Google Slides and placed in the FCU Slides for Services subfolder of the Video Production Team folder [here](#). The filename should be in the format of “year.mo.day FCU Title,” such as 2023.04.06 FCU Spirituality and Peace. The slides should be placed in the folder by the Saturday before the service. It is your responsibility to ensure that the slides are prepared in the proper order with all elements included. This [template file](#) contains most of the typical service elements and will get you started. Please remember to save it as a copy before modifying it and be careful not to delete or modify the other files in this folder.

If you wish to play a video or use recorded music these must also be uploaded to the appropriate subfolder (videos or mp3) under the [Video Production Team folder](#). Please contact the tech team at video@fculittle.org if you need assistance. Please do not surprise anyone on the day of your service with a thumb drive of material to be shown.

Ushers

Remember that there are ushers at every service. If you need help passing out items or collecting items you can call on the ushers for assistance. If you are using others to do these things you might want to notify the ushers before the service so they don't think it's their responsibility.

Rehearsals

We strongly recommend that you schedule a rehearsal, particularly if there are multiple people involved in your service. Knowing where people will stand or sit, when they will move and who will introduce each element will make your service flow well. Determining the volume and pacing of each speaker will help plan for smooth transitions. Including the technical support person who will be helping on the day of your service can avoid any last minute glitches, as well as increase your level of comfort using the microphones. All of this will help you and the congregation be present and relaxed.

To schedule the sanctuary for a rehearsal time, please contact the Office Administrator at office@fculittle.org or (978) 486-3044.

Remember that you will be the face of Unitarian Universalism for the day of your service. We know you will want it to go as smoothly as possible, and the investment of one hour for rehearsal can help you feel confident in presenting the best service possible.

Deadlines

AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

- Provide the service theme to the Thea and Molly and, if desired, request a particular piece of music or Time for All Ages story
- Coordinate any special technology needs with the assigned Videography Team member.

THE WEDNESDAY BEFORE

- Submit the final order of service to Bllu, our Church Office Administrator including the order of elements, who will do each element, titles and authors of readings, a name for your reflection if you wish to have one. Copy the Music Director and DRE.
- Submit all information for order of service inserts to Bllu including any information for how you want it formatted
- Offer any suggestions or request for a picture for the front of the order of service to tie to your theme

THE SATURDAY BEFORE

- Provide the slide deck, video and/or recorded music files

THE DAY OF

- Check the setup of the sanctuary. Ensure that all the materials you need are present
- Perform a sound check with the technical support person

Checklist

- Select theme and clarify its connection to spirituality and UU principles
- Submit a proposal to the Deacons and wait to hear if the proposal is officially accepted and assigned a date. Let the Deacons know as soon as possible if there is a conflict with the date.
- Request audio-visual help as soon as possible
- Make special requests for music or Time for All Ages as soon as possible
- Design any decorative elements you want for the sanctuary and secure supplies
- Community Matters blurb to the Office Administrator one week before
- Talk to the tech specialist for any audio-visual needs such as showing videos, playing recorded music or using multiple microphones
- Schedule a rehearsal with all speakers and tech helpers
- Submit order of service to the Office Administrator by the Wednesday before the service including suggestions for cover illustration
- Create and upload slide deck, video or audio files by Saturday prior to the service
- Prepare and bring copies of all elements of the service whether you are presenting them or someone else is
- Sunday Morning
 - Coordinate with Worship Associate on microphones or other needs
 - Sound check
 - Coordinate with Thea to get the name of the chalice lighter

Resources

Books:

Singing the Living Tradition [gray hymnal found in the sanctuary]

Hymns, readings, chalice lightings, opening and closing words

Singing the Journey [teal hymnal, found in the sanctuary]

Hymns

Las Voces del Camino [purple hymnal, found in the Volunteer Center]

Spanish language hymns including some familiar tunes in translation

Web sites:

- UUA WorshipWeb: individual elements and full services on a wide variety of topics, also contains great information about worship theory and practice <http://www.uua.org/worship/>
- UU World article on neurodiversity [*The Spectrum of Inclusion*](#)
- UUA Resources on ableism <https://www.uua.org/worship/collections/ableism>

Appendix A: Service Leader Words and Actions

While the items below need to be covered, they should be said in words and expressions natural to you. You may or may not want to read from a prepared script, but using your own words will be much more effective than reading from a sample script. Examples are provided below.

Call to Worship

- Offer the words you've chosen

Chalice Lighting (*in unison*)

- Note that the flaming chalice is a symbol of Unitarian Universalism
- Announce who will light the chalice today
- Invite people to join in reading the chalice lighting words in the order of service/displayed on screen

Words of Welcome

- Welcome everyone
- Introduce yourself including your pronouns. You might choose to add how long you have been a member or ways in which you have served at FCU.
- If not included in Community Matters: extend a particular welcome to visitors. Invite them to speak with one of us or check out the web site faculittle.org if they would like more information on Unitarian Universalism or this church. Note how people joining online can contact us.
- If not included in Community Matters: invite all to gather after the service for coffee and conversation after the service & indicate how to get to gathering space
- If not included in Community Matters: request that cell phones be set to silent

Hymn

- Announce the hymn number and title
- Let people know that the pianist will play it through once before we sing
- Invite people to rise in body or in spirit

Opportunity for Generosity

- If it is a Sunday when the offering is being given to a nonprofit organization, invite someone from Social Justice to introduce the speaker or organization
- Invite people to give to support the work of the church
- Offer words of gratitude for people's generosity
- For those joining online, mention how they can give through the website or by sending a check to the church office
- Ask ushers to come forward to receive offering

Community Response (*in unison*)

- Invite all to join in words of gratitude in OS/on screen
- Lead words

Candles of Caring

- Introduce time of sharing

- Invite people in sanctuary to raise a hand and note that Worship Associates will bring microphone to them and a candle will be lit up front
- When everyone in sanctuary has spoken ask tech helper if anyone online has something to share

Pastoral Prayer and Time of Silence

- Offer prayer, may be general or specific to what was shared
- Please keep the invitation wide—including words such as prayer, meditation and contemplation—so that people of all theologies feel that it is a time for them
- Invite time of silence, you may ring the bell to begin and end time of silence

Musical Response

- Lead singing of hymn #123 or alternate selection
- If using #123 you may lead signing of the words

Closing Words

- Offer the words you've chosen from the pulpit of floor

Examples of personalized Words of Welcome

A. Good Morning! Welcome to the First Church Unitarian Littleton, known to its friends as FCU. My name is Jim Parks, and my pronouns are he and him. I enjoy playing tuba and pool, and talking with people who are interested in Unitarian Universalism. Welcome to all, members and visitors, whether you are here with us in person or joining us online this morning. If you are joining on Zoom or YouTube we encourage you to visit our website at fculittle.org where you can find out more about us and where you can contact us if you choose. For those here in person today, our minister will be glad to tell you more about FCU during the coffee hour which will follow the service. Please join us by following the line exiting through this door to my left. If you see me there, I'll be glad to help you get acquainted. (*Don't say that unless you mean it.*) In consideration for others, please silence all electronic devices. Headphones are available from the ushers for those to whom they might be helpful.

B. Good morning everybody :) Welcome to First Church Unitarian in Littleton. My name is Alice Andrews and I use she/her pronouns. My husband Arthur and I have been members here for 15 years and I serve on the Religious Education Committee. I'm so glad to be with you all this morning, both those of you who are here in the sanctuary and those who are joining us online. Any of us would be happy to answer any questions you have about our church if you would like to contact us through our website fculittle.org or over a cup of coffee following the service. Everybody is invited for coffee, whether you have questions about the church or not :) If you think you might have trouble hearing what is said during the service, please ask an usher for a listening device. And for everybody with a cell phone, please mute them or turn them off at this time. Again, welcome, everybody.

C. Good morning. It's wonderful to see everyone today! I'm Sally Fortunato (they/them pronouns), and I am delighted to welcome you all to First Church Unitarian here in Littleton, MA. On behalf of the minister and congregation, I offer a special welcome to all our guests today, those who are new to the congregation or visiting us for the first time. If you are joining us online through Zoom or YouTube we are so delighted that you are with us this morning. All are welcome here. If you have questions about our Unitarian Universalist tradition in general or this congregation in particular I invite you to speak with me or with any of our members as we gather for coffee and conversation. Anyone will be glad to guide you to our fellowship space through this door after the service. In the spirit of welcome and hospitality to all, we ask you to turn cell phones to the silent mode at this time. If you would like assistance with hearing our ushers at the rear of the sanctuary have headphones available.

Appendix B: Presentation Tips

Even experienced speakers need to remind themselves now and then of best practices for public speaking. Here are a few.

1. Eye contact is essential. Look up as much as possible. Tipping your head down to read breaks eye contact and your connection with the congregation. Doing so as you are still speaking the end of a sentence signals that you have no faith in what you just said. If you must look down, finish a sentence and then glance down.
2. Text preparation helps. Printing your text in a large enough font to see easily and breaking up the text one phrase per line allows you to keep your place and keep the flow going. I use 16pt font with 1.5 line spacing. Find what works best for you. Using only the top 1/2 to 2/3 of the page minimizes how far you have to drop your eyes. Adjust the pulpit shelf for your height if you need to.
3. Understand how the microphones work and use them. If you are speaking somewhere other than from the pulpit make sure to use a microphone no matter how sure you are that your voice is loud enough to carry. The sound system does more than boost volume. It clarifies sound and is hooked into a hearing loop system for those who wear hearing aids. Without a microphone, those joining online will not be able to hear you. Ask the Worship Associate or videographer to show you how to turn the mic on/off, mute it and speak into it most effectively.
4. Stand squarely at the podium. Angling to speak more closely into the microphone is not necessary and means half the room can't see your face.
5. Be careful not to touch the microphone either with your hands or by hitting it with papers as you move from one page to the next. It is very distracting. Make any necessary adjustments before the service starts. Sliding papers flat rather than lifting and flipping minimizes distraction and the chance of hitting the mic.
6. Breathe often and speak slowly. What may feel unnaturally slow to you actually allows people to hear you clearly and absorb what you are saying. Practice with a friend to set a comfortable pacing.
7. Practice!
8. Record yourself. The best way to know the real timing of reflections or other spoken pieces is to record them as you would deliver them to a congregation. Watching the recording will allow you to monitor for eye contact, speaking speed, the use of feeling that undergirds your words or the use of hesitation words such as "um" or "like" that may distract from your message.