

SOLIDARITY

The Blooming Season, May-June 2026

A collaboration of First Universalist Church of Rochester,
Unitarian Universalist Church of Canandaigua, and First Unitarian Church of Rochester.
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SOLIDARITY: “I don’t know if we have a god. But I know that we have each other. What unites human beings is that, like it or not, we will rise and fall collectively. . . . I like to hope for something more modest and achievable: That we can unite ourselves around a common value that can serve as a more stable foundation for a common political program, and then a better world. Solidarity. That is the value I suggest. It is a value that sits well apart from specific hot button issues, encompassing an entire world view that can be translated into action in a straightforward way. Solidarity means, simply, that we are all in this together. It means loving thy neighbor, and it means treating others as you would be treated, yet it requires no appeal to mysticism for its authority. All it requires is a look around. We’re all here. We’re all trying to figure out how to live together. If we all take responsibility for one another, and decide that our collective well-being is our collective responsibility, we are all going to get farther than we otherwise would.”

-- Hamilton Nolan, journalist and author of “How Things Work” on Substack.

Dear Ones,

Solidarity. Fundamentally, it's about community – church community, interest-based organizations, sports leagues, neighborhoods, cities, states, nations. What's the opposite of solidarity – isolation. Resist isolating yourself even, or especially, when times are tough.

My Rochester UU high-school youth group showed solidarity with the Black people in the Jim Crow segregated south by picketing a local movie theater that was part of a national chain that was segregated in southern states. With my college friends, I picketed a meeting of HUAC (House Un-American Activities Committee) in solidarity with our fellow student whose father was Dalton Trumbo, one of the Hollywood Ten, blacklisted in the 1950s Joe McCarthy era.

As UUs, we put love at the center. Simply put, love thy neighbor. This was brilliantly shown in January in Minneapolis, where people from all walks of life took care of their neighbors who were threatened with detention by immigration and border patrol. People shopped for immigrants fearful of even the simple act of going to the grocery store. They protested the ICE agents who wore face coverings and had no identification showing they were ICE. UU ministers and other faith leaders came from all corners of the country in solidarity. They packaged food bags, marched, and protested at the airport, where many were arrested. The same fears and dangers exist in our area and similar actions of solidarity are ongoing.

Our UU values call us into solidarity with many groups and identities, both within our congregations and in our larger communities.

- Justice – solidarity with marginalized groups, such as
 - Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC)
 - LGBTQIA, expressed in many UU communities as 'welcoming congregations'.
- Interdependence – we all rely on immigrants to milk our cows and pick our fruits and vegetables as well as to take care of our elders, and to bring diversity to our cuisine. Many eventually are able to return to their pre-immigrant careers in medicine, engineering, and the like.
- Equity – unions bring equity in the workplace versus management and unions support one another during protests and boycotts.
- Transformation – welcome the stranger into our midst and we will be transformed.
- Pluralism – many UU churches have congregants who co-identify with other religious traditions, such as Buddhist, Jewish, or Pagan / Earth-centered.
- Generosity – one way to show solidarity is by sharing our time, talent, and treasure.



This Blooming Season, we are called to act in solidarity with our neighbors based on our UU Love at the Center and values and with our church communities as a base.

Anne J. Perry, Member
First Unitarian Church of Rochester, NY

GRATITUDE

Much thanks to the Blooming Season’s packet-team leads, Scarlett Miles and Anne Perry, the three-church worship team brainstorm, and numerous contributions from the entire packet team. We hope you find inspiration to explore what solidarity means for you and your community.

READINGS FOR CHALICE LIGHTING

Chalice Lighting for Challenging Times

By Lisa Doege, UU minister

“Why a flaming chalice?” the question comes.
It’s the cup of life, we answer.
A cup of blessings overflowing.
A cup of water to quench our spirits’ thirst.
A cup of wine for celebration and dedication.
The flame of truth.
The fire of purification.
Oil for anointing, healing.
Out of chaos, fear, and horror,
thus was the symbol crafted, a generation ago.
So may it be for us,
in these days of uncertainty, sorrow, and rage.
And a light to warm our souls and guide us home.



A Holy Alchemy

By Kim Mason, UU minister

Once upon a time
chemists believed
they could transform
lead into gold
or death into life.

We laugh
but are we not also
in the business of alchemy?
Turning loneliness into connection,
pain into comfort,
anger into solidarity,
faith into action?

The subtle magic of church:
combines love with justice,
creates hope out of fear,
transforms individuals into community.

Here we engage in
a holy alchemy,
finding beauty in the ordinary
and life in the present.
Come, let us be transformed
Together.

READINGS FOR CHALICE EXTINGUISHING

Mindful of our highest aspirations

By Rebecca A Edmiston-Lange, UU minister

Mindful of our highest aspirations,
Bound by common faith and purpose,

And, yet, beginning with ourselves as we are,
Let us take one more step, together,
in our unending quest for dignity, justice
and love. Amen.

Prayer for Human Solidarity

by Rabbi Hanan Schlesinger, Orthodox Jewish rabbi and teacher.

Our Father^[1] in heaven,
Creator of all humanity,
Whose mercies are upon all His creatures
and Whose love is withheld from none.

Help us to live in the light of our faith
that all human beings are cast from the
same die,
that all are created in the divine image

and that all bear Your infinite value.

Let us remember that all of humanity
constitute one unit
and that we are all interdependent.
May we heal the suspicion, fear and hate
that divide communities, nations and
peoples.
Renew our sense of human solidarity.

[1] *Some may wish to substitute 'Parent' for 'Father'.*
[Prayer For Human Solidarity.](#)

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

These spiritual exercises are an opportunity to experience the theme, to come at it from a different angle than just thinking or talking about it. Pick one or two that speak to you, or perhaps that are out of your usual comfort zone and make time to complete them.

Exercise A. Cross Cultural Solidarity (History / Research Exercise)

Research historical figures who share a Unitarian Universalist identity with you who acted in solidarity with marginalized people. Check out this link for the Spring 2025 Minns Lecture Series “Deconstructing Mythologies of Unitarian Anti-Racism”. This series of three videos covers 19th and 20th century history and is a commitment of about 5-½ hours including Q & As. Two of the presenters have links to our UU churches – Rev. Lisa Friedman grew up in First Unitarian Church of Rochester and Rev. Dr. Mark Morrison Reed served First Universalist Church of Rochester. <https://www.minnslectures.org/lecture-archive> Share with your small group or a friend what new information you learned.

Exercise B. These Are My People / Journaling

UU minister Karen G. Johnston writes about a spiritual practice that her Buddhist teacher Sharon Salzberg recommends. ([UUA These Are My People](#)) When traveling on a train, bus, or at the airport. Attending a concert. In the grocery store. Or even looking out a window observing people walking or driving by. Look at the people and say to yourself, “*These are my people, and I am theirs.*” They aren’t your friends or family, but the universe chose them for you at that moment. Over the next 10 days, practice this wherever you are and, if you wish, write a daily reflection in your journal. At the end of the 10 days, summarize your experience – Did this practice change anything for you? Did you experience healing or justice? Did this transform you? Share your experience with your small group or a friend.

Exercise C. Cooperative Board Games

Select a game from the cooperative board game genre. If you don’t have one in mind, here are a few examples. **The Game** is low complexity and readily accessible with limited rules. **Hanabi** is a lower-complexity card game where each player’s cards face the other players. The group

works together to get the highest score possible. **Mysterium** is a medium-complexity game about a group of psychics communing with a ghost to learn the identity of their murderer. One player plays the ghost who has to lead the other players to the right murderer, murder location, and murder weapon. Gather a group of 3-6 players after acquiring a game and play it one or more times. How does it feel to play a table game that depends on cooperation rather than competition? What did you learn about solidarity? Share your experience among the players and with your small group. (Millennial Games in Henrietta, NY, has both new and used games or contact packet lead Anne Perry for a loaner game by emailing: packetteam@rochesterunitarian.org)

Exercise D. Story: One Flower in a Field

This can be done individually or with a few friends or family members. Read the story. How does the rabbit's solidarity with the droopy plant, standing its ground against the hedgehog, act as a parable about creating community even with the occasional curmudgeon? What can you do in your community to make sure that even the shy person is brought into solidarity? Try practicing that and share your experience with your small group or church friends. [One Flower in a Field](#)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

These questions aren't "homework" that need to be covered entirely. Instead, simply pick the one question that speaks to you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The questions often lead not to answers, but more questions.

1. Is 100% agreement necessary to act in solidarity? Think of examples.
2. What action or actions would you consider taking in solidarity with your neighbors, based on our UU Love at the Center and values?
3. If you have clothing with a message, such as a yellow 'Side with Love' shirt and/or scarf, ICE OUT button, Pride rainbow gear, and the like, what does it mean to you to wear it to a vigil, protest, or church service? How do you feel when others are wearing the same item?
4. In light of the Minneapolis experience resisting ICE, what are the most urgent needs and important opportunities in our communities?
5. What do our shared values call us to do in response to this historical moment and what are you most compelled, equipped, and/or positioned to do? For yourself or for your church community?
6. What are you willing to sacrifice for solidarity?

RESOURCES

FROM UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM

Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt, President, Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA)
Facebook, 1/23/26 at 1:57 pm, in Minneapolis, MN:

"I am proud and grateful to be with so many of my colleagues in ministry and so many others on this [#DayofTruthandFreedom](#).

“This moment demands that we show up in solidarity, to witness what is being tested here, to learn from how communities are responding and to help bear the burden together. This is not just a local struggle. It is a test of who we are as a nation and what kind of future we will build together.”

Rev. Shari Quan, Lead Minister, First Unitarian Church of Rochester, NY
January 23 in solidarity with the people of Minneapolis, MN:

“I’m in Minneapolis right now in response to a national call to clergy to show up in support of a city fighting back against the occupation by ICE and the kidnapping of nearly 2000 residents so far.

“What’s happening in Minneapolis right now is staggering in its cruelty, and while not everything is being lost, it is being tested. The collective trauma is real and so too is the resilience and creativity of communities made up of experienced activists and ordinary people who never thought they’d be called on to defend their neighbors. . . . We are all in this together.”

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC)

Who we are

“Rooted in solidarity, committed to systemic change”

For over 80 years, UUSC has worked to challenge injustice and advance human rights. Through our collaboration with frontline communities and grassroots movements, we are building a better world together.”

<https://www.uusc.org/>

Image: A group of leaders in Haiti hold hands. Photo credit: UUSC



SIDE WITH LOVE

The Organizing Strategy Team of the Unitarian Universalist Association

Solidarity Stances: Recording and Resources from The Gathering,
Local Stories, Shared Songs, February 10, 2026

“Last night we gathered to hear three very different stories of local organizing in solidarity with immigrants from Maine, Chicago, and Oakland. Songs for Liberation from Chicago nourished our spirits, reminding us with Woody Guthrie’s song “All you fascists bound to lose,” renewed lyrics with Amazing Grace and more. We hope you were inspired by the Zoom full of folks sharing their resistance to authoritarianism as we all seek to live our faith with courage and integrity.” [Song Sheets with Lyrics](#) Watch the recording: [February Gathering Side With Love](#)

We Would be One – UU Hymnal Singing the Living Tradition #318

[We Would be One](#)

Note: *this link takes you to the story of this hymn written for the 1953-54 continental convention where the Unitarian and Universalist youth merged nearly ten years before the two denominations merged. Scroll down for a link to a performance.*

We Are a Gentle, Angry People – UU Hymnal Singing the Living Tradition # 170

The song was written after she heard news of the assassination of city supervisor Harvey Milk, a champion of LGBTQIA rights. Words and music by Holly Near. [Singing for our Lives.](#)

A Theology of Community Organizing – UU

WORLD "People don't want to be convinced, they want to feel claimed by a "we" that doesn't dissolve who they are but magnifies it in a shared power." [UU World Community Organizing](#)



QUOTATIONS

A Christian theological view of Solidarity

"Solidarity includes compassion, but it is more. Solidarity is not only a spontaneous movement of the heart that responds immediately, but also a decision to take action to join with, to form community with, those who are suffering. Solidarity takes place when a person or community not only sees a need and acts, but commits to follow up, to endeavor to see that action

is taken to improve the other's situation for the long run. Solidarity also includes a kind of mutuality that goes both ways in respect and accountability when the relationship grows. Solidarity becomes a two-way process because it becomes a relationship with both sides giving and receiving."

– Marie J. Giblin, Ph.D., former chair of the Theology Department at Xavier University.

"I don't believe in charity, I believe in solidarity. Charity is so vertical. It goes from top to bottom. Solidarity is horizontal. It respects the other person. I have a lot to learn from other people."

– Eduardo Galeano, Uruguayan journalist, writer and novelist.

The Next Buddha May Be a Sangha

“The Buddha, Shakyamuni, our teacher, predicted that the next Buddha would be Maitreya, the Buddha of love. We desperately need love. And in the Buddha’s teaching we learn that love is born from understanding. The willingness to love is not enough. If you do not understand, you cannot love. The capacity to understand the other person will bring about acceptance and loving kindness.

“It is possible the next Buddha will not take the form of an individual. The next Buddha may take the form of a community, a community practicing understanding and loving kindness, a community practicing mindful living. And the practice can be carried out as a group, as a city, as a nation.”

– Thich Nhat Hanh, Buddhist theologian, 1993. [Next Buddha May Be a Sangha](#)

Terminology, Clarity and the Question of What is the Left

“. . . I was very glad to get out into the world, in an answer to whether Gavin Newsom or Zohran Mamdani was the hero we needed: One of the great weaknesses of our era is that we get lone superhero movies that suggest that our big problems are solved by muscly guys in spandex, when actually the world mostly gets changed through collective effort. Thich Nhat Hanh said before he died a few years ago that the next Buddha will be the Sangha. The Sangha, in Buddhist terminology, is the community of practitioners. It’s this idea that we don’t have to look for an individual, for a savior, for an Übermensch.”

– Rebecca Solnit, American writer and activist [Terminology, Clarity, etc.](#)

“Humanization as Sacred Duty: Stone Circle Wicca Lessons on Defending Dignity in Minneapolis”

Rev. Catharine “Qira” Clarenbach explained that SCW’s language of “humanization” is not rhetorical but a spiritual value with teeth. “Humanization... and opposition to dehumanization come out of a worldview that is essentially in the service of life,” she said.

“Rev. E. Eldritch described the interfaith dimension in practical terms. When entering coalitions where Pagans may be unfamiliar to other participants, he said, the first task is not to lead with labels or theological explanation, but to meet the human need in front of you. “When you go to a community... the first thing you have to do is show up for humanity,” he said. The identity questions—who is Wiccan, who is Pagan, what anyone believes or how they practice —can come later, if they come at all. “What’s the need?... Talk about theology later,” he said, emphasizing that solidarity begins with presence.”

– Manny Moreno, *The Wild Hunt*, February 9, 2026. [Humanization as a Sacred Duty](#).

“Believing”

“In particular, he thinks we’ve become too focused on what is good for individuals instead of what is good for communities. He thinks everything has become commodified, hollowing out civic life. He thinks we have misguided ideas about merit, and that we should acknowledge luck more. Finally, he thinks modern politics has failed to prioritize meaningful conversations about morality.”

– Lauren Jackson on Michael Sandel, Harvard Philosopher, *The NYTimes* 3/1/26 [Believing - NYT](#)



“I enjoy life this way. I enjoy life being in solidarity with people who are fighting for a better world.”
 -- David Dellinger,
 American pacifist and activist.

Photos: H. Nolan



“This is the world I want to live in. The shared world. . . . This can still happen anywhere. Not everything is lost.”

– Naomi Shihab Nye, “Gate A4” from *Honeybee* [Gate A4](#)

FURTHER ENGAGEMENT

Union Anthems sung by Pete Seeger

Solidarity Forever – [Solidarity Forever](#)

Which Side Are You On – [Which Side Are You On](#)

We are the World – musicians from many genres unite in solidarity with Ethiopians during the 1983-85 famine. [We Are the World](#)

Swimmy, by Leo Lionni. Children’s book about small fish gathering in solidarity to trick the big fish into thinking they are also big. [Swimmy on YouTube](#)

Solidarity Has a Price

At the 1968 Mexico City Olympics, 200-meter gold medalist Tommie Smith and bronze medalist John Carlos raised their fists in solidarity with the Olympic Project for Human Rights (OPHR). Australian Peter Norman also wears the OPHR badge in solidarity with Smith and Carlos. Smith and Carlos were expelled from the Games. Peter Norman was excluded from future Games by the Australian Olympic Committee.

Photo widely published by Mexico News Daily, BBC, NY Times, and Time Magazine, among others.



HUMOR



UU Hysterical Society:



Yournew Momfriend
@NewMomFriend

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My 3 kids each have 30 minutes tablet screen time, but yesterday they learned if they agreed on what to do/watch together they could turn it into an hour and a half.

So now I either have to create distrust among them or accept that they've unionized.