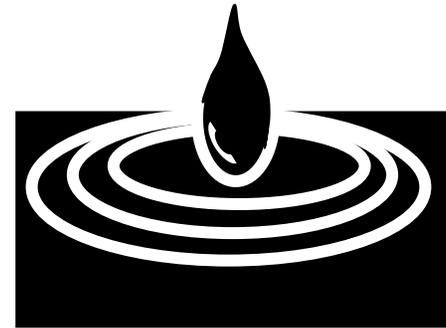


From the UU Worship Web:
<http://www.uua.org/worshipweb/main.html>

HOMECOMING – sometimes the first Sunday after Labor Day. The kick-off of the church year for many congregations. Some congregations include the **Water Communion** ritual in this service. This ritual involves congregants who have brought small amounts of water to the service, taken from special places they have been over the summer. Or the water is collected from a rainstorm or is otherwise significant or symbolic in some way. They can pour the water into a large bowl and tell the congregation where it is from and the meaning it has for them.

Themes often used in homecoming include: reunion; re-gathering; re-covenanting as a community of faith; hospitality; returning home to the church community that holds us; hope; looking forward with excitement to church year. The service may be intergenerational in whole or in part.



SMALL GROUP MINISTRY
FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF
SAN JOSE

Sharing the Water of Life

Can we be like drops of water
Falling on the stone
Splashing, breaking, dispersing in air
Weaker than stone by far but be aware that
As time goes by, the rock will wear away.
-Holly Near, "The Rock Will Wear Away"

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the
shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements
grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.
-William Butler Yeats

Preliminaries Get a volunteer to light the chalice and volunteers to do each reading. Note that check-in has been moved to the end.

Chalice Lighting
- Sara Campbell,
UUMA Worship Materials Collection (adapted)

Each of us comes to this sacred space today to dip into the well that nourishes our hungry spirits. Each of us comes with our own cup of goodness to pour into the well. We drink together. May we be strengthened in our bonds of love and peace.

Sitting in Silence *Please take a few minutes to settle into the space, relax your breathing, and center your thoughts.*

Reading
- Rev. Elizabeth Lerner, UU Church of Silver Springs, MD

Like water flowing to the sea, we return from the mountains and rivers and quiet places where we ran out some time of our days in recent months, returning to this place. Joining together, we comprise this sea of continuity, filled with myriad currents carrying along our spiritual and emotional journeys in a cycle of change: ocean, mist, rain, trickle, stream, river, ocean, that keeps us alive and changing.

Sharing of the Waters *Please pour your water into the common bowl and share your answers to the Preparation questions.*

Singing
- Hymnal #108, *My Life Flows On in Endless Song*

My life flows on in endless song
Above earth's lamentation.
I hear the real though far-off hymn
That hails a new creation.
Through all the tumult and the strife
I hear the music ringing.
It sounds an echo in my soul.
How can I keep from singing!

What though the tempest 'round me roars,
I know the truth, it liveth.
What though the darkness 'round me close,
Songs in the night it giveth.
No storm can shake my inmost calm
While to that rock I'm clinging.
Since love prevails in heav'n and earth,
How can I keep from singing!

Further Sharing *Go 'round the circle or share as the spirit moves you. In the interests of time, please take only 2-3 minutes each.*

What does "homecoming" mean to you in the context of the church community? What are you most looking forward to for the coming church year?

Closing / Extinguishing the Chalice
- Barbara Hamilton-Holway,
1997 UUMA
Worship Materials Collection

Join hands or link arms as you read the closing words together:

Go now in peace.
Deeply regard each other.
Truly listen to each other.
Speak what each of you must speak.
Be ready in any moment to disarm your own heart,
and always live as if a realm of love had begun.
So be it. Blessed be. Amen.

Check in Following the session, we invite you to spend time "checking in" about your lives, perhaps over refreshments.