



Soul Matters

Courage



Worship Research
October 2026

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Calendar Connections

October 2026

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

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

Interfaith

- [Feast of St Francis of Assisi](#) (Christian) - Oct. 4
- [Sukkot](#): Feast of Tabernacles (Jewish) - Evening of Fri, Sep 25, 2026 – Fri, Oct 2, 2026
- [Ayudha Puja](#) (Hindu) - Oct. 20, 2026 (more [here](#))
- [Reformation Day](#) (Christian) - Oct. 31 (more [here](#))
- [Samhain](#) (Pagan/Wiccan) - Oct. 31 - Nov. 1 ([more](#))

Unitarian Universalist

- Birthday of [e e cummings](#) - Oct. 14
- [Michael Servetus](#) burned at the stake in Geneva - Oct. 27 (1553) (more [here](#))
- [UU Merger Vote](#): Unitarians and Universalists, meeting separately in Syracuse, NY, voted to proceed with consolidation - Oct. 31, 1959. (*The official consolidation, [UUA Founding Day](#), happened in 1961 on May 12. - more [here](#)*)

National & Cultural Holidays

- [LGBTQ History Month](#)
- [Hispanic Heritage Month](#) (Sept. 15 - Oct. 15)
- [Breast Cancer Awareness Month](#)
- [Bullying Prevention Month](#)
- [ADHD Awareness Month](#)
- Birthday of Mohandas Gandhi - Oct. 2 (1869)
- Thurgood Marshall sworn in as the 1st African American justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. - Oct. 2, 1967
- Ruth Bader Ginsburg joins the U.S. Supreme Court as its second woman Justice - Oct. 4, 1993
- [Sisters in Spirit Vigils](#) (Canada) - October 4, 2018 : Honoring the lives of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)
- NASA launches first peopled mission, Apollo 7 - Oct. 11 (1968)
- [Indigenous Peoples Day](#) / Columbus Day (U.S.) - Oct. 12, 2026 (second Monday of October) - more [here](#)
- [National Coming Out Day](#) - Oct. 11 (more [here](#))
- Thanksgiving Day (Canada) - Oct. 12, 2026 (second Monday in October)
- [John Brown's Raid](#) - Oct. 16 (1859)
- [Intersex Awareness Day](#) - Oct. 26
- Halloween, All Soul's Eve - Oct. 31

For Fun and On the Fringe

- World Vegetarian Day - Oct. 1
- [Banned Books Week](#) - Oct. 4-10, 2026 (more [here](#))
- [World Smile Day](#) - Oct. 6
- [Clergy Appreciation Day](#) - Sunday Oct. 11, 2026 (second Sunday of October)

Chalice Lightings & Opening Words

Out of the Flames *

Rev. Sara LaWall

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

Out of the flames of fear
We rise with courage of our deepest convictions
to stand for justice, inclusion and peace

Out of the flames of scrutiny
We rise to proclaim our faith
With hope to heal a fractured and hurting world

Out of the flames of doubt
We rise to embrace the mystery, wonder and awe
of all there is and all that is yet to be

Out of the flames of hate
We rise with the force of love
Love that celebrates our shared humanity

Out of the flames we rise.

All That We Have Been, All That We Will Become *

Leslie Ahuvah Fails

Full piece at

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/all-we-have-been-all-we-will-become>

[Permission Source](#)

We stand at the precipice, arms locked
together like tandem skydivers
working up the courage to jump.
Tell me, friends: What have we got to lose?...
What wonders await us...

The Courage that Lies In Between *

Rev. Scott Tayler

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

We light this flame to illuminate
not just the courage that lies within,
but also, the courage that lies in between.
This precious bravery that arises from solidarity
carries us more than we often know.
It is felt when our ancestors whisper to us as the
night grows dark.
It is known when we reach our limit and feel the
strong hands of a friend – or a stranger – lift us up.
So, today, let us pledge to re-weave the brave
strands that bind us to each other, and to extend
that courageous webbing wider and wider each day.

There is a quiet courage ...*

Rev. Gretchen Haley

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

There is a quiet courage
In the choice to let go
of the past,
in the choice to be present
in this new day
to live for this hour,
this moment
and to believe in its possibility -
to release the regrets,
to stop the spinning stories of what was
and is no longer,
to accept this gift
to believe that we are worthy
still of happiness
of ease
of delight, and hope
to believe we have all we need
to heal
already, and to receive
this wholeness
with ready hearts
and open hands,
saying only thank you.
Come, let us practice this surrender
together
gathering up all the brave
boldness
we know can be found in our bones and blood
if we will breathe together
knowing ourselves a part of this one life
filled with mystery, creativity
and power,
Changing us, growing us, and
calling us into partnership
with all that is.
Come, let us worship together.

Courage-ing *

Rev. Dr. David Breeden

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

We begin with the courage
we have, not the power
we imagine. Not a fire
but a flame cupped
against the wind.

Courage is the breath
before speaking a truth;
the hand on a latch;
the body rising
with sorrow's salt
still on our lips.

Courage is asking for help.
Courage is offering bread.
Courage is changing your mind
when that practiced road
turns cruel.

Courage is the voice
that breaks silence;
the heart refusing
the ease of stone.

We do not pledge
to be fearless.

We do pledge
to stay near what
love asks of us.

In hours of darkness,
may we be
a sheltering people,

lamps in the rain,
shoulder to shoulder,
keeping a path
that makes the path.

One More Time, One More Way *

Rev. Michelle Collins

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

The same choice comes around again and again:
Do we act from fear or from courageous love?
We don't always get it right.
We light this flame for trying anyway, one more
time, in one more way.

The Courage to Let Ourselves be Changed *

Rev. Michelle Collins

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

It takes courage to call for the world to change, and
additional courage to let ourselves be changed in
return. So, today, we gather willing to be shaped, to
be softened, to be surprised. Let us release our
need to stay the same and open ourselves to
transformation. Together, let us welcome what
change asks of us, and together, let us worship.

Let Us Dare *

Craig Rowland

Full piece at

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting/let-us-dare>

[Permission Source](#)

We light this chalice
for the quiet courage it takes
to speak plainly of what moves us...
May this light remind us...
even the smallest act of bravery
can be the start of a shared path.

To Face the World's Shadows, A Chalice of Light *

Lindsay Bates

Full piece at

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting/face-worlds-shadows>

[Permission Source](#)

To face the world's shadows, a chalice of light.
To face the world's coldness, a chalice of warmth,
To face the world's terrors, a chalice of courage...

Witnesses of the World / Testigos del Mundo *

Tania Márquez

Full piece at

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/opening/witnesses-world>

[Permission Source](#)

It is now, when we are called as witnesses of the
world...
Not to hide, not to fear, but to be bold and loud...
Let us gather, let us give each other courage...

For Services Honoring LGBTQ History Month, National Coming Out Day (Oct. 11), or Intersex Awareness Day (Oct. 26)

To Fight for an Equitable World *

Tyler Boyle

Full piece at

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting/fight-equitable-world>
[Permission Source](#)

As we light this chalice, let us remember those who came before us:

our LGBTQ+ ancestors.

Those who had unimaginable courage to fight for an equitable world...

Those who planted the seeds of revolution...

And those who we've lost along the way.

May this flame remind us of our commitment to carry on their legacy...

Joy and Power That Grow *

Jami Yandle

Full piece at

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting/joy-and-power-grow>
[Permission Source](#)

We light this chalice

for the quiet truths we carry,

and for the futures we're brave enough to write.

In this circle, we honor

the courage it takes to live openly...

As the chalice glows

may we feel steadiness rise in us...

Meditations & Prayers

Blessing for stretching your heart

Kate Bowler

Full meditation at <https://www.facebook.com/CherryPointUnitedMethodist/posts/1246371180690280/>

Let today be an exercise of yes...and.
Yes, you have so much to be thankful for,
and this is not what you imagined...
Yes, you are hopeful, and this is daunting.
Yes, you are trying to be brave,
and you are also quietly terrified...
May you see this as life's work.
Where it takes courage to live,
where grief strips you to the studs
and love can remake you again...
May you be capable of absurd joy,
ridiculous love, audacious risk, and
even fear, as your heart stretches to hold
this gloriously messy yes...and today...

Opening Our Hearts Once Again *

Rev. Michelle Collins

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We pause today longing to find bravery but not always being able to hold on to it as long as we'd like.
And so, we open our hearts once again to all that asking courage of us: the hard conversation waiting to happen, the risk we haven't yet taken, the difficult truth we've been circling.
Some of us feel strong today. Others feel worn thin by all that bravery has cost us lately. May we remind each other that both are welcome in this community. We are not called to always be strong, but instead to trust that when we need to rest and sit with our doubts, others will step up and carry the courage for us, as we will for them.
We know courage rarely looks like the stories we were told, capes and grand gestures. It looks more like the bravery of being gentle with yourself, like getting up again, like staying at the table, like choosing to trust one more time. Holding that truth in our hearts, may we find, in this hour, some small reserve of steadiness we didn't know we had. And may we remember that none of us bears this alone.

The Courage of Patience *

Rev. Richard S. Gilbert

Full piece at <http://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/courage-patience>

[Permission Source](#)

May we recognize courage in ourselves and our companions;
That is not dramatic, that elicits no fanfare...
That is forgotten and taken for granted.
May we learn how to cope
Like those who live one day of pain at a time...
Who inspire us by their patient courage...

The Courage to Continue on the Journey *

Lyn Cox

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

We give thanks for the ability to begin again: after the disaster, after the tragedy, after the loss, after meeting the challenge set before us. Grant us the courage to continue on the journey, the courage to speak up for the well-being of others and ourselves and the planet. May we forgive each other when our courage falls short, and may we try again. Grant us hearts to love boldly...

Map of the Journey in Progress *

Rev. Victoria Safford

Full piece at <http://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/map-journey-progress>
[Permission Source](#)

Here is where I found my voice and chose to be brave...
This is the place where I said no, more loudly than I'd thought I ever could...
Here's a time, and here's another, when I laid down my fear and walked right on into it...
Here is where I began to look with my own eyes and listen with my ears and sing my own song, shaky as it is...

Permission to Bring Our Fear into the Room *

Rev. Michelle Collins

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

Spirit of Life, so many of the bravest things we've ever done were done while afraid, hearts pounding, palms sweating, certainty nowhere in sight. We ask today for permission to bring our fear into the room rather than waiting for it to leave. Let us stop treating fear as evidence that we lack courage and instead start recognizing it as the very ground from which courage grows. May we find enough trust in ourselves and in each other to take the next step regardless, fear included, uncertainty included, imperfection included. Let this be enough. Let us know that we are enough and will be enough.

The Color of Courage - Guided Meditation

[April Rosario](#)

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

I invite you to find a comfortable way to sit.
Allow your feet to rest on the floor, or if it feels better, tuck them beneath you. Rest your hands wherever they feel most comfortable - in your lap, at your sides, or gently over your heart.
If it feels comfortable, close your eyes. If not, simply soften your gaze, allowing it to rest on the floor in front of you as a small crease of light filters into your awareness.
Take a slow, easy breath in... And let it go.
Again... Breathing in... And breathing out.

Allow yourself to arrive fully in this moment.
Notice the steady rhythm of your breath.
Notice the places where your body feels soft...
and the places where it may still be holding tension.
There is nothing you need to fix.
Nothing you need to change. Simply notice.

(Pause)

Now, take another slow breath in through your nose...
and before you exhale, pause for just a moment.
Feel the quiet strength that already lives within your body.
Not because you are fearless. Not because everything is easy.
But because you are here.
Breathing. Living. Showing up.

And now, I invite you to imagine the color of your courage.
There is no right answer.
Perhaps your courage is a brilliant gold that glows like the morning sun.
Perhaps it is a deep blue, steady and calm like the ocean.
Maybe it is a vibrant red that burns with passion.
Or a rich green that grows quietly and persistently.
Maybe it is a color you've never seen before.
Whatever color comes to you... trust it.

As you breathe in, imagine drawing that color into your body.
Watch it fill your lungs...
your chest...
your shoulders...
your arms...
your hands...
flowing through every part of you.

Again... take a deep breath in and let it out
And as you do, allow that color to spread a little farther.
Filling the places where fear has settled.
Filling the places where doubt has taken root.
Making room for courage.

Again... take a deep breath in and let it out
Imagine your color becoming brighter... warmer... steadier.
Not because it pushes fear away...
but because it reminds you that courage and fear often travel together.
Courage is not the absence of fear. It is choosing to move with love, even when fear is present.

One final deep breath in.
Allow your color of courage to fill your entire being.
Imagine it radiating beyond your body...
surrounding you like a warm light...
wrapping you in strength... compassion... and love.

Carry that color with you today.
May it remind you to speak when your voice matters.
To listen when another shares their truth.
To be gentle with yourself.
And to be brave enough - not to become someone new -but to become more fully yourself.

Take one last slow breath in...
And let it go.
When you are ready, gently wiggle your fingers and your toes.
And slowly bring your attention back to this room, carrying your color of courage with you.

Poems That Can Serve as Meditations on Courage

At the Poetry Slam Championship in Kansas

Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

Full poem at <https://ahundredfallingveils.com/2026/08/02/at-the-poetry-slam-championship-in-kansas/>

...This, too, the gift we most need—
to dare to turn toward
what makes each other bleed.
This, too, transforms wound into generous bloom,
the gift of hearing and hailing,
honoring each other's humanness,
saying yes, I see you, I see you.

Blessing of Courage

Jan Richardson

Full poem at <https://pollycastor.com/2023/03/03/blessing-of-courage-poem-by-jan-richardson/>

I cannot say
where it lives,
only that it comes...
to the heart
that does not turn away...

you will know it
by the strength
that rises from within you
to meet it...

Fighting the Wind

Teresa Breeden

Full poem at <https://rattle.com/fighting-the-wind-by-teresa-breeden/>

The trick is not to.
Not to struggle, thrusting
the anvil of your
body against the gale...
welcoming dishevelment...

Who is bold enough
to slam open the windows
let the shouting in?

You want to be brave.
But you yearn also to curl
beneath the blanket...

Music

Suggestions For October 2026 - “Courage”

from Soul Matters Music Resources Coordinator, [Emma Campbell](#)

Musical Notes: Is there such a thing as ‘too much music’?

Sometimes there are many great choices of possible hymns for a theme, and I feel like this month is one of them. If you consider all the other musical possibilities for singing on the theme of ‘Courage’ that are outside our hymnals, the options are even more numerous. Trying to fit in all the wonderful options can be a challenge - it can be difficult selecting what should be included, over the rejection of other pieces. One solution is to expand our imagination about how to engage our hymns. Here are some suggestions about how to go about that:

- 1) Lyrics of songs can be used for Chalice Lightings, Extinguishings, or in other spoken parts of the worship service - the whole song / hymn does not have to be used, one verse may be sufficient to convey a particular message.
- 2) The lyrics of well-known pieces can be brought to mind when performed as an instrumental. There are often plenty of places to slip in a few measures of a piece:
 - a) during transitions between different elements in a service;
 - b) you could also consider underscoring elements such as “joys and concerns” with a well-chosen piece performed at an appropriate dynamic and tempo for the occasion;
 - c) instead of a moment of silence after the worship leader’s prayer, there could be a musical reflection
- 3) If you want to include more hymns in a service, you do not always need to sing every verse that is in the hymnal
- 4) You could try convincing other worship leaders that their part of the service could also include music. Some churches have a ‘Time for all ages’ or a Wisdom Tale - both of them lend themselves perfectly to an exploration of a hymn such as #118 - This Little Light of Mine, followed by inviting everyone to sing a verse or two.
- 5) Could you make a playlist and share it in your newsletter?
- 6) Could you offer a small-group activity where people discuss selected pieces that lift up the theme of the month, with a vote at the end of the hour for which one is considered the best example of music embodying the theme?

As you support your other worship leaders in expanding their imaginations, it may be helpful to remind them that a hymn or song is just a reading set to music. As such, replacing a reading with a piece of music is not such a crime that you should be invited to assist with the washing up after coffee hour - though I’m aware that in smaller churches, many of us offer to do this. (Could it be a good excuse for a singalong with congregants....?)

Hymns

Hymn 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

Hymn Permissions Key

Hymns where the permissions column is highlighted in GREEN typically do NOT require additional copyright for the average UU congregation.		
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For more information on permissions and licensing, please consult the [UUA Hymn and Reading Permissions](#).

Hymn Recommendations

#	Title	Style Notes	Singability		Permissions
6	Just as Long as I Have Breath	Traditional, Stately	4	H	L: Print credit below M: Public Domain
	"Lyrics by Alicia S. Carpenter, © 1981; used with permission of the Estate"				
16	'Tis a Gift to Be Simple	Flowing, Shaker Hymn	5	H/SL	Public Domain
52	In Sweet Fields of Autumn	Lilting, Gentle, Lullaby	5	H/SL	words: donate to First Unitarian Church of Los Angeles by sending a check, with Hodgin 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
101	Abide with Me	Traditional, Comforting	5	H	Public Domain
106	Who Would True Valor See	Traditional, Rousing	4	H/SL	Public Domain
107	Now Sing We of the Brave of Old	Traditional	5	H	Public Domain

118	This Little Light of Mine	Upbeat, Spiritual	5	R/SL	Public Domain
123	Spirit of Life	Simple, Melodic, Soothing	5	H/SL	Permissions Granted
131	Love Will Guide Us	Rocking, Sweet	5	H/SL	Permissions Granted

137	We Utter Our Cry	Bold, Uplifting	3	H/SL	McAdam, First Unitarian Church of LA, 2936 W . 8th St., Los Angeles, CA 90005 and email link to her at rochelle@uula.org
149	Lift Every Voice and Sing	Boisterous, Uplifting	4	H/SL	Public Domain
396	I Know This Rose Will Open	Simple, Comfort, In the Round	4	R/SL	Permissions Granted
1006	In My Quiet Sorrow	Flowing, Lamentation	3	SL	Permissions granted if credit is given to Jeannie Gagne
1014	Answering the Call of Love	Pop, Uplifting	2	SL	Permissions Granted. Please use new title "Answering the Call of Love"
1017	Building a New Way	Driving, Uplifting	3	SL	Permissions Granted. Must credit Martha Sandefer if posted.
1023	Building Bridges	Simple, Resilient, In the Round	4	SL	Public Domain
1028	The Fire of Commitment	Upbeat, Driving	4	H/SL	Permissions Granted
1059	May Your Life Be As a Song	Mystical, In the Round	4	H/R/SL	Offering requested: donate via Jim Scott's Website

Hymns in Context - Stories behind the songs

"Sing Out Love" contains fantastic information about the hymns and their composers, enabling worship leaders to find ways of linking the lyrics to the worship topic. I hope the information below, based on the other two hymnals I have offered suggestions for this month from, will be helpful for some. You are welcome to paraphrase the information below, read it word-for-word, or share the thoughts in a newsletter. If you are not familiar with providing context for hymns, and would welcome seeing a training being offered on this topic (or anything else) please get in touch. soulmattersmusic@gmail.com

#118 - This Little Light of Mine

When singing this song, it helps me to remember that single candles in lighthouses used to save the lives of hundreds of sailors. The light didn't need to be huge, extravagant, or sophisticated - all that mattered was that it was present in times of trouble. I, as one person, am small and I certainly am not fancy nor sophisticated - yet my light may be a source of help and comfort to others.

On a slightly different note (pun intended), the name "Lattimer" given to the melody of this African American spiritual is in recognition of Louis Lattimer (1848-1928). The son of a runaway slave, he worked on the development of the electric light bulb with Thomas Edison. Lightbulbs began to replace candles in lighthouses during the early 1900s.

#149 - Lift Every Voice

Do you eat pizza or pasta? Do you eat sushi? Are you of Italian or Japanese descent? Me neither - but sushi and pizza are probably the most favorite meals that everyone in our family will happily eat. Though Lift Every Voice and Sing is often called the “Black National Anthem” (and our congregation is predominantly white), it is really important that we sing it. Rather than being an example of cultural appropriation it is an example of cultural appreciation. As a pianist, I love playing Bach and refuse to avoid it just because I am not German. Not singing this hymn has the potential to give the message that we don’t value the message it contains. Originally conceived as a poem, you may want to consider that the first verse is an example of praise, the second is a lament, and the third is a prayer. Singing each verse slightly differently can help convey this intentionally.

#1014 - Answering the Call of Love

This hymn was written in 2004 to honor Reverend William Sinkford, president of the Unitarian Universalist Association, for his prophetic witness in being one of the leading voices of our movement in the Marriage Equality issue. It is a fantastic example of Transformation - one of our UU Values. The original title and lyrics, ‘Standing on the Side of Love’, were altered for a number of reasons. One was because it was felt that these words gave an impression of being passive, rather than being a call to action. Another was that the title was ableist, and there was a desire to recognize the need to be more inclusive. If your hymnal contains the older lyrics please note the change to ‘Answering the call of love’.

[Sing Out Love!](#)

All hymns in the UUA virtual hymnal *Sing Out Love* may be performed in worship and streamed so long as you have [an active subscription](#) to *Sing Out Love*. Please check the permissions tab (at the top right of the page) to view more information on permissions to alter the hymn for your purposes.

Title	Composer	Style Notes	Singability	
Hold Fast To Love	Lynn Harrison	Folk, Lilted, Uplifting	4	H/SL
Holy and Divine	Lindasusan V. Ulrich	Chant, simple	5	H/SL
In the Silence	Rick Hermann	Folk, Lyrical, Lilted	3	H
We Shine Our Light	Leah Orchinik	Traditional	5	H/SL

Choral/Vocal Suggestions

Title	Composer	Voicing	Style Notes
Be the Change (Sing Out Love)	Michael Sansonia	Solo Voice and backing vocals (labelled as 'congregation' on the score) chord symbols	Modern, uplifting
We Have Enough (Sing Out Love)	Angela Salvaggione	SATB and Piano	Melancholy in sections and uplifting in others
We Will Carry Each Other (Sing Out Love)	Soren Austenfeld	Vocals and chords (composer suggests multi-voices on chorus and soloist on verses)	Lyrical, uplifting
Courage Calls to Courage	Emily Crocker	Various arrangements available	Modern, rhythmically driving
Courage, My Soul	Rollo Dilworth	Various arrangements available	Spiritual
Fortes Fortuna	Daniel Gutierrez	Various arrangements available	Driving rhythms, exciting, Latin
I Ain't Afraid	Holly Near	SATB	Swung rhythms, lyrical
She Keeps Me Warm	Mary Lambert	Vocal and piano	Ballad
The Storm is Passing Over	Charles A Tindley	Various arrangements available	Gospel, uplifting
This is Me (from 'The Greatest Showman')	Benj Pasek and Justin Paul	Various arrangements available	Pop, lively, driving rhythms
Youth choir suggestion: When I Close My Eyes	Jim Papoulis	2-part or SAB	Lyrical, homophonic

Instrumental Suggestions

Title	Composer	Instrumentation	Keywords
Courage	Tony Ann	Piano	Minimalism, exhilarating
Fürchtenmachen (Frightening)	Schumann	Piano	Classical, mood changes
Haunted House	A. Benjamin	Piano	Chromatic, spooky, easy
L'Orage)No.13 from Études de genre, Op.109	Burgmüller	Piano	Lively, rousing
You'll Never Walk Alone	Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein		Contemplative

Contemporary Music Suggestions

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

- “Brave” by Sara Bareilles
- “The Climb” from ‘Hannah Montana: The Movie’ by Miley Cyrus
- “Hero” by Mariah Carey
- “I Didn’t Know My Own Strength” by Whitney Houston
- “I’m Still Standing” by Elton John
- “Nothing’s Gonna Stop Us Now” by Starship
- “Rise Up” by Andra Day
- “Stronger” by The Score
- “Wind Beneath My Wings” by Bette Midler
- “You Raise Me Up” by Josh Groban

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](#)

Don’t Forget About the Monthly Themed Playlists We Create for Our Small Group Packets!

For our small group packets, we put together a contemporary music playlist for each monthly theme. While these playlists are designed as personal musical meditations on the themes, some of the songs on these playlists could be used in worship, especially if you have a house band. You can explore these playlists on our website, by clicking [HERE](#).

- Click [here](#) for the **Spotify** playlist on Courage
- Click [here](#) for the **YouTube** playlist on Courage

Music for Online Worship from UUA

All Unitarian Universalist congregations and worship leaders are asked to review the UUA's [WorshipWeb guidelines \(PDF\)](#), developed in collaboration with the Association for UU Music Ministries (AUUMM). These new guidelines apply **to all videos on this page**, except for the videos below identified as commissioned. These videos may be used in online and recorded worship services by Unitarian Universalist congregations.

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](#).
- [“Spirit of Life” \(GoogleDrive\)](#) (#123 in *Singing the Living Tradition*; music and words by Carolyn McDade, harmony by Grace Lewis-McLaren.) Choral arrangement by Nylea L. Butler-Moore. Video by the UU Virtual Singers of the Unitarian Church of Los Alamos, NM; Nylea Butler-Moore, Music Director; Rick Bolton, AV Engineer. If you use this video, please email Nylea at nyleab@uulosalamos.org. [Pay-what-you-can to the Unitarian Church of Los Alamos](#).
- [“When the Spirit Says Do” \(YouTube\)](#) (#1024 in *Singing the Journey*). Words & music: African American spiritual, arr. Mark Freundt. Vocals and piano by Ruben Piirainen, Music Director, Unitarian Universalist Church West (Brookfield, WI). **Please make a pay-what-you-can donation; PayPal: jrubenp@yahoo.com/Venmo: @jrubenp.**

Music Resources from the Soul Matters Community

This section is dedicated to showcasing the work of musicians within our community who have created resources based on Soul Matters themes.

If you'd like to submit your resource, email soulmattersmusic@gmail.com

Music from Sharon Sholl

On her webpage, freeprintmusic.com, Sharon creates songs inspired by Soul Matters themes. You can find the page dedicated explicitly to Soul Matters themes [here](#). For this month's theme of Courage, Sharon has created the song [Courage](#). It is free for you to use.

Songs From Lea Morris

Longtime friend of Soul Matters, [Lea Morris](#), will be generously suggesting her music that goes with upcoming themes. Below are her suggestions for October's theme of Courage, along with the purchase information for each song.

- **“Greater”** - choir <https://youtu.be/L8awh9RE0xM>
Melody only for congregation: <https://youtu.be/a9STaj2eR1o>
Resources can be found at <https://www.thisislea.com/shop/p/greater> (Soon to be added to [Singable.app](#))
- **“Shelter Me”** - choir and congregation - https://youtu.be/5IXx_7JXuXc
Resources can be found at [Singable.app](#)
and <https://www.thisislea.com/shop/p/shelterme>

More Soul Matters Music Leader Support & Inspiration

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.

Soul Matters Music Playlists

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.

- Click [here](#) for the **Spotify** playlists
- Click [here](#) for the **YouTube** playlists

Quarterly Music Packets **NEW!**

To help those of you who do advanced music planning, we create [Quarterly Music Packets](#). Each Quarterly Music packet contains 2-3 months of music suggestions, allowing you to plan farther in advance than our 7-week out worship packets do. As they are completed, they are posted to your online archive labeled as *2026-27 Quarterly Music Packets*. You can also access them by [clicking here](#).

Here's the schedule for when each of the quarterly packets will be posted to your archive:

- The fall music packet covering music for September - November was posted on Aug. 1.
- The winter packet will cover music for December - February, and will be available by Oct. 1.
- The early spring packet will cover music for March - April and will be available by the end of November.
- The late spring packet will cover music for May - June and will be available by the end of January.

Got Music Ideas? Send Them Our Way!

Whenever you have music recommendations, you can submit them to Emma at soulmattersmusic@gmail.com.
We love suggestions. They enrich the work of all of us!

Stories For All Ages

The below wisdom tale and story book recommendations come from our October Lower and Upper Elementary RE Packets. So be sure to coordinate your use of them with your RE Leader. The wisdom tales are hyperlinked because we've given each wisdom tale its own downloadable document. This makes it easier for you to distribute to your leaders and easier for leaders to use as script.

Wisdom Tales (from the upper elementary packet)

- [The Ugly Duckling](#)
- [Oya and the Mask](#)
- [The Emperor's New Clothes](#)
- [Fire, Water, Truth, and Falsehood](#)
- [The Argument in the House of Study](#)
- [The Sparrow Who Sang a Different Song](#)
- [Michael Servetus Shares His Truth](#)
- [The Boy Who Went to Find His Fear](#)
- [The Boy and the Dragon's Cave](#)

Story Books (from the lower elementary packet)

- My Shadow Is Purple by Scott Stuart
- Giraffes Can't Dance by Giles Andreae
- Be You by Peter Reynolds
- I Can Do Hard Things
- Strictly No Elephants by Lisa Mantchev
- The Truth About Dragons by Julie Leung
- Malala's Magic Pencil by Malala Yousafzai
- Jabari Jumps by Gaia Cornwall
- Benny J and the Horrible Halloween by Sivan Hong

Story Books (from the one room schoolhouse packet)

- The Smallest Spot of a Dot by Linsey Davis and Michael Tyler
- We Are Still Here!: Native American Truths Everyone Should Know by Traci Sorell
- Malala's Magic Pencil by Malala Yousafzai

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 Making Friends with Fear

Reading - Facing Fear, Thich Nhat Hanh, from *'Fear: Essential Wisdom for Getting Through the Storm'*

I am of the nature to grow old. I cannot escape growing old. I am of the nature to have ill health. I cannot escape having ill health. I am of the nature to die. I cannot escape death. All that is dear to me, and everyone I love, are of the nature to change. There is no way to escape being separated from them... Looking deeply at each of these remembrances and breathing in and out with our awareness of each one, we engage our fear in an empowered way...

Most of us don't want to acknowledge it, so we live more or less in denial. Yet down deep in the recesses of our minds, we know it's true. When we suppress our fearful thoughts, they continue to fester there in the dark. Running away from our fear ultimately makes us suffer and makes others suffer, and our fear only grows stronger... [So,] Invite your fear into consciousness, and smile through it; every time you smile through your fear, it will lose some of its strength. If you try to run away from your pain, there is no way out...

We must invite these things up into our mind consciousness every day and tell them, "My dear, I'm not afraid of you. I'm not afraid of my fear. It is my nature to grow old; I cannot escape old age." When fear manifests, we want to have the seed of mindfulness also manifest to embrace it. So we have two energies present—the first is the energy of fear, and the second is the energy of mindfulness. The fear receives a bath of mindfulness and becomes a little bit weaker before it drops back down to the depths of our consciousness in the form of a seed.

Video Clip - Don't Run Away From Fear. 'Agree' With It, Ezra Klein & Pema Chödrön

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r2mb4tTwAqo>

Podcast – This Is Why I Find Pema Chödrön So Essential | The Ezra Klein Show

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

Book - Comfortable with Uncertainty: Cultivating Fearlessness and Compassion, Pema Chodron

Interview - Pema Chödrön on Groundlessness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TnObGF4WQkE>

Short Talk – Pema Chodron on Fear and Uncertainty

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=931352584618989>

On breaking through the fear of uncertainty to find growth and fully engaged living.

Quote – Anonymous

Fear is a teacher. Don't skip class

Quote & Article - Fear is Your Teacher, Not the Truth, Jessica Joines

<https://medium.com/thrive-global/fear-is-your-teacher-not-the-truth-60a82d46073a>

“So many of us go through life, believing everything fear has to say. And aligning our lives to it. We engage with it as *truth* and construct much of our lives based upon it. When in fact, the energy of fear simply exists to *show* us what needs to be healed within us... Know this: **Underneath your fear is always a clue...**”

Quote - Sara Crawford

Fear is not just an emotion to conquer but a profound teacher that reveals our deepest values. For example, fear of failure can reveal how important success is to us and motivate us to take action. When we are fearful for an aging parent or a sick child, we remember how important our loved ones are to us.

Quote/Video – Arthur Brooks

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1609889990192551>

People do not discover the meaning of their lives in moments of ease. They find it in loss, failure, illness, fear, and in the effort it takes to make their way through those experiences. A culture that tries to eliminate pain entirely does not become happier. It becomes less capable of meaning.

Calendar Connection – Samhain (Oct. 31)

Samhain is an ancient festival, originating in the Celtic world. It marks the end of the agricultural year and is, therefore, the New Year celebration in the pagan cycle. It is a time to welcome the darkness of winter and shadow. Its invitation is to bravely face the dark, the unknown and the reality of decay. In this sense, it is all about making friends with fear.

On the Courage to Hope

Quote - Brian Andreas

Anyone can slay a dragon but try waking up every morning and loving the world all over again. That's what takes a real hero.

Quote - Maria Popova, from The Courage to Resist Cynicism

<https://www.brainpickings.org/2016/05/16/annenberg-commencement/>

Our culture has created a reward system in which you get points for tearing down rather than building up, and for besieging with criticism and derision those who dare to work and live from a place of constructive hope. Don't just resist cynicism — fight it actively, in yourself and in those you love and in the communication with which you shape culture. Cynicism, like all destruction, is easy, it's lazy. There is nothing more difficult yet more gratifying in our society than living with sincere, active, constructive hope for the human spirit. This is the most potent antidote to cynicism, and it is an act of courage and resistance today.

Poem - Courage, Sri Chinmoy

Full poem at <http://www.poetseers.org/poem-of-the-day-archive/poems-about-courage/index.html>

To speak ill of the world needs courage, but fortunately or unfortunately, everybody has that courage. To love the world as one's own, very own, needs courage. Unfortunately, most of us are wanting...

Poem - The Thing Is, Ellen Bass

Full poem at <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/151844/the-thing-is>

to love life, to love it even
when you have no stomach for it
and everything you've held dear
crumbles like burnt paper in your hands...

Prayer/Quote - Valarie Kaur, A Sikh Prayer for America

The future is dark. But my faith dares me to ask: What if this darkness is not the darkness of the tomb, but the darkness of the womb? ... What if this is our Great Contraction before we birth a new future?...

Quote - Maria, from Moral Courage: <https://www.facebook.com/Upworthy/videos/1226169624090560/>

Living hopefully is not devoid of pain. Living hopefully means residing squarely inside of pain, naming it as real and still saying to it "You're not the only story to tell."

Quote - Cornel West

We need the courage to question the powers that be, the courage to be impatient with evil and patient with people, the courage to fight for social justice. In many instances we will be stepping out on nothing, and just hoping to land on something. But that's the struggle. To live is to wrestle with despair, yet never allow despair to have the last word.

Quote - Ayana Elizabeth Johnson & Katharine K Wilkinson

Movements don't alter history by saying: *what if we don't succeed?... Some things will never change... The odds seem really long... Maybe we'll never get the right to vote, to marry, to be free...* Without knowing the outcome, we have to try anyway; Without a single guarantee, we must show up.

Quote - Emily Johnston

I want to make a difficult point, but one that I think is also clarifying: We cannot expect to feel hopeful, at least not very often, and having any particular hope is likely to end in heartbreak. We have entered — already, in some places — into an era of chaos and great pain, and if we ask the universe to make us feel optimistic about that somehow, even as others suffer far more than we do, we're asking for illusion. But our gift, and our task, is far more powerful than sunny feelings, because we still have the chance to make the space for hope — to act in such a way that hope might exist for others who come after us.

Quote - Mary Annaïse Heglar

We don't have to be pollyannish, or fatalistic. We can just be human. We can be messy, imperfect, contradictory, broken. We can recognize the difference between hopelessness and helplessness. Because what if we've been doing the equation backward? What if hope isn't what leads to action? What if courage is what leads to action and hope is what comes next?

Podcast - Understanding "hopeful pessimism", The Gray Area

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gyPfkHcW5BI>

On the Courage that Arises from Being in it Together

Chant - "Courage" by IfNotNow

https://www.musicthatmakescommunity.org/courage_my_friend

Poem - Courage – it takes more, Philippa Yaa de Villiers

Full poem at <https://poetryarchive.org/poem/courage-it-takes-more/>

"Will you won't you, will you won't you walk behind Mandela...
He was not alone - a million hands held him up
Colossus... heroes are heroes because we make them heroes..."

Quote - From [Project Hail Mary](#)

Anyone can be brave. You just need someone to be brave for.

Sermon Quote - From [Fear...What is it good for?](#), Rev. Carrie Holley-Hurt

"Fear breeds in isolation. Community is the antidote...
Some of us are called to stand at the front line, to stand in between harm and our neighbor.
And others of us are called to organize those people, the food delivery, the whatever.
Some of us are called to provide care....Some of us are called to lead songs...
We figure out what we are good at. What it is that we are called to do and we do it. "Because that is our sphere of influence" as Rev. Blaedel said.
Bringing your beautiful and precious life into the service of community, into the service of your values, makes us brave!..."

Short Video - Courage Comes From Trust of Others, Simon Sinek

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wkl3FDxgPdo>

TED Talk - Courage is contagious

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

When artist Damon Davis went to join the protests in Ferguson, Missouri, after police killed Michael Brown in 2014, he found not only anger but also a sense of love for self and community... and courage.

Quote - Marianne Williamson

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It is not just in some of us; it is in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. *As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.*

Reading or Meditation - They Are with Us Still by Kathleen McTigue

Full piece at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/affirmation/they-are-us-still>

They are with us still... Their words remind us and call us back to ourselves.
Their courage and love evoke our own.
We, the living, carry them with us: we are their voices, their hands and their hearts.

On the Courage to Speak Out & Dissent

Book - On Courage: How to Be a Dissident in an Age of Fear, Julia Angwin and Ami Fields-Meyer

Interview with the authors [here](#) and [here](#)

Quote - Michael Servetus, UU ancestor and martyr

To seek truth and to utter what one believes to be true can never be a crime.

Sermon - The Path of Courage – Michael Servetus and Courageous Ancestors, Rev. Margaret A. Beckman

<https://uucastine.org/sermons/the-path-of-courage-michael-servetus-and-courageous-ancestors/>
(*Calendar connection: Servetus was burned at the stake in Geneva in October 1553*)

Song Video - Quiet, MILCK with GW Sirens and Capital Blend

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9lond4SXgk> & <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZD05-ZvQFs>

"I can't keep quiet..."

Quote - Audre Lorde

Next time, ask: What's the worst that will happen? Then push yourself a little further than you dare. Once you start to speak, people will yell at you. They will interrupt you, put you down and suggest it's personal. And the world won't end. And the speaking will get easier and easier. And you will find you have fallen in love with your own vision, which you may never have realized you had. And you will lose some friends and lovers, and realize you don't miss them. And new ones will find you and cherish you. ... And at last you'll know with surpassing certainty that only one thing is more frightening than speaking your truth. And that is not speaking.

Quote - Audre Lorde

I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood. That the speaking profits me, beyond any other effect ... what I most regretted were my silences. Of what had I ever been afraid? To question or to speak as I believed could have meant pain, or death. But we all hurt in so many different ways, all the time, and pain will either change or end. ... Your silence will not protect you... And of course I am afraid, because the transformation of silence into language and action is an act of self-revelation, and that always seems fraught with danger.

Quote - Audre Lorde

We can sit in our corners mute forever while [our lives are] wasted, while our children are distorted and destroyed, while our earth is poisoned, we can sit in our safe corners as mute as bottles, and still we will be no less afraid.

Quote - Albert Einstein

The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing.

Quote - Toko-pa

It's never comfortable to be the lone voice which speaks contrarily to the group, especially the group to which one feels belonging... and it rarely feels courageous while you do so. But if you can stand the terrible loneliness and doubt, there might slowly emerge the young tendrils of understanding in the hearts of others. Then, and only then, will you see that you've been tremendously brave.

Quote - Brené Brown

You can choose courage or you can choose comfort, but you cannot have both.

Podcast - Dare to Dissent (On the courage to stand up to your own in-group and the consequences that follow.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6BrYcHUCinU>

On the Centrality of Fear in American & How Fear-Fed Isolation is a Weapon of Authoritarian Oppression

Reflection - The Spell of the Enemy, Rev. Cameron Trimble

<https://www.pilotingfaith.org/p/the-spell-of-the-enemy>

"Maybe that is why we are so afraid. We do not know what will happen next. So we turn to old enemies and old stories: fascism versus communism, freedom versus tyranny, real Americans versus those who want to destroy America. Using these old words makes the world feel understandable again. It tells us who we are and who we should fight.

Jesus once asked why we see the small fault in someone else but ignore the big fault in ourselves. He was not saying we should ignore what is wrong. He wanted us to see how judging others can keep us from looking at ourselves. What is the log in our collective eye? Maybe it is our wish to see ourselves as innocent. We want to believe that only the other side is cruel. We want our own fear to look like virtue, our contempt to look like courage, and our desire for power to look like justice. We hope that if our side wins big enough, we will finally be safe..."

Article - Fear Is the Fulcrum, Scot Nakagawa

<https://antiauthoritarianplaybook.substack.com/p/fear-is-the-fulcrum>

"Despite its reputation, authoritarianism is not mainly a story about brute force... In each case, a minority faction governs a resistant majority - not by overwhelming us, but by arranging the conditions under which resistance feels irrational. Those conditions are mostly made of fear... Fear, above all, of one another..."

This is why the authoritarian project spends so much on disinformation and so little, relatively, on coercion. The disinformation is the real labor. The goal is not to make people love the regime. The goal is to make them doubt each other. They don't need us to believe in them. They just need us to never find each other..."

Article - Solidarity Is Not a Feeling, Scot Nakagawa

<https://antiauthoritarianplaybook.substack.com/p/solidarity-is-not-a-feeling>

"Authoritarian consolidation is a machine... that works through specific, predictable moves: arrest a few visible people early, to create examples. Use legal and financial pressure to make resistance expensive. Isolate resisters from their institutions and networks. **Then let fear do the rest.**

The goal is not to suppress every act of resistance. That's impossible. The goal is to make the individual calculation produce inaction often enough that organized resistance never reaches critical mass. Not everyone has to be afraid. Enough people have to be uncertain that anyone will be there with them if they act..."

Essay – Hannah Arendt on Loneliness as the Common Ground for Terror and How Tyrannical Regimes Use Isolation as a Weapon of Oppression, Maria Popova

<https://www.themarginalian.org/2016/12/20/hannah-arendt-origins-of-totalitarianism-loneliness-isolation/>

"What perpetuates such tyrannical regimes, Arendt argues, is manipulation by isolation — something most effectively accomplished by the divisiveness of "us vs. them" narratives... Although isolation is not necessarily the same as loneliness, Arendt notes that loneliness can become both the seedbed and the perilous consequence of the isolation effected by tyrannical regimes... This is why our insistence on belonging, community, and human connection is one of the greatest acts of courage and resistance in the face of oppression..."

Is the Trump Administration Trying to bring Back the Lavender Scare?

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

On Ordinary Courage & Quiet Courage

Quote - Seneca the Younger

Sometimes even to live is an act of courage.

Quote - Mary Anne Radmacher

Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, 'I will try again tomorrow.'

Poem - Courage, Anne Sexton

Full poem at <https://allpoetry.com/poem/8505443-Courage-by-Anne-Sexton>

It is in the small things we see it. The child's first step... The first time you rode a bike...

Quote - Julian Weber Gordon

Courage is more than standing for a firm conviction. It includes the risk of questioning that conviction.

Story/Anecdote - Heroism at the BART Station, Rev. Vanessa Southern

Found in [Miles of Dream](#), a UUA worship resource & Soul Matters "[Common Shelf](#)" Book

Article - Six Ways to Find Your Courage During Challenging Times, By Amy L. Eva

Full article at https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/six_ways_to_find_your_courage_during_challenging_times

1. See yourself as courageous
2. Get comfortable with mistakes
3. Keep trying
4. Look for the heroes
5. Clarify your values
6. Become part of a social force for courage

Quote - Harper Lee

I wanted you to see what real courage is, instead of getting an idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand. It's when you know you're licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you see it through no matter what.

Quote/Reflection - David Whyte

Courage is a word that tempts us to think outwardly, to run bravely against opposing fire, to do something under besieging circumstance, and perhaps, above all, to be seen to do it in public... but a look at its linguistic origins is to look in a more interior direction and toward its original template, the old Norman French. Courage is the measure of our heartfelt participation with life, with another, with a community, a work; a future. To be courageous is not necessarily to go anywhere or do anything except to make conscious those things we already feel deeply and then to live through the unending vulnerabilities of those consequences.

Essay – The Quiet Courage of Changing Your Mind, Thom Hartman

<https://wisdomschool.com/p/the-quiet-courage-of-changing-your>

"The quiet courage of changing your mind lies in its humility. It requires acknowledging that your understanding was partial, that your perspective was limited, and/or that the world is more complex than the story you once told yourself... Changing your mind also carries social risk. Beliefs are often woven into group belonging. Political identities, religious frameworks, professional cultures, even family dynamics can make certain ideas untouchable. Questioning them can feel like questioning the relationship itself..."

On the Courage to be Vulnerable

Quote - [Jeff Brown](#)

There are two forms of courage in this world. One demands that we jump into action with our armor on. The other demands that we strip ourselves bare-naked and surrender. Bravery is a curious thing.

Meditation/Reading - On courage and vulnerability, by Rev. Douglas Taylor

Full piece found at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1s6JZ09oBfmsGhDQ9TPqaJo2JGMCPqYODCir9yQDfF-8/edit?usp=sharing>

"I would have my vulnerability be a choice made from my courage rather than my fear. I would have my vulnerability be my strength. May my strength be not found as a hard shell of defense or a sharp weapon of attack. May my strength, instead, be found in an open stance of kindness and empathy, like a tree bending gracefully in the wind storm. May my strength be found in a willingness to join in the suffering of others, like a forest of trees together in a storm. May I choose to be receptive rather than protected, sharing rather than shielded...

Quote/Reflection - [David Whyte](#)

To be courageous is not necessarily to go anywhere or do anything except to make conscious those things we already feel deeply and then to live through the unending vulnerabilities of those consequences.

Quote - Beau Taplin

Softness is not weakness. It takes courage to stay delicate in a world so cruel.

Quote - Brené Brown

Vulnerability is not winning or losing; it's having the courage to show up and be seen when we have no control over the outcome. Vulnerability is not weakness; it's our greatest measure of courage.

Article - The Physics of Vulnerability and What it Really Means to be Brave, Brene Brown

<https://www.dailygood.org/story/1973/the-physics-of-vulnerability-brene-brown/>

Podcast - Courage is Born from Struggle - On Being interview with Brené Brown

<https://onbeing.org/programs/1-courage-born-struggle-brene-brown/>

"We buy into some mythology about vulnerability being weakness and being gullibility and being frailty because it gives us permission not to do it..."

Reflection - goals that ladder up to changing the world, Rev. Julián Jamaica Soto

<https://medium.com/@titasoto/goals-that-ladder-up-to-changing-the-world-bren%C3%A9-brown-amazingly-expands-89830855dbdb>

"Ever since Brené Brown's message of connection through vulnerability got popular, I have struggled with the ways it hasn't seemed to fit with my lived experiences... But Brown went back to research participants to ask about ground rules for vulnerability. She identified in the research two exceptions: physical safety and dehumanization. "When your beliefs dehumanize who I am, I am not called to move in closer to that," Brown summarizes. This is the piece that has been missing for me..."

Video Clip – On churches, AA and the power of not hiding

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/2094595594634990>

On the Courage to Live Wholeheartedly and Undivided

Quote - [David Whyte](#)

To be courageous is to stay close to the way we are made.

Book - Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead, Brené Brown

Video - Courage to Live Undivided, Parker J Palmer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o5ZLt4yyYrw>

Quote - Rita Mae Brown

The reward for conformity was that everyone liked you except yourself.

Quote - Paul Tillich

Joy is the emotional expression of the courageous yes to one's own true being.

Article - The top five regrets of the dying

Full article at <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2012/feb/01/top-five-regrets-of-the-dying>

3) *I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings.*

1) *I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me.*

Quote - Harry Holleywood

Courage is acting out of self-respect for doing the right thing. To not act, or to do something different other than the right thing, is soul murder. Not being true to oneself and others leaves one diminished and, in some ways, less than human.

Quote - [S.C. Lourie](#)

Be confused, it's where you begin to learn new things. Be broken, it's where you begin to heal. Be frustrated, it's where you start to make more authentic decisions. Be sad, because if we are brave enough we can hear our heart's wisdom through it. Be whatever you are right now. No more hiding.

Quote - [Leena Wilde Ryan](#)

Courage, it turns out, isn't one dramatic leap. It's the daily, unglamorous decision to keep authoring your own life instead of accepting the draft everyone else already wrote for you... That's the world I want to leave behind — Not a blueprint to copy. We didn't come here to be the same as each other. We came here to become so unmistakably ourselves that the people who watch us can feel exactly how deeply we've met our own hearts.

Reading/Poem - Blessing of Courage, Jan Richardson

Full poem at <https://pollycastor.com/2023/03/03/blessing-of-courage-poem-by-jan-richardson/>

Poem - I Will Not Die an Unlived Life, Dawna Markova

Full poem (and reflection on it) at <https://www.awakin.org/v2/read/view.php?tid=552>

Calendar Connection - Halloween (Oct. 31)

Halloween is the time of mask wearing and thus can be seen as inviting us to bravely remove the masks we wear and show ourselves to the world as we truly are, flaws and differences alike. It is also an invitation to courageously remove the masks we wear to hide our shadow parts from ourselves!

On the Courage to Free Ourselves from Self-Deception

(i.e. On the Courage to Live Wide Awake)

Quote - Brené Brown

Courage is a heart word. The root of the word courage is cor - the Latin word for heart. In one of its earliest forms, the word courage meant "To speak one's mind by telling all one's heart." Over time, this definition has changed, and today, we typically associate courage with heroic and brave deeds. But in my opinion, this definition fails to recognize the inner strength and level of commitment required for us to actually speak honestly and openly about who we are and about our experiences -- good and bad.

Quote & Article - [Pema Chodron](#)

A warrior is always on a journey, and a main feature of that journey is fear. This fear is not simply something to be lamented, avoided, or vanquished. It is something to be examined, something to make a relationship with. <https://www.lionsroar.com/smile-at-fear-pema-chodrons-teachings-on-bravery-open-heart-basic-goodness/>

Quote - [Pema Chodron](#)

The essence of bravery is being without self-deception. However, it's not so easy to take a straight look at what we do. Seeing ourselves clearly is initially uncomfortable and embarrassing. As we train in clarity and steadfastness, we see things we'd prefer to deny—judgmental-ness, pettiness, arrogance. These are not sins but temporary and workable habits of mind. The more we get to know them, the more they lose their power. This is how we come to trust that our basic nature is utterly simple, free of a struggle between good and bad.

Quote - [Pema Chödrön](#)

The most fundamental aggression to ourselves, the most fundamental harm we can do to ourselves, is to remain ignorant by not having the courage and the respect to look at ourselves honestly and gently.

Quote - [Pema Chödrön](#)

Fear is a natural reaction to moving closer to the truth.

Book - [Start Where You Are: A Guide to Compassionate Living](#), Pema Chodron

Quote - Marianne Williamson

It takes courage ... to endure the sharp pains of self-discovery rather than choose to take the dull pain of unconsciousness that would last the rest of our lives.

Quote - [Cornel West](#)

It takes tremendous courage to think for yourself, to examine yourself. The Socratic imperative of examining yourself requires courage. William Butler Yeats used to say that it takes more courage to examine the dark corners of your own soul than it does for a soldier to fight on the battlefield.

On the Courage of Boundaries

Quote - Brene Brown

Daring to set boundaries is having the courage [to love ourselves](#) even when we risk disappointing others.

Reflection - 3 Ways to Set Boundaries: The importance of knowing when, and how, to say no, Brené Brown

<https://www.oprah.com/inspiration/how-to-set-boundaries-brene-browns-advice>

Short Talk - People Will Treat You How You Let Them, Brene Brown

On having the courage to set boundaries

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRXMRJ-2Vmk>

"Here's what I learned: boundaries are not about controlling other people's behavior there about controlling our own availability. If I keep answering that late night call, I'm not holding a boundary, I'm just wishing for one. So what are you available for? And just as important what are you not available for? One of the most life changing shifts I made was getting really specific. I'm available for meaningful reciprocal friendships where we both show up for each other; I'm not available for relationships where I'm constantly chasing someone's attention. I'm available for honest direct communication even when it's hard; I'm not available for passive aggressive comments disguised as humor... Here's the thing: when you are clear about what you will and won't accept, you don't have to beg for respect. The right people will adjust and the wrong ones will remove themselves. Either way you win..."

Video - Brené Brown on Empathy with Boundaries

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tuj9JnDtoQ>

Quote – Prentis Hemphill

Boundaries give us the space to do the work of loving ourselves. They might be, actually, the first and fundamental expression of self-love. They also give us the space to love and witness others as they are, even those that have hurt us... Boundaries are the distance at which I can love you and me simultaneously.

Related reflection [here](#)

On the Fear of Change

Quote - Erica Jong

I have accepted fear as part of life – specifically the fear of change... I have gone ahead despite the pounding in the heart that says: turn back.

Podcast - Blessing of Courage, Turning Towards Life

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9b1oKXuz8E>

Frankly it's pretty scary when we really look at how vulnerable we are and how quickly things can change and how everything changes and how we lose it all...

Quote - Raymond Lindquist

Courage is the power to let go of the familiar.

Poem - Fighting the Wind, Teresa Breeden

<https://rattle.com/fighting-the-wind-by-teresa-breeden/>

On Following Our Values & Talents into the Frightening Places

Quote - Erica Jong

Everyone has talent. What's rare is the courage to follow it to the dark places where it leads.

Quote - Erica Jong

We are so scared of being judged that we look for every excuse to procrastinate.

Storied Wisdom

Knowing that storied wisdom makes for great sermon fodder, this year we're going to gather and point to a few key sacred stories and fairy tales (and movies sometimes) that bring a unique lens to the monthly theme.

Fairy Tale – The Frog Prince **(see note below)*

On how transformation is not always driven by the loving lure of others and our better selves, but often requires the courage of enduring the pain of allowing ourselves to be broken open or fall to pieces.

<https://www.centerforlit.com/blog-roll/2020/4/27/the-frog-prince-and-the-answer-to-everything>

Christian - Walking on Water, Matthew 14: 22-31

On the courage of finally walk toward our worthiness

<https://www.uuhaverhill.org/sermons/2019/3/24/stepping-out-of-that-boat-called-fear>

Christian - The Healing of a woman's daughter, Matthew 15: 21-28, or Mark 7: 24-30

On the courage to demand your right to well-being.

[Interpretive poem](#): "He dared asked for healing, release, relief, from the demonic system."

Buddhist – The Abbot & the Sword

On the courage to accept the inevitable so we can escape the clinging to the life that once was

A fierce and terrifying band of samurai was riding through the countryside, bringing fear and harm wherever they went. As they were approaching one particular town, all the monks in the town's monastery fled, except for the abbot. When the band of warriors entered the monastery, they found the abbot sitting at the front of the shrine room in perfect posture. The fierce leader took out his sword and said, "Don't you know who I am? Don't you know that I'm the sort of person who could run you through with my sword without batting an eye?" The Zen master responded, "And I, sir, am the sort of man who could be run through by a sword without batting an eye."

See Sylvia Boorstein's take on this story at <https://www.lionsroar.com/fear-and-fearlessness-what-the-buddhists-teach/>

Buddhist - the Demon's Mouth

On the courage to lean into and learn from our fears. On the courage to see our fears as teachers.

<https://tricycle.org/magazine/demons-mouth/>

On Courage found in UU Theology & History

Each month we provide concise connections between the monthly theme and our UU history and theology put together by the Soul Matters Team. You can find this month's material on Courage at:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XpvfTSWvQlmaRp8ZFm9AYAIIDZVL77DamLX2U5M8UKXM/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.
- **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. If you are interested in hiring these preachers to give the recommended sermons as a virtual guest preacher or through sending you a video recording of them preaching the sermon, we've listed their contact information below the sermon section so you can contact them directly.

Courageous Love

Rev. Gretchen Haley

<https://revgretchenhaley.wordpress.com/2017/02/10/courageous-love/>

"I have come to understand that answering the call of courageous love requires a capacity to live with a lot of pain, a commitment that persists through great sacrifice, and a willingness not to turn away, but to move towards what in regular times we might call, danger..."

Where Seldom is Heard...

Rev. Rod Richards

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1G5RAamlJs5YW41CCtgBKS3Taf8dLj1fA/edit?usp=sharing&oid=101245613595157190644&rtpof=true&sd=true>

"Dis-courage-ment robs me of courage. How can I ever replenish courage—restore courage—if I am in this world where an encouraging word is seldom heard..."

Ordinary Bravery & The Call of Spiritual Warriorship

Rev. Dr. Sandra Fees

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lNJThqMy_eZ0IHxwr03IHPUjFDW6_nMl6Qw8ISHI4/edit?usp=sharing

"What is the brave course of action? According to Wheatley, we "remain sane and available." We choose to be open to life. The alternative is to recoil from life and to lose faith in the possibilities of life. Chogyam Trungpa says, "It becomes a dark time when we lose faith in each other and thus lack courage." In Buddhism and New Age spirituality, this courage is called spiritual warriorship..."

Note: Rev. Fees is available to offer this sermon by Zooming into your service as a virtual guest preacher for a fee. If you are interested, contact Rev. Fees at sandrafrees@gmail.com. To view all the sermons and services she has to offer, check out her website at revsandrafrees.com. You can also read her weekly reflection, The Glimmer, at <https://sandrafrees.substack.com/>.

Fear...What is it good for?

Rev. Carrie Holley-Hurt

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/17MaW59LwFntBjsuDgyZ2ZMHbqgANbxyo-Xf09TKwc/edit?usp=sharing>

"Fear breeds in isolation. Community is the antidote...

Some of us are called to stand at the front line, to stand in between harm and our neighbor.

And others of us are called to organize those people, the food delivery, the whatever.

Some of us are called to provide care....Some of us are called to lead songs...

We figure out what we are good at. What it is that we are called to do and we do it. "Because that is our sphere of influence" as Rev. Blaedel said.

Bringing your beautiful and precious life into the service of community, into the service of your values, makes us brave!..."

Note: Rev. Holley-Hurt is available to provide a video recording of this sermon for use in your service. If you are interested, you can contact Rev. Holley-Hurt at carrie.holley-hurt@austinuu.org

Failing Brilliantly: The Messy Life of Moncure Conway (And What It Asks of Us)

Rev. David Brown

https://docs.google.com/document/d/12KCOscSAwrNUulXeLkeQxX2jiYbmBLsvl_cqDWB90LE/edit?usp=sharing

"From one angle, that is a sad ending: estranged from his homeland, distanced from former allies, his name relatively obscure compared to the giants he once debated and hosted.

From another angle, it is simply honest: most of our lives do not resolve into clean hero arcs. They are a tangle of courage, missteps, growth, and grief... So the question his story leaves us with is... Where, in my own life, am I being invited to change my mind, deepen my courage, or turn belief into action—even if I might fail?..."

Note: Rev. Brown is available to offer this sermon as a video recording or by Zooming into your service as a guest preacher for a fee. If you are interested, you can contact Rev. Brown at minister@bruu.org

Featured Preacher Bios & Contact Information

- Rev. Gretchen Haley: <https://foothillsuu.org/ministersandstaff/>
- Rev. Rod Richards: retired from ministry but can be reached by emailing the Soul Matters Team
- Rev. Sandra Fees: sandrarfees@gmail.com (also revsandrafees.com)
- Rev. Carrie Holley-Hurt: carrie.holley-hurt@austinuu.org
- Rev. David Brown minister@bruu.org & <https://www.bruu.org/www2/rev-david-brown/>

Closing & Chalice Extinguishing Words

The Courage to be Open...*

Rev. Douglas Taylor

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

May we learn to be vulnerable.

May we seek the courage to be open,

and set aside the closed fist, the stinging retort, the barbed judgment of others.

May we seek within ourselves the strength to stand exposed and unguarded before the world,

not because we cannot be any other way

but because we have chosen this better way.

This Quiet Persistence *

Rev. Michelle Collins

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

Right beside the bright-shining bravery that is written into the headlines and history books, may we hold tight to the courage that announces itself with little fanfare or flash, and moves through our ordinary choices, like a stream finding its path around stones. May we bring this quiet persistence into the days that unfold before us. May we find both rest and resolve. And may we return to this community when we need to remember that we're never all alone.

The Bravery of Boldness *

Soul Matters Team

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

Let us leave with the words of the great German poet and playwright, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, in our hearts:

"Whatever you can do, or dream you can do, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it."

May we ever be bold and brave in our living and in our loving. Amen

Sing through your fear...*

Rev. Carrie Holley-Hurt

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

As we go back to our normal lives,

as we leave this sacred space,

may you hold your values close,

may you lean on community,

and may you sing through your fear.

We Are Not Done, Audette Fulbright Fulson *

Full piece at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/reading/we-are-not-done>

[Permission Source](#)

Do not think fear is the end of us—oh

you are broken in mind and heart if you even imagine

that our fear for our lives is the end of this story...

Never the last word...

Cornel West

We need the courage to question the powers that be, the courage to be impatient with evil and patient with people, the courage to fight for social justice. In many instances we will be stepping out on nothing, and just hoping to land on something. But that's the struggle. To live is to wrestle with despair, yet never allow despair to have the last word.

This Quiet Persistence *

Rev. Michelle Collins

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

Courage and fear traveled here together today, and neither one will ever fully cancel the other out. So, as you encounter both in the coming days, trust that action doesn't require calm to be real or worthy. It only asks that we be brave enough to begin. May you find your imperfect resilience for whatever the next intimidating moment asks of you. And know that there will be others right beside you, ready to throw their shaky bravery into the arena alongside yours.

Hold Tight to Each Other *

Rev. Scott Tayler

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

When the wind whips
and the days grow dim,
hold tight to each other.
Not out of fearful retreat,
but because it is through our connections that courage arises.
May this trust in the saving grace of solidarity,
this faith in the bravery of friendship,
companion us throughout our days.

The World is Too Beautiful, Eric Williams *

Full piece at <http://www.uua.org/worship/words/benediction/world-too-beautiful>

[Permission Source](#)

The world is too beautiful to be praised by only one voice.
So may you have the courage to sing your part...

Do Not Fear Agitation, Tania Márquez *

Full piece at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/blessing/do-not-fear-agitation>

[Permission Source](#)

Do not fear agitation, for agitation is the rhythm of life itself; to be put into motion, to be stirred.
Do not fear the movements that decenter what you always thought permanent.
You carry within the center of your understanding, the compass to show you the way...

The Unbroken Chain *

Tyler Boyle

Full piece at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-extinguishing/unbroken-chain>

[Permission Source](#)

For Services Honoring LGBTQ History Month, National Coming Out Day (Oct. 11), or Intersex Awareness Day (Oct. 26)

Worship Leader Support

Join the Soul Matters Worship Leader Support Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/soulmatterssharingcircle/>

Join the Soul Matters Ministers' Support Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/719788338192570/>

Attend one of our two monthly online ministers' brainstorming groups:

First Tuesdays and First Thursdays of each month at 1pm eastern time
with this zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/5857099120>

Attend our monthly online Music Matters Coaching Calls:

On the second Tuesday of every month at 2pm eastern time
with this zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/5857099120>

Inspiration

Our Facebook Inspiration Page

<https://www.facebook.com/soulmatterssharingcircle/>

Our Instagram Page

Find us as "soul_matters_circle"

Music Playlists

Click [here](#) for links to the [Spotify playlists](#) for each month.

Click [here](#) to check out the [YouTube playlists](#).



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