



FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF PHILADELPHIA

A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

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Responsibilities of a Worship Associate

Even though a congregation has a full time minister, the regular presence of a layperson as a key part of the Sunday Service is important. Members and visitors alike enjoy this affirmation of the nonhierarchical nature of a Unitarian Universalist congregation, and it gives all of us the opportunity to discover more about who we are and what we value in a worship experience.

This is part of our shared ministry. Whether our minister or a guest speaker is in the pulpit on a particular Sunday, the Worship Associate can play an important role in the various elements of the service. They remind us of the diverse people who represent this Unitarian Universalist congregation.

Worship Associates should arrive each Sunday thirty minutes before the service is to begin. Since the Associates represent the congregation to the public, they should dress appropriately and have no other duties to the church that morning.

A Worship Associate

- needs to have knowledge of the standard Order of Service, its various components and their meaning
- understand that serving as a Worship Associate is a leadership position – a sacred trust and important part of congregational life
- be willing to collaborate with the Minister in planning and preparing a Service
- be responsible for planning and/or coordinating a Summer Service (usually a Sunday sometime in mid-June through August)
- participate in Sunday Services Committee meetings and workshops
- be prepared for Sunday morning presentation, use the scripts or suggested wording for various Service elements, either verbatim or with slight variations.
- be familiar with our Unitarian Universalist hymnals [*Singing the Living Tradition* (the grey book), the music and readings it contains; and *Singing the Journey* (the “teal hymnal”).
 - in almost every instance, the Minister (whether 1stUU's or a guest) will choose hymns, readings and prayer/ meditations for the Service.
 - However, Worship Associates should consult with any guest minister or speaker in advance to be sure there is shared understanding regarding participation and related matters. So a Worship Associate should be prepared and comfortable with selecting readings and hymns when requested when your input is requested on those Service elements
- the Worship Associate is usually responsible for leading the following parts of the Service (others may be added, depending on the Service)
 - ✚ Welcome and Announcements;
 - ✚ Centering Moment (Sounding the gong);

- ✚ Kindling the Chalice;
- ✚ the Reading (usually provided by the Minister);
- ✚ introduce and invite the Offering
- ✚ Extinguishing the Chalice flame

On Sunday

- Arrive at least 45 minutes before the Service is to begin (10:15 AM September through June; 9:15 AM for Summer Services)
- Check in with the minister or greet the guest speaker when s/he arrives.
- Confirm that you both have copies of the script for that morning
- Communicate flow of Service with Music Director or musician
- Confirm the following:
 - Lights and the microphone and have been turned on or activated (and do a "sound check")
 - the Chalice is ready for lighting... with matches or a "servant candle" present and sufficient oil in the lamp;
 - there are hymnals and a copy of the Order of Service for you and the speaker or minister;
 - there are glasses of water for the speaker or minister (placed on the small table near chairs)

Once the arrangements issues have been checked:

- Coordinate the Service start time with the Minister or speaker
- Be sure both you and the Minister/speaker are ready to begin and present in the Sanctuary. Do not start the service without the minister or speaker present (unless instructed to do so).
- Once the Service begins, follow the Order of Service to introduce the various sections, as required. The Worship Associate script provides appropriate wording for your parts of the Service. Please become very familiar with this material (you may wish to practice it aloud several times beforehand).

A note on Guest Speakers

The Minister and Worship Arts Ministry team will continue to take responsibility for contacting guest speakers and providing them with the necessary information (introductory materials, a sample Order of Service, directions to First Unitarian and your contact information as Worship Associate). You should be prepared to initiate contact in the event that you do not hear from the speaker or presenter.

The Worship Associate may also need to

- coordinate with the Music Director or guest musician the selected musical elements and hymns
- be responsible for the details of the Order of Service, including introducing the speaker, leading Sorrows and Joys (Milestones), and may need to choose or consult on such elements opening words, hymns, readings
- make sure the guest speaker provides you with an introduction for him/herself and or his/her presentation or briefly interview them and write an introduction.

- send the Order of Service to the Communications Director by Wednesday morning (communications@philauu.org)
- be prepared to introduce or conduct all parts of the service.

Sample Resources:

Singing the Living Tradition – the grey hymnal, published by the UUA 1993

Singing the Journey - the “teal” hymnal, published by the UUA 2005

The UUA Worship Web –an informative website sponsored by the UUA

(www.uua.org/worshipweb)

UUA Meditation Manuals, published by Skinner House Books

Various poetry anthologies and story collections [e.g., poems by Mary Oliver; *Cries of the Spirit* (an anthology of women’s writing); *Soul Food: Stories to Nourish the Spirit and the Heart* by Jack Kornfield, just to name a very few of the myriad resources available]