

Rise Up O Flame: A Ferguson Worship Toolkit for UUs

As we face the indictment announcement and the time after, the Ferguson Response Team brings to you this Worship Toolkit. In forming this Toolkit, we received resources from ministers in the St. Louis area and around the country. We hope this will support you in offering a worship service to support Ferguson and to raise conversations, awareness, and healing around the ongoing violence towards young black people in our country.

You can opt to utilize the suggested Order of Service or borrow what you need for your own liturgy. We hope you will find this resource valuable. May we carry forth our Unitarian Universalist wisdom into the world and be transformed by the wisdom of those who guide us in life-long learning.

Sincerely,

The Unitarian Universalist Ferguson Response Team

Barbara Gadon, Lead Minister, Eliot Unitarian Chapel, Kirkwood, MO

Thomas Perchlik, Minister, First Unitarian Church of St. Louis, MO

Krista Taves, Minister, Emerson UU Chapel, Ellisville, MO

Julie Taylor, Director UU House Studies and Adjunct Professor, Eden Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO

Sunshine Wolfe, Interim Minister, First Unitarian Church, Alton, IL

James Hobart, Minister Associated, First Unitarian Society, Chicago, IL

Abhi Janamanchi, Senior Minister, Cedar Lane UU Church, Bethesda, MD

Leslie MacFayden, Community Activist, Philadelphia, PA

Rosemary Bray McNatt, President Starr King School for the Ministry

Meg Riley, Senior Minister, Church of the Larger Fellowship

Christopher D. Sims, Poet and Activist, Rockford, IL

Bill Sinkford, Senior Minister, First Unitarian Church, Portland OR; former UUA President

Kenny Wiley, Director of Religious Education, Prairie UU Church, Parker, CO

Terasa Cooley, Program and Strategy Officer, UUA

Annette Marquis, LGBTQ and Multicultural Programs Director, UUA

Nora Rasman, Standing on the Side of Love Campaign Coordinator, UUA

Susan Leslie, Congregational Advocacy and Witness Director, UUA

Taquiena Boston, Director of Multicultural Growth and Witness, UUA

Table of Contents

Page 1-	Letter from Ferguson Response Team
Page 2-	Table of Contents
Page 3-	Sample Order of Service
Page 4-	Music and Opening Words/Invocations
Page 5-	Community Prayer
Pages 6-11	Readings/Litanies/Responsive Readings
Page 12	Benedictions
Page 13	Stories for All Ages
Page 13-22	Children's Sermon by Rev. Krista Taves

Sample Order of Service

Prelude	<u>"Ella's Song"</u>	Sweet Honey and the Rock
Opening Words	"Reach the Place of Self"	Ma. Theresa Gustilo Gallardo
Chalice Lighting		
Opening Hymn	#155 Circle 'Round for Freedom	
Time for All Ages	"Standing for What We Believe"	Rev. Krista Taves
Community Prayer	"An Adaptation of the Lord's Prayer"	Rev. Julie Taylor
Reading	Select Reading from Pages	
Hymn	#1024 When the Spirit Says Do (Teal Hymnal) or #95 There Is More Love Somewhere (Grey Hymnal)	
Litany	Select Litany from Pages	
Sermon/Reflection		
Hymn	#1014 Standing on the Side of Love or #348 Guide My Feet	
Benediction	"Highest Resolve"	Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman
Extinguish Chalice		
Postlude	<u>"We Are Here"</u>	Alicia Keys

Music

Music varies widely in our denomination based on size and resources. To that end, you will notice that there are hymn choices based on available hymnals. The goals in selecting music relevant to Ferguson are to have music that is not appropriated and yet remains authentic to the goals of justice and love. We do not want to unintentionally perpetuate racism in our music when talking about such a difficult topic as Ferguson.

One source for music ideas is this play list on Ferguson from Church of the Larger Fellowship- [CLICK HERE](#).

Opening Words

“Let us reach the place of self, the place that is not alien to truth. Let us wash over the peace and serenity, with fierce longing for light and heart; with living strength flowing in our veins, bring ourselves into fearlessness and into trust.”

~“Reach the Place of Self” by Ma. Theresa Gustillo Gallardo

“When they asked for those to raise their hands who'd go down to the courthouse the next day, I raised mine. Had it high up as I could get it. I guess if I'd had any sense I'd've been a little scared, but what was the point of being scared? The only thing they could do to me was kill me and it seemed like they'd been trying to do that a little bit at a time ever since I could remember.”

~Fannie Lou Hamer

“In a real sense all life is inter-related. All men are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the inter-related structure of reality.”

~Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

#584 in Singing the Living Tradition contains full version as a responsive reading

Prayer

Community Prayer: An adaptation of the Lord's Prayer

Adapted by Rev. Julie Taylor from *Prayers Encircling the World*

Spirit of Life, that dwells with us and in us,
let us honor the spirit of all life in our incessant search for justice and peace.

May we experience a world community with peace, liberty and justice for all.

May we have the will to live up to our covenant to right relationship in our congregations, our communities, our nation and our world
that we might be a people on the side of the oppressed, the poor and the marginalized.

Give us today what we need
that we might have the will and the strength to build a new society.

Forgive us our shortcomings; do not let us fall into the temptation
of believing ourselves already new people.

And deliver us from the evil of forgetting that our lives are not ours alone. Amen

Readings/Responsive Readings/Liturgies

"Same Story" a spoken word by Prince Ea Find link to video [HERE](#).

Excerpt from the essay A Testament of Hope by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Men of the white West, whether or not they like it, have grown up in a racist culture, and their thinking is colored by that fact. They have been fed on a false mythology and tradition that blinds them to the aspirations and talents of other men. They don't really respect anyone who is not white. But we simply cannot have peace in the world without mutual respect...

But there is no single answer to the plight of the American Negro. Conditions and needs vary greatly in different sections of the country. I think that the place to start, however, is in the area of human relations, and especially in the area of community-police relations. This is a sensitive and touchy problem that has rarely been adequately emphasized. Virtually every riot has begun from some police action. If you try to tell the people in most Negro communities that the police are their friends, they just laugh at you. Obviously, something desperately needs to be done to correct this. I have been particularly impressed by the fact that even in the state of Mississippi, where the FBI did a significant training job with the Mississippi police, the police are much more courteous to Negroes than they are in Chicago or New York. Our police forces simply must develop an attitude of courtesy and respect for the ordinary citizen. If we can just stop policeman from using profanity in their encounters with black people, we will have accomplished a lot. In the larger sense, police must cease being occupation troops in the ghetto and start protecting its residents. Yet very few cities have really faced up to this problem and tried to do something about it. It is the most abrasive element in Negro-white relations, but it is the last to be scientifically and objectively appraised.

Open Letter from Sybrina Fulton, the mother of Trayvon Martin, to the Brown Family

"Honor your son and his life, not the circumstances of his alleged transgressions. I have always said that Trayvon was not perfect. But no one will ever convince me that my son deserved to be stalked and murdered. No one can convince you that Michael deserved to be executed.

But know this: neither of their lives shall be in vain...While we fight injustice, we will also hold ourselves to an appropriate level of intelligent advocacy. If they refuse to hear us, we will make them feel us. Some will mistake that last statement as being negatively provocative. But feeling to us means feeling our pain; imagining our plight as parents of slain children. We will no longer be ignored. We will bond, continue our fights for justice, and make them remember our children in an appropriate light.

I am Tired of Black Men Dying at the Hands of the Police

It's as if Billy clubs and guns
Have our names on them. It's as
if their sole purpose for existence
Is to take away the lives of
Every black male on the planet.

It's as if black male means to
beat
bruise
puncture
poison
pursue
end the life of
annihilate.

I am tired of Black men
dying at the hands of the police.

It's as if cops exist to terminate us
in any way possible. They are
so hostile. We sit in churches
Singing the saddest of gospels
Because police beat us to death.
Beat and choke us to death.
Choke and strangle us to death.

I am tired, and I bet the spirits of Emmitt Till, Malcolm X, Medgar Evers,
Fred Hampton, Sean Bell, Amadou Diallo, Mark Anthony Barmore, Trayvon Martin,
Kimani Gray, Timothy Russell, Ervin Jefferson, Kendrec McDade, Oscar Grant, Eric Garner,
John Crawford III, Michael Brown, and many others, are just as tired as I am!

I am tired of Black men
Dying at the hands of the police,
in elementary schools, in jails,
In prisons, on prison yards,
in classrooms where we are
Overlooked, undermined, and
misunderstood.

I am tired. So, so, so, so tired.

© Christopher D. Sims, August 2, 2014

“Fears” by Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt from the anthology Been in the Storm So Long

He phones more than an hour ago, to say he was on his way home. But I have yet to hear the scrape of the iron gate, the rattling keys, so I worry.

Most married women fret about a tardy husband. Young black women like myself worry more. For most people in New York the urban bogeyman is a young black man in sneakers. But we live in Central Harlem, where every young man is black and wears sneakers, so we learn to look into the eyes of young males and discern the difference between youthful bravado and the true dangers of the streets.

No, I have other fears. I fear white men in police uniforms; white teenagers driving by; thin, panicky, middle aged white men on the subway. Most of all, I fear that their path and my husband’s will cross one night as he makes his way home.

I fear that some white person will look at him and see only his or her nightmare—another black man in sneakers. But he’s also a writer, an amateur cyclist, a lousy basketball player, his parents’ son, my life’s companion. When I peek out the window, the visions in my head are those of blind white panic at my husband’s black presence.

Once upon a time I was vaguely ashamed of my paranoia about his safety in the world outside our home. After all, he’s a grown man. But he’s a grown black man on the streets alone. I am reminded, over and over, how dangerous white people can be, how their fears are still a hazard to our health. When white people are ruled by their fears of everything black, every black man is a rapist—even a murderer.

**A Litany For Children Slain By Violence
and Traumatized By Those Called to “Serve and Protect”**

August 17, 2014

- Leader:** A sound is heard in Ramah, the sound of bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children. She refuses to be comforted, for they are dead.
- Assembly:** We pray for the families of children who have been slain by gun violence, left to die on streets with less dignity than is given to animals.
- Leader:** A sound is heard in every city. Communities are weeping generationally for their children. Our sons, like Emmett Till, Trayvon Martin, Ezell Ford, Michael Brown and John Crawford. Our daughters, like Aiyana Jones, Miriam Carey, Malisa Williams and Tarika Wilson.
- Assembly:** As people of God, we weep for the lives of all children who instead of enjoying the sweetness of innocence become victims of hate, victims of war, and victims of violence.
- Leader:** Now, let us rise up and interrupt these rushing waters of violence that leave children and communities wounded and paralyzed, traumatized by internal disintegration and state terror. Let us rise up and demand this nation abandon its affair with beliefs, practices and laws that are rooted in militarism, justified by racism and propped up by systemic inequities.
- Assembly:** We will rise up against laws rooted in evil that have no concern for life, nor any concern for God’s love. We will rise up until justice rolls on like a river and righteousness like a never failing stream.
- Leader:** Oh Lord, we commit ourselves to seeing all children the way that you see them. No matter their age or race, they are precious gifts made in your image, created with transformative purpose and unlimited promise.
- Assembly:** And for that cause, we pledge to be hedges of protection for their lives, we pledge to stand against anything that threatens their potential or promise.
- All:** We embody the universal spirit of Ubuntu, “I am because we are and because we are, I am.” We are all Rachel crying for the children! Therefore, we pledge to lock arms in solidarity with the families of the slain. We pledge to let our voices be heard all over this nation and the world, for we know we are called to do what is just and right.

©2014 by Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, Inc.

Because Our Lives Depend On It

Leader: We envision a world where your life and safety is tied to mine

ALL: Because, otherwise, our lives are in danger.

Leader: We envision a world where language is used for wholeness and liberation

ALL: Because what we say has power.

Leader: We envision a world where your liberation is linked to my liberation

ALL: Because we are interconnected.

Leader: We envision a world where voting will be an empowering event

ALL: Because justice depends on it.

Leader: We envision a world where war and violence will be considered reprehensible

ALL: Because dehumanizing others dehumanizes me

Leader: We envision a world where creation, ingenuity, discomfort, and compassionate criticism will be welcomed

ALL: Because we need these things to grow.

Leader: We envision a world where all are valued, loved, and respected

ALL: Because humanizing you humanizes me.

Leader: We envision a world where all living beings will have access to clean water, fresh food, shelter, beauty, love

ALL: Because our bodies, heart, minds, and souls depend on it.

Leader: We envision a world where fear will be recognized as an emotion and not as an authority

ALL: Because our lives depend on it.

Leader: We envision a world where humans think ahead and consider impact on future generations.

ALL: Because their lives depend on it.

Leader: We envision a world where respect for the earth is as important as respect for oneself and one's community

ALL: We do these things because they matter, because our lives depend on it.

ALL: Because all of our lives depend on it.

Telling

by Laura Hershey

What you risk telling your story:
You will bore them.
Your voice will break, your ink will
spill and stain your coat.
No one will understand, their eyes
become fences.
You will park yourself forever
on the outside, your differentness once
and for all revealed, dangerous,
the names you give to yourself
will become epithets.
Your happiness will be called
bravery, denial.
Your sadness will magnify their fears.
Everything you say will prove something about
their god, or their economic system.
Your feelings, that change day
to day, kaleidoscopic,
will freeze in place,
brand you forever,
justify anything they decide to do
with you.
Those with power can afford
to tell their story
or not.
Those without power
risk everything to tell their story
and must.
Someone, somewhere
will hear your story and decide to fight,
to live and refuse compromise.
Someone else will tell
her own story,
risking everything.

Benedictions

“Keep fresh before me the moments of my High Resolve, that in fair weather or in foul, in good times or in tempests, in the days when the darkness and the foe are nameless or familiar, I may not forget that to which my life is committed. Keep fresh before me the moments of my high resolve.”

~Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman

#698 in Singing the Living Journey

“Take courage friends.

The way is often hard, the path is never clear,
and the stakes are very high.

Take courage.

For deep down, there is another truth:
you are not alone.”

~Rev. Wayne Arnason

“The Common Good”

We breathe the common wind of the earth
no matter where we live, who we love,
what language we speak.

We drink the common water of the earth
no matter what our race, how long we live,
the coverings we drape on our forms.

We follow the common paths of the earth
no matter our beliefs, how far we move from home,
the gold that we carry, or its lack.

May we live from these truths: our hearts
open to the holiness all around us,
and our hands turned always toward the common good.

~ Rev. Kathleen McTigue

Children's/Intergenerational Stories

The Skin You Live In by Michael Tyler

Yertle the Turtle by Dr. Seuss

The Other Side by Jacqueline Woodson

Cootie Shots: Theatrical Inoculations Against Bigotry for Kids, Parents, and Teachers

Edited by Norma Bowles with Mark E. Rosenthal

Contains numerous skits, poems, readings, and songs

Children's Sermon:

"Standing for what we believe"

Rev. Krista Taves,

Emerson Unitarian Universalist Chapel, St. Louis County, MO. October 2014.

minister@emersonuuchapel.org

www.emersonuuchapel.org

This story uses several images. Ideally, they are projected so that the entire congregation can see them. If you do not have this capability in your worshiping space, you can print these for use with the children.

Opening: There have been so many times in the history of the world when people have used protests as a way to stand for what they believe. Can any of you tell me what a protest is? (engage their answers)

Protests are a way of saying that we don't like the way things are in our world, and there are things that have to change because the way they are now is wrong and unfair. We use protests to try to change people's minds or to influence people who do have the power to make the changes we would like to see.

I have some pictures of different ways that people protest. When I show you the picture, tell me what you see.



What is happening here? engage their answers.....

Where are these people meeting? They are on the street. They are in public. Often protests will happen in important public places so that the protest is seen by a lot of people. Protesters will also be very careful about where they choose to protest because sometimes the place they choose has a very important meaning. This protest is taking place in a city called Ferguson in the state of Missouri, where a black man named Michael Brown was killed by a police officer. Many people are very angry about this and they are meeting at the very place where Michael Brown was hurt. This helps the protesters to show why they are upset and to talk about what they believe needs to change.



What's happening here? (engage their answers)

This little boy is holding a sign. One of the ways people protest is by making signs that show what they want to change. This little boy is at a protest for racial justice. When his parents told him what happened to Michael Brown, he decided that this is the sign that he wanted to hold, "Stop Hurting People."



What's happening here?

Sometimes protesters will sing songs while they are marching. The words to the songs will talk about what the protesters believe in and what they want to change. Sometimes the songs are also used to help the protesters feel strong and courageous. Sometimes protests are dangerous because other people might not like what they are saying. Sometimes protesters are arrested and put in jail. Singing can help you feel stronger so that if it becomes dangerous, you will remember why you are there.



What is happening here?

What we have here is one man carrying a speaker and the other man speaking into a microphone. He is chanting. These are people who were marching behind the Unitarian Universalists yesterday when we protested for racial justice in our city, and that person man had a lot of chants. And he was really loud! But that meant everyone could hear him. One of the things he said a lot was “Hands Up, Don’t Shoot!” and everyone would raise their hands and say, “Hands up Don’t Shoot!” Something else he would say is, “Tell me what democracy looks like!” and everyone would answer, “This is what democracy looks like!” Protesters use slogans to share their values and their hopes and their dreams. They also use slogans to demonstrate what they think is wrong and why it needs to change.



What is happening here?

This is a sit-in. This sit-in happened in Malaysia a few years ago when people were angry about the election. They did not trust that every ballot was counted. So they sat in the street and refused to move. This means no cars could go through the city. Many were arrested. Sit-ins are a way of making people very aware that something is wrong and it has to change.



What is happening here?

This young person is on the phone. One of the ways to protest is to call your elected representatives and tell them your opinion. They represent you and because they want to be re-elected, they need to listen to the people who elect them. They don't always listen, which can be very difficult, but we have to keep trying. Sometimes protesting means having a lot of faith when things look hard, when it looks like no one is listening.



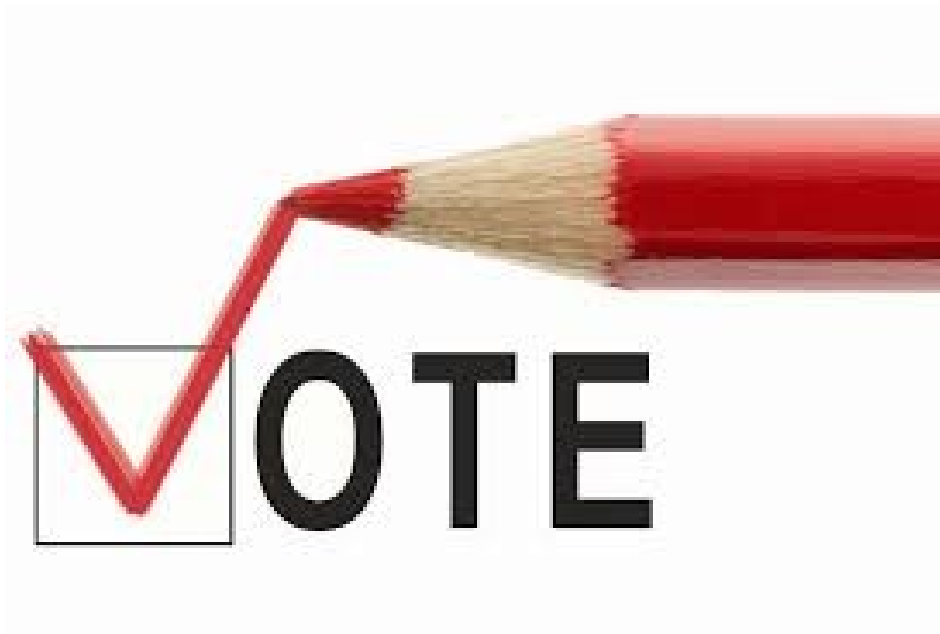
What is happening here?

This young person is writing a letter on their computer. One way to protest is to write a letter. It allows us to say exactly what we believe and exactly what we would like to see changed. When you send a letter to an elected legislator, you will usually get a letter back from them.



What is happening here?

This is a petition. Not all of us are good at writing letters and some of us feel nervous about talking on the phone. There are lots of people who are really good at writing letters and then they invite others to sign them. When lots of people sign a letter asking for change, that is a petition. A petition is one way to protest. We hope that because so many people signed it, that the people who receive the letter will consider what we have to say.



What is happening here?

The most important way to protest is by voting. If we are really unhappy with our elected legislators, we can vote them out. It is very important to never miss an election. If you can vote, you should vote because your vote is the most powerful way you have of creating change and helping the world to be a better place.

So next time you see something that you think is really unfair, ask yourself what you can do to make your voice heard. Will you join with other people on the street, hold a sign, sing songs, chant. Maybe some day you will be part of a sit in. You can make a phone call, write a letter, or sign a petition. And you can vote. Maybe your school has votes, and when you are 18, you can vote in all the elections.

When we stand for what we believe in, we make a difference in our world.