



# Worship Committee Guidelines

On Sunday mornings, our community gathers together for worship services that honor our reverence for life. What happens in these services is significant to the life and well-being of our congregation. Worship services can provide spiritual reflection, musical enrichment, intellectual stimulation, intergenerational connections, a sense of community, and continuity with the Unitarian Universalist faith. They seek to energize and affirm members and their families, deepening their sense of belonging and commitment.

Worship services also give visitors their crucial first impression of what Unitarian Universalism, as well as our congregation, is like. In planning worship services, we try to ensure that visitors will desire to make a return visit and want to know more about us.

The Charge of the Worship Committee from the MMUUS Operating Manual:

The Worship Committee works in collaboration with the Society's minister(s) to plan, create and implement regular and special worship services. This work shall be conducted in a manner that honors the tradition of the Free Pulpit and Free Pew, and that employs the special talents and expertise of all participants in the collaborative process.

## The Worship Committee

The Worship Committee is made up of members of the congregation the Society's minister, as well as, the Director of Religious Education. The committee is responsible for the planning and facilitation of all summer services, and at least one service a month, when the Parish Minister is not in the pulpit.

The committee works with guest speakers and the Music Director to insure the overall quality, consistency and balance of worship services. The Committee assures that diverse voices are a part of the services. In accordance with our UU principles and our status as a Welcoming Congregation, we insist that guest speakers use inclusive language in their talks.

Members of the worship committee may take on the monthly role of Volunteer Coordinator (VC) as well as occasionally being a Worship Service Coordinator (WSC) planning and facilitating an entire worship service.

In short:

**Volunteer Coordinator (VC)** = A Worship Committee Member who secures and works with Sunday morning volunteers (ushers, decorators and greeters), sets up sanctuary on Sunday mornings, and conducts the "Welcome and Announcements" and may light the chalice.

**Worship Service Coordinator (WSC)** = A Worship Committee Member who works with guest speakers, or other worship committee members, to design and facilitate a worship service consistent with worship practices.

## The Volunteer Coordinator (VC)

The Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for securing volunteers for designated Sunday services (usually this is a month long assignment). This includes getting volunteers to usher, greet, and decorator for the dais. The VC arrives early on Sunday morning (9:45 a.m.) to set up the Sanctuary. This includes turning on the lights and sound system, doing a sound check with all microphones, putting alcohol in the chalice, and a fresh glass of water for the speaker, turning on the camera in the choir loft and the TV in the Memorial room, and receiving announcements or joys and Sorrows from the community. They are available to respond to any last minute issues and/or problems that may occur.

## The Worship Service Coordinator (WSC)

When the parish minister is away from the pulpit, the worship committee steps in to facilitate worship services. Each "Worship Committee" service has a designated coordinator who is responsible for the overall service. This may mean working with a guest speaker or planning and implementing a lay led service. The responsibilities of the WSC include:

- When the service involves a guest speaker, the WSC is responsible for contacting and communicating what is expected, as well as planning and implementing the service. Some guest speakers are more involved than others in service planning.
- The WSC should run a sound check with each speaker before the service, ensuring that speakers know how our microphones work.
- The WSC is in charge of getting the title and description of the sermon or theme, to the office for the monthly newsletter. It needs to be sent to [office@mmuus.org](mailto:office@mmuus.org) by the 15th of the **previous** month of publication.
- The WSC is responsible for submitting information for the Order of Service by 10:00 am the Thursday before the service, to the office [office@mmuus.org](mailto:office@mmuus.org)
- If the guest speaker is to be paid, the WSC informs the bookkeeper, well in advance, and sees that the check is prepared and presented to the speaker.

## Typical Order of Service (OoS)

A good service has many components that should be planned and facilitated carefully. Services should start promptly at 10:30 and end at approximately 11:30. A service theme which is repeated throughout the elements of the service makes the service unified and gives it a flow.

**Prelude** Worship Services typically begins with a Prelude. Doors to the sanctuary are closed and the congregation is respectfully quiet and attentive as they enter a time of worship.

**Welcome** A worship committee member introduces him/herself to the congregation and welcomes them to the service making a special gesture towards first time visitors.

**Greeting One Another** After the welcoming words, the congregation is invited to stand as one is able and greet one another before singing the first hymn.

**Opening Hymn** There are usually two or three hymns during a worship service. At MMUUS, we use two hymn books: *Singing the Living Tradition* & *Singing the Journey*. Music may also be used from other resources, as well.

**Call To Worship/Opening Words** A "Call to Worship" is conducted by an ordained minister, where as "Opening Words" and conducted by lay persons. These words set the tone of the worship service.

**Chalice Lighting** The worship leader typically invites the congregation to read in unison the words for the chalice lighting which are found on the OoS. The VC or designee will come forward and light the chalice.

**Children's Story** Children are invited to the front of the sanctuary for a story. Typically, the Director of Religious Education (DRE) will read a story chosen to emphasis or accent the sermon. A child will go up to the Sacred Shelf and, with the help of the DRE, transfer the flame from the chalice to the traveling lantern. This will be used to light the children's chalice at the Creek Side Chapel.

**Children's Recessional Song** Children are sung out of the sanctuary by the congregation, as they head downstairs to the Creek Side Chapel where they will have their own short worship service before they head to their classroom.

**Affirming Community, Meditation** The worship leader or designee shares with the congregation, some of the joys and sorrows in our community. Then the congregation is lead in a silent meditation.

**Offertory** The Music Director typically selects music for receiving the offering.

**Music** The selection of hymns for the service should be consistent with the theme of the service. The Music Director can suggest hymns and will arrange for the music for the Prelude, Postlude, Offertory, and Anthem and occasionally, for special music.

**Readings** A variety of reading may be used to enhance the topic of the service. Congregational responsive readings may be found in the back of the gray hymnal.

**Sermon** The sermon should run between 18 - 22 minutes. All speakers should do a time check. Ten minutes are needed after the sermon in order to wrap up the service by approximately 11:30.

**Closing Words and Music Postlude** The Worship Leader offers the congregation some final words which should bring the service to a graceful conclusion. It has been our tradition for the congregation to sit quietly through the Music Postlude. At the end of the Postlude the Volunteer Coordinator or designee will extinguish the chalice. Members of the congregation then leave the sanctuary, greeting the Speaker on the way out. Coffee, tea and fellowship follow in the Social Hall.