Order of Service

June 14, 2026

Let Us Have Peace

Gathering Music "Sinfonia to Cantata 29", J.S. Bach
Tom Berryman

Chime and Welcome Jim Grumbach

Chalice Lighting & Covenant Kenney/Chapman Family

With open minds and loving hearts, we gather to search for meaning,
to care for one another, and to work together for a better world.

This morning we have a special treat.

First, the Bell Choir is going to play "Let There Be Peace on Earth" for us.

Then the choir will rise and sing as the bell choir plays, then we will all rise, as we're willing or able, and join them once more in singing.

[Choir to move up to the choir loft as they sing with the congregation?]

Invocation “Let There Be Peace on Earth”

Areen Bell Choir

Sy Miller and Jill Jackson, arr. by Douglas E. Wagner

Hymn “Let There Be Peace on Earth”

LET THERE BE PEACE ON EARTH

Let there be peace on earth,
And let it begin with me.
Let there be peace on earth,
The peace that was meant to be

With Earth as our mother,
Family all are we,
Let us walk with each other
In perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me;
Let this be the moment now.
With every step I take,
Let this be my solemn vow;

To take each moment and live each moment
In peace eternally!
Let there be peace on earth,
And let it begin with me.

Opening Words Rev. Lisa Perry-Wood

Welcome, friends! I'm RLPW; pronouns; interim minister at FPW. Welcome to our last Sunday of what we call "the church program year", though don't forget the wonderful summer services planned by folks here and at three other UU churches in our Summer Services Consortium.
We hope you'll check them out!

As we close out the program year, it's a moment to notice, really to be proud of all that we've accomplished over the last two years. From our Trans DOR and Shine a Light vigils, to Bystander and Non-Violent Resistance trainings, holiday fairs, Carol Sings, auction and yard sale, stewardship and fellowship dinners, wonderful Music Sundays, and so much more - we have truly demonstrated the

power of community to bring and keep and bind us together, when ***all of us show up for all of us***.
And we get to celebrate that today!

Over these two years we've shared a wide range of experiences, emotions, activities, against a backdrop of rising turmoil and deep concern for our democracy.
The world surrounding us has *needed* us to show up, not just for each other, but for everyone.
And Peace - authentic, loving, generative and lasting peace - has seemed hard to come by.
We so dearly need peace in our lives, even more than ever.
Let us have peace, let us work for peace, let us *be* peace.

This is **WALKING MEDITATION by** Buddhist teacher, Thich Nhat Hanh:

Take my hand.
We will walk.
We will only walk.
We will enjoy our walk
without thinking of arriving anywhere.
Walk peacefully.

Walk happily.
Our walk is a peace walk.
Our walk is a happiness walk.

Then we learn
that there is no peace walk;
that peace is the walk;
that there is no happiness walk;
that happiness is the walk.
We walk for ourselves.
We walk for everyone
always hand in hand.

Walk and touch peace every moment.
Walk and touch happiness every moment.
Each step brings a fresh breeze.
Each step makes a flower bloom under our feet.
Kiss the Earth with your feet.
Print on Earth your love and happiness.

Earth will be safe
when we feel in us enough safety.

Dear friends, come now into this beloved and sacred space we co-create each week and let us worship together.

Offering

The offering we give each week is a symbol of our commitment to this faith community and to the life and works of our congregation.
Instructions on how to donate online are in the order of service.
If you are here for the first time, please let the plate pass you by. You are our guest.

We receive your generosity with gratitude and in appreciation of all that sustains us.
Your gifts maintain the strength of this community and all it does within these walls as well as the work we do together to make the world a better place.

The offering will now be given and gratefully received.

Offertory "Adagio from Sonata in D, Op. 5, No. 1"
John Emery, violin Arcangelo Corelli

Time For All Ages Kate Holland

Anthem "Gate Gate", Brian Tate

Reflection Let Us Have Peace Rev. Lisa

Now…just letting the kids know, this is the most boring part…
So get out those pew packs or make another tissue paper flower while I'm talking mostly to the grownups.
It won't be too long, I promise!

So, I've been thinking a lot about peace lately.

Peace in the world, with wars raging in so many places, and the impact increasingly felt here at home.

Peace in our own country, with the rise of authoritarianism and the associated violence it brings.

Peace in our neighborhoods, between individuals of differing values and beliefs, peace in our own hearts, as we witness all of this.

So, we wonder, how can we have peace when pain and suffering are all around us?

It's an ancient question.

The song we just heard the choir sing has a deep meaning in the Buddhist tradition:

Gate, gate, parasamgate is the concluding line of the Heart Sutra.

This powerful, poetic mantra is intended to bring an experience of enlightenment, and encouragement to let it all go.

The Heart Sutra speaks to the impermanence of our lives and acceptance of that truth;

So we can live with insight, compassion, and liberation from the suffering of attachment.

Thich Nhat Hanh expressed this liberation as "the insight that brings us to the other shore" - the "other shore" meaning deep wisdom and understanding.

Non-attachment, letting go - it's a lesson for all of us, for all moments in our lives, and especially for relief from the very real, often everyday, suffering of our lives.

Nhat Hanh, or Thay, as his followers called him, told this story:

A young woman was working in the city, and every day hurried to eat breakfast and take the train to work.

Many times she had to run to catch the train.

One day, coming home, she met a woman, an elder, in the elevator;

making conversation, she said to the woman:

“If it’s necessary to run all day like this, that’s not much of a life, is it?”

The woman replied:

“Well, at least you still have two strong legs to run.

Not me, if I run, I’ll fall flat on my face.”

The young woman, says Thay, didn’t know that *she was having happiness*.

Having two strong legs is a great happiness.

We only need to appreciate being able to walk or run to have happiness.

Or appreciate being able to see a sunset or hear music or taste a strawberry, smell a rose, feel the touch of a gentle hand, or a warm hug.

Happiness is *possible*.

And, in the same way, *peace is possible*.

Dr. Abdul El-Sayed is a Michagan Democrat seeking nomination as a U.S. Senate candidate.

His candidacy has been controversial, due to his support of the Palestinian people.

And this is *not* an endorsement.

But something I heard him say recently really struck me.

El-Sayed is laying out a vision for how we end the current president's hold over his followers; how to be done with "Trumpism."

He's suggesting *radical empathy* for Trump voters and *radical change* to eliminate the social conditions that enabled this presidency.

El-Sayed urges talking with those on “the other side” about what we both love about this country - there are likely places where we’ll connect.

And he talks about *“winning peace”*;

healing the causes of pain that made this regime possible, instead of over-fixating on its leader as the sum total of all its ills.

“Winning peace” means reaching for the other’s common humanity, listening to their pain and fear;

instead of fighting more and harder, we need to create conditions where *fighting is unnecessary.*

And friends, that work for peace, it begins with us, right here, in communities like this one.

And I know that you and I, all of us, can lead this work, because we understand love and loving.

And as we said two years ago:

We are the ones we’ve been waiting for.

My very dear friends, as many of you already know, after we close out our time together, we will not have contact for a while.

This may feel hard to those of you who've never experienced this policy, but, beloveds, there's a very good reason.

Because your new minister deserves to have the time and space to connect deeply with you, as I know Lauren is eager to do.

And we all want that too.

There's a very human temptation to long for what we've known, there's safety in that.

Yet that attachment is not helpful for any of us.

So we'll emulate the Buddhist practice of non-attachment, no clinging, letting each other go, in peace, with love and words of appreciation.

There's a tradition you've had here of a Gratitude Tree.

It's a large poster board with a drawing of a tree, with post-it notes, so you can write messages of appreciation and stick them like leaves on the branches.

There is *so much* to appreciate about this community.

In the best of all possible worlds, at least in my imagination, *every one of us* would feel appreciated for some way that we've participated here this year.

Okay, that may be a lofty goal!

But I encourage you to reflect on all the many ways that we have carried our shared ministry of love and let's celebrate those together.

You'll find the Gratitude Tree in the Vestry downstairs.

One last story before I close, and this is also an appreciation for one of you, though I could share even more about so many of you. Ross Trimby shared this story with me last year and it stayed with me.

Literally, I had it on a sticky note on my desk!

Ross, I hope I tell it right - if not, I'm sure you'll let me know!

Ross told me when he was in the Navy, he served on a submarine.

Now this is a very tight space for roughly 150 crew members.

Sometimes they'd be submerged for 120 days or even longer.

The amazing thing, said Ross, is that there were *no fights*.

None.

150 crew members, 120 days confined in a tight space together.

All living in peace.

And that's how I'll think about our time together here at First Parish, these last two years.

We may have had disagreements - we're opinionated UUs, after all!

But there have been *no fights*.

And in this climate, with all that's going on in the world and in our lives, that, my friends is "not nothing"

So let us have peace, for *all* of us, everywhere.

To take each moment and live each moment
In peace eternally!

Let there be peace on earth,
And let it begin with me.
May it be so. Amen.

Now, we come to our closing ritual.

The Flower Ceremony is an annual end-of-year event celebrating beauty, human uniqueness, diversity, and community.
The UU Flower Ceremony was created in 1923 by Dr. Norbert Capek [Chah-Peck], founder of the modern Unitarian movement in Czechoslovakia.
On the last Sunday before the summer recess of the Prague Unitarian church, all the children and adults participated in this colorful ritual.
Then, when the Nazis took control of Prague in 1940, they found Dr. Capek's preaching of the inherent worth and beauty of every human person to be-as Nazi court records show-- "...too dangerous to the Reich."

Dr. Capek was sent to the camp at Dachau.
While he didn't survive, his message of human hope and decency lives on through his Flower Ceremony, which his wife Maja brought to the U.S. and is widely celebrated by UUs here.
As Maya Capek, explained,
"No two flowers are alike, no two people are alike;
yet each has a contribution to make;

each would help to make this world as beautiful
as a colorful bouquet…

By exchanging flowers we signify that we are willing,
in the spirit of tolerance and patience,
To march together in search of truth,
Disregarding all that usually divides humankind."

As I gaze upon these flowers, I do so quietly--reverently-- with a sense of how important it is to meet our world and other people with gentleness, justice and love.
As *you* gaze upon each flower, here or at home, or recall the image of a flower, bring to mind the name of a person who is dear to you. We hold all - those we love, those who love us, and those we are doing our best to love, in our thoughts and hearts as we connect with the flowers.
Now we'll quietly share in this ritual of human oneness and love. Please come forward and take the flower that is calling to you….

Now, please raise your flowers high for this blessing by
Norbert Capek:

In the name of Hope, which plants in the seed the future of the tree and in the hearts of all the longing for people living in human love;
in the name of the spirit of life, which moves us and makes parents, siblings, and loved ones what they are;
in the name of sages and great religious leaders, who sacrificed their lives to hasten the coming of peace and justice
--let us renew our resolution--sincerely, to be *real family* to each other, regardless of any kind of bar that estranges one from another.
In this sacred resolution may we be strengthened, knowing that we are one family, that one spirit, the spirit of love, unites us, and may we endeavor for a more peaceful and joyful life.
Amen.

Hymn #1064 "Blue Boat Home"

Closing Words

In a moment, the choir and I will lead you in our recessional, as we move outside to the front steps for our congregational photo.
You'll find the words in the insert in your OOS.

We'll begin the singing and you can join in - the words are in your OOS;
it's a zipper song, where one word changes with each verse - you'll pick it up quickly.
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Listen, listen, listen to my heart's song…

My dear, dear, beloved friends, may you leave this place with your heart filled with all that we have shared today, and take all that love and connection out into the world to be a blessing to all those you meet. And may you, in turn, be blessed.
Amen.

Choral Response "Where You Go", Shoshana Jedwab