

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fort Myers
Order of Worship
March 2, 2025

*** Please rise in body or spirit*

Gathering Music

To include *Rise Up O Flame* UUCFM Musicians/Choir

Welcome

Lesley Peterson

Call to Worship

On "The Prophet" by Khalil Gibran

Lesley Peterson

Khalil Gibran's *The Prophet* (1923) is a philosophical and poetic work that explores themes of love, life, and the human experience through the wisdom of a central figure, Almustafa. This titular prophet has spent **twelve years** in the city of Orphalese, sharing his wisdom with its people. As the story begins, his long-awaited ship has arrived to take him back to his homeland. Before he departs, the townspeople gather and ask him to share his insights one last time. Each chapter of the book is a response to their questions about various aspects of human existence. The book is structured as a series of poetic essays, each addressing different aspects of life, such as love, marriage, work, sorrow, joy, freedom, and death. In the opening section, a seer asks Almustafa: "prophet of god, in quest of the uttermost, long have you searched distances for your far ship." What is this "far ship," and what significance does it have for our own lives?

The people of Orphalese recognize Almustafa as a "**Prophet of God**" who has been on a spiritual journey "**in quest of the uttermost**"—seeking ultimate truth and understanding. His "**far ship**" symbolizes his impending departure, but also metaphorically represents fulfillment, destiny, or even death. The entire book revolves around the idea of **letting go, wisdom**

gained through experience, and the cycle of life. Almustafa's departure symbolizes both an ending and a new beginning—just as in life, relationships, and spiritual journeys, there is always movement and transformation. Indeed, *The Prophet* is not tied to a single religion but rather offers a universal and spiritual perspective on life.

And now, let us open our minds and hearts to think upon these perspectives, asking our own questions about various metaphorical “ships,” all tied to the theme of building community, and consider how they may provide guidance through the waters of our own lives. In this sacred time and place, let us set our minds upon the sea of knowledge, and join our hearts upon the tides of compassion, as we come together to worship.

****Chalice Lighting** “Across the Distance” - Laura Thompson
Lesley Peterson

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting/across-distance>

****Covenant** by James Vila Blake

Love is the spirit of this congregation and service its law. This is our great covenant: To dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, and to help one another.

****Opening Hymn #360 - Here We Have Gathered**

A Story for All Ages *Two Baby Scones and Their Happy Place*
Arthur L. Jones

Centering *Here in This Space We Are Gathered - Maureen Killoran*
Lesley Peterson

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/154589.shtml>

Stones of Intention
Final Stone

Lesley Peterson

Meditative Hymn #1031 - May I Be Filled With Loving Kindness

Sermon “Living Extraordinarily Within Community via ‘The Ships’”

Arthur L. Jones

Offering

Lesley Peterson

Offertory/Anthem

Times and Seasons UUCFM Choir

****Words of Gratitude**

By the work of our hands, and the work of our hearts, our love is made real. May we be grateful for all that is given, and grateful for all that is shared.

****Extinguishing the Chalice** by Elizabeth Selle Jones

We extinguish this flame, but not the light of truth, the warmth of community or the fire of commitment. These we carry in our hearts until we are together again.

**** Closing Hymn #1064 - Blue Boat Home**

Closing Words

Farewell Words

Postlude