



Our spiritual practice for May is **Awakening Curiosity**.

*"Great Doubt, Great Awakening. Little Doubt, Little Awakening. No Doubt, Fast Asleep."*

~Zen maxim

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**Sunday, May 17th, 2026**

**"The Future of Church"**

with Rev. Mary Gear

The media says that religion is in decline and young people are not interested in church. What is the future of faith communities like OUUC?

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At OUUC, masks are welcome and optional. Please join us online if you don't feel well.

Kindly put your cell phones into Airplane Mode to help us ensure a meaningful experience for all in attendance, onsite and online.

Hearing assistance devices are available in the sanctuary at the tech desk.

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**Prelude**

*Troy Fisher (he/him)*

**Morning Song**

*Congregation*

**Hymn #1020 "Woyaya"**

Words & music: Loughy Amoa, Solomon Amarfio,  
Rober M. Bailey, Toy Dedeau, Francis T. Osei, Whendell  
K. Richardson and Mac Tontoh  
Transcribed from Ysaye M. Barnwell, arr. Jeannie  
Gagne

We are going,  
heaven knows where we are going,  
but we know within.

And we will get there,  
heaven knows how we will get there,  
but we know we will.  
It will be hard, we know,  
and the road will be muddy and rough,  
but we'll get there,  
heaven knows how we will get there,  
but we know we will.  
Woyaya, Woyaya,  
Woyaya, Woyaya,

We are going,  
heaven knows where we are going,  
but we know within.  
And we will get there,  
heaven knows how we will get there,  
but we know we will.  
Woyaya, Woyaya,  
Woyaya, Woyaya,  
Woyaya yiyay, Woyaya yiyay  
Woyaya yiyay, Woyaya yiyay  
Ya!

**Welcome**

*Curtis Tanner (he/him)*

**Chalice Lighting**

*Curtis Tanner*

“Welcome to this Community of Seekers”

Words of Alexis Engelbrecht

**Opening Words**

*Rev. Mary Gear*

“The Church Has Left the Building” by

*(she/her)*

Rev. Margaret Weis

**Opening Hymn**

*Congregation*

“As We Carry this Flame Forward”

Words: Wesley King / Music: attr. William Moore

As we carry this flame forward, we hold true to  
what we know.

As we carry this flame forward, we leave space  
for us to grow.

This flame represents a place where all are  
valued, all belong.

With this flame we speak to power, with this  
flame, we join in song.

As we carry this flame forward, hand in hand,  
we heed the call

to do justice, kindness, mercy, equity, and  
peace to all.

This flame represents a people found in every  
faith and creed.

People who commit to serving all their  
neighbors, and their needs.

As we carry this flame forward, it goes with us  
as a light.

As we carry this flame toward a new world, our  
future's bright.

This flame represents a promise, one we make  
with the Divine.

A new world we are creating, we can make  
tomorrow shine!

### **Story for All**

*Theodore Parker: Outcast Hero* By Helen Lutton Cohen

*Rev. Sara Lewis (she/her)*

### **Musical Interlude**

*Troy Fisher*

### **Share the Plate Offering**

*Curtis Tanner*

### **Offertory**

“Open my Eyes, That I May See”

Arranged by Joel Raney

*Troy Fisher*

### **Ritual of Sharing from the Heart**

*Rev. Mary Gear*

**Prayerful Practice**

*Rev. Mary Gear*

**Musical Response**

*Congregation*

**Hymn #123 “Spirit of Life”**

Words & music: Carolyn McDade, harmony by Grace Lewis-McLaren

Spirit of Life, come unto me.  
Sing in my heart all the stirrings of  
compassion.  
Blow in the wind, rise in the sea;  
move in the hand, giving life the shape of  
justice.  
Roots hold me close; wings set me free;  
Spirit of Life, come to me, come to me.

**Reading 1**

*Curtis Tanner*

Excerpt from *Separation of Church and Hate*  
by John Fugelsang

**Part 1: The Church Now**

*Rev. Mary Gear*

**Musical Interlude**

*Troy Fisher*

**Reading 2**

*Curtis Tanner*

Blog post “Gen Z Is Deeply Religious. The Polls Just  
Can’t See It” by Liz Bucar

**Part 2: The Future of Church**

*Rev. Mary Gear*

**Closing Hymn**

*Congregation*

**Hymn #1028 “The Fire of Commitment”**

Words: Mary Katherine Morn and Jason Shelton  
Music: Jason Shelton

From the light of days remembered burns a  
beacon bright and clear  
Guiding hands and hearts and spirits Into faith  
set free from fear.

Chorus:

When the fire of commitment sets our mind  
and soul a blaze  
When our hunger and our passion meet to call  
us on our way  
When we live with deep assurance of the flame  
that burns within,  
Then our promise finds fulfillment and our  
future can begin.

From the stories of our living rings a song both  
brave and free,  
Calling pilgrims still to witness to the life of  
liberty.

Chorus:

When the fire of commitment sets our mind  
and soul a blaze  
When our hunger and our passion meet to call  
us on our way  
When we live with deep assurance of the flame  
that burns within,  
Then our promise finds fulfillment and our  
future can begin.

From the dreams of youthful vision comes a  
new, prophetic voice,  
Which demands a deeper justice built by our  
courageous choice

Chorus:

When the fire of commitment sets our mind  
and soul a blaze  
When our hunger and our passion meet to call  
us on our way  
When we live with deep assurance of the flame  
that burns within,

Then our promise finds fulfillment and our future can begin.

**Closing Words & Extinguishing the Chalice**

*Rev. Mary Gear*

“The Purpose of This Community is to Help Its People Grow” words of Rev. Erik Walker Wikstrom

**Postlude**

*Troy Fisher*

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**Reflection Questions:**

1. What do you think is the future of church?
  2. What do you think is permanent and transient in church?
  3. How do you experience church now?
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**Today’s After-Service Forum (12:15 pm, onsite and online):**

**General Assembly & UUA Denominational Affairs with Rev. Nancy Reid-McKee & Rev. Linda Hart**

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**Next Sunday, May 24th, 2026, at 9 am (onsite only) & 10:45 am (online & onsite):**

**“Question Box Service” with Rev. Mary Gear**

In a service crafted by the congregation, Rev. Mary addresses your theological questions. Send your questions to Rev. Mary at [minister@ouuc.org](mailto:minister@ouuc.org)

**After-Service Forum on May 24th, at 12:15 pm (onsite & online):**

There will be no After-Service Forum — Happy Memorial Day!

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**Share the Plate Offering:** Our Share the Plate organization for May and June is Enterprise for Equity:

Enterprise for Equity helps people with low incomes to start or strengthen small businesses. They offer intensive training, expert coaching and consultation, a supportive community of entrepreneurs, and access to credit. Enterprise for Equity believes that entrepreneurship can be a pathway out of poverty, a tool for economic justice, and a vehicle for sustainable, community-rooted prosperity.

If you write a check, please note "PLEDGE" if it is a pledge payment. All other donations in the basket will benefit the Share the Plate program.

- Checks can be mailed to: 2306 East End St NW, Olympia, WA 98502
  - Donate online at: <https://onrealm.org/OUUC/give/offering>
  - Donate by text: Text "OUUC offering" to 73256 to give using your mobile device. Messages and data rates may apply. Message frequency varies. Text HELP to 73256 for help. Text STOP to 73256 to cancel
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**Thanks to everyone who participated in the OUUC auction last night.** And it's not over! The OUUC online auction is still open until 5 pm today! Check out and bid on the many items here. Let's continue to Lead with Love and keep the bidding going—together!

**Are you somewhere between 18 and roughly 50?** Want to get to know some UU peers over lunch? Our Generation XYZ group meets today at 12:15 in the classroom wing. Join us for food and fellowship!

**Next Sunday is a Question Box service** in which Rev. Mary explores our theological questions. Rev. Mary welcomes questions in advance, so you can send them to her at [minister@ouuc.org](mailto:minister@ouuc.org). You can also submit questions in the services next Sunday. What's on your mind as we practice awakening curiosity this month?

**Find more details on these and other announcements in the Weekly Update:** <https://www.ouuc.org/weekly-update/>