



I don't know exactly what a prayer is. I do know how to pay attention....how to kneel down in the grass, how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields..."

~ Mary Oliver, *"The Summer Day"*

Sunday, August 30th, 2026
"Blessings of the Backpacks"

with Rev. Mary and Rev. Sara

As we begin a new school year, we bless the backpacks for those of all ages who attend school, and we reflect on what we all carry in our backpacks. How do we pack for these times?

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.

Prelude

Troy Fisher (he/him)

Morning Song

Congregation

"Joy in the Morning"

Words & music: Adam Podd

We'll find joy in the mornin'
Joy in the mornin'
Joy in the mornin'
in the mornin' we'll find joy.

We find hope in our children
Hope in our children
Hope in our children
In our children we find hope

We find strength in each other
Strength in each other
Strength in each other
In each other, we find strength

There is love all around us
Love all around us
Love all around us
All around us there is love.

Welcome

Anne Radford(she/her)

Chalice Lighting

Anne Radford

“A Symbol of Learning and Love”
words of Elizabeth Harding

Opening Words

Rev. Mary Gear

“A Renewed Hope for This World”
by Nathan Ryan

(she/her)

Opening Hymn

Congregation

Hymn #1068 “Rising Green”

Words & music: Carolyn McDade, arr. Jim Scott

My blood doth rise in the roots of yon oak, her
sap doth run in my veins.
Boundless my soul like the open sky where the
stars forever have lain.
Where the stars, where the stars, where the stars
forever have lain.

My hands hold the weavings of time without
end, my sight as deep as the sea.
Beating, my heart sounds the measures of old,
that of love's eternity.
That of love, that of love, that of love's eternity.

I feel the tides as they answer the moon, rushing
on a far distant sand.
Winging my song is the wind of my breast and
my love blows over the land.
And my love, and my love, and my love blows
over the land.

My foot carries days of the old into new, our
dreaming shows us the way.
Wondrous our faith settles deep in the earth,
rising green to bring a new day.
Rising green, rising green, rising green to bring
a new day.

Ritual of Transition: Blessing of the Backpacks

*Rev. Sara Lewis
(she/her) & Rev. Mary*

Musical Interlude

Troy Fisher

Share the Plate Offering

Anne Radford

Offertory

Troy Fisher

Ritual of Sharing from the Heart

Rev. Mary Gear

Prayerful Practice

Rev. Mary Gear

Musical Response

Congregation

"The Web of Life"

Words & music: Sara Ruth Davis

Sharing our joy together.
Bearing our grief together.
The web of life holds us in this truth;
we are not alone.

Striving for change together.
Healing our pain together.
The web of life holds us in this truth;
we are not alone.

Journeying on together.
Learning to love together.
The web of life holds us in this truth;
we are not alone.

Reading 1

Anne Radford

"But What If?" by Rev. Sara Lewis

Part 1: The Ten Essentials

Rev. Sara Lewis

Musical Interlude

Troy Fisher

Reading 2

Anne Radford

"Got Room for Love?" by Rev. Erika Hewitt

Part 2: Unpacking and Repacking

Rev. Mary Gear

Closing Hymn

Congregation

Hymn #118 "This Little Light of Mine"

Words & music: African American spiritual, harmony by
Horace Clarence Boyer

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Ev'rywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine...
Building up a world, I'm gonna let it shine...

Closing Words & Extinguishing the Chalice
“Here and Beyond These Walls” by Craig Rowland

Rev. Mary Gear

Postlude

Troy Fisher

Reflection Questions:

1. What’s in YOUR backpack?
 2. Is there anything you’d like to unpack?
 3. Anything you’d like to add?
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There is no after service forum today, forums will return on September 20th.

Next Sunday, September 6th, 2026, at 9 am (onsite only) & 10:45 am (online & onsite):

“Dinner Table Theology” with Rev. Nancy Reid-McKee

On this Labor Day weekend, we celebrate how the labor movement and unions have worked to make “room at the table” for everyone.

Share the Plate Offering: Our Share the Plate organization for July and August is Puget Sound Estuarium:

OUUC member Diana Larsen-Mills and her husband Ken Guza founded Puget Sound Estuarium in 2007. The Estuarium focuses on environmental learning, stewardship, and community engagement. Its science-based programs serve learners from pre-kindergarten through adulthood, helping people understand and protect the waters, shorelines, species, and estuaries of the South Sound. The “Share the Plate” proceeds will enhance the Estuarium’s scholarship fund so that these learning opportunities will be accessible to all.

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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At noon today OUUC is gathering for our annual picnic, this year at Yauger Park. This is a potluck picnic with games and fun for all ages, everyone is invited so please feel free to join us there at noon.

The OUUC Choir will begin singing together again on Wednesday, September 9th here in the sanctuary. If you have been thinking about joining the choir, we would love to have you raise your voice together with ours. If you have any questions please talk to our Music Director Troy after the service.

Sunday, September 13th, is our annual water communion ritual as we gather again to begin a new congregational year. **Bring a bit of water** from wherever you have been this summer, including your own kitchen. We combine our water into one bowl as we combine ourselves into one community.

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