

## **Liturgical Year Draft**

A Work in Perpetual Progress by the Rev. Susan M. Smith

### **Theme: Celebrating Our Unitarian Universalist Heritage (The Ancestors)**

Source: “Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love.”

Approx. Dates: Mid-August through Homecoming Sunday including Labor Day

Content: Services about UU heritage suitable for newcomers including the heritage of the local congregation culminating in Homecoming Sunday which includes an ingathering of new members tying together newcomers with the existing and historic congregation and movement

### **Theme: The Long Search (The Pilgrim)**

Principle: “The free and responsible search for truth and meaning.”

Approx. Dates: Sunday after Homecoming through Columbus Day including Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur

Content: Services and ceremonies that bring the congregation together in reconciliation and renew their charge to be engaged in this search that is the core of UU teachings and praxis

### **Theme: A Voice, A Vote and A Vocation (The Citizen)**

Principle: “The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.”

Approx. Dates: Sunday after Indigenous Peoples (Columbus) Day through Election Day

Content: Reflections on the relationship of church and state, the role of the church and its members in society, the meaning of democratic process in covenantal societies

### **Theme: Giving and Thanksgiving (The Cosmos)**

Source: “Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythm of nature.”

Approx. Dates: Sunday after Election Day through Thanksgiving (includes annual pledge drive), picks up themes of Halloween and All Souls

Content: Celebration of harvest and abundance and of the cyclical nature of life on earth, grounding in the natural order, appreciation for our blessings and response through generosity to others

**Theme: Season of Light (The Wise Ones)**

Sources: “Wisdom from the world’s religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life.” and “Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God’s love by loving our neighbors as ourselves.”

Approx. Dates: After Thanksgiving through New Year’s Day includes Hannukah, Yule, Advent, Christmas, Kwanzaa and New Year (sometimes Ramadan)

Content: Celebrations of the world’s major religions that with very diverse purposes use lamps, candles, fire, or fireworks to express insight, light that overcomes “shadow” (not “darkness”)

**Theme: Growing in Spirit (The Seeker)**

Principle: “Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations.”

Approx. Dates: New Year’s to last of January including Martin Luther King’s birthday

Content: An in-depth examination of some aspect of theology such as God, prayer, salvation or ethics suitable for seekers and those wanting to go deeper

**Theme: Season of Nonviolence (The Peacemaker)**

Principle: “The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.”

Approx. Dates: The month of February coinciding with the first half of Nobel Laureates’ Season of Nonviolence and including Secret Friends/Valentines Day, may include Ash Wednesday

Content: The state of nonviolence and/or the causes and effects of violence from individual to group to worldwide scope, the nature of peace within the church community and larger society

**Theme: Loving One Another (The Friend)**

Principle: “Justice, equity and compassion in human relations.”

Approx. Dates: First of March through April 4 (ends Season of Nonviolence), includes equinox, may include Easter and Passover

Content: Focus on human relationships and the personal experiences of peace, celebrations of liberation and justice making

**Theme: Web of Life (The Earthling)**

Principle: “Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are part.”

Approx. Dates: April including Earth Day and possibly Easter and Passover

Content: Environmentalism, deep ecology, earth-based spirituality, the renewal of life in spring

**Theme: Witnesses of Wonders (The Mind)**

Source: "Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit."

Approx. Dates: The month of May prior to Memorial Day, includes Mother's Day

Content: Focus on some particular aspect of contemporary science and its application to religious developments and/or ethics, the science-based story of creation

**Theme: This Light of Mine (The Individual)**

Principle: "The inherent worth and dignity of every person."

Approx. Dates: Memorial Day through Fourth of July including summer solstice and Father's Day

Content: The life and rights of the individual, the basis for inherent worth and dignity, the power of one, the individual in society

**Theme: Idle and Blessed (The Senses)**

Source: "Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life."

Approx. Dates: The Sunday after Fourth of July through mid-August

Content: Engagement of the senses in worship including an outdoor service, the heritage of the Transcendentalists, the importance of rest and reflection in a balanced life, meditation