

Mount Vernon Unitarian Church Guide for Planning a Sunday Service

Rev February 20, 2013

This guide is intended to help guest speakers and Worship Coordinators plan for Sunday services when the Minister is not in the pulpit. The Minister conducts most services each year, and works closely with the Worship, Arts and Music Committee, which assumes responsibility for services on other Sundays. These usually are one service each month during the regular church year and approximately eight services each summer.

Advance Planning

For each service not conducted by the Minister, the Worship Committee appoints a Worship Coordinator, who attempts to ensure that all aspects of the service are appropriate and of high quality. The Worship Coordinator assists the speaker in doing the necessary advance planning. The two parties agree between themselves which aspects of the planning and of the service itself each person will do.

Advance Information

Titles and brief descriptions of services to be offered in the coming month are published in the monthly church newsletter, *The Windmill*, and on the church website. ***The Minister and the chair of the Worship Committee provide this information to the newsletter editor.*** If you are scheduled to present a service, you will be asked to provide the information for your service to the Worship Committee no later than the 12th of the month before the month of your service.

Order of Service

The Worship Coordinator or Guest Minister for the service (decide between yourselves who will do this) is expected to create the draft Order of Service, except for information about music, which is provided by the Music Director. ***The Worship Coordinator or Guest Minister is responsible for sending the draft Order of Service – minus the music information - by email to the Order of Service volunteer (usually Lynne Kennedy) at orderofservice@mvuc.org by 5 p.m. of the Tuesday preceding the Sunday service.*** In the next day or so, the volunteer will send a draft of the completed OS for final editing.

Quotation for Cover of OS. You are asked to provide a very brief quotation relevant to the topic for the cover of the Order of Service, along with the name of the author. See copies of recent orders of service for examples.

TO PLAN A SERVICE

A checklist

[]1. **Order of Service Templates.** Get copies of the Orders of Service for recent services comparable to the one you are planning. You can get a paper copy from the church or request an e-copy from the Worship Committee (worship@mvuc.org.)

During the regular church year, the first service is designed to encourage contemplation with meditations and periods of silence. The second service has more music and the choir usually sings. Services have an expected order with ingathering music, welcome and announcements, an initial meditation (first service) or introit (second service), chalice lighting and opening words, an opening hymn, the covenant of MVUC, and a story for all ages.

[]2. **Welcome and Announcements.** Determine who will read the Welcome. At services conducted by the minister, the opening welcome is usually given by a Worship Assistant. When there is a Worship Coordinator, he or she usually performs the functions of the Assistant as well as additional parts of the service. The current script for the Welcome segment is available from the Worship Committee and is on the website.

[]3. **Hymns.** Select which hymns best emphasize the theme of your service. Most services have three hymns: one early in the service, one in the middle, and one near the end. If you are new to service planning, it is best to use the standard order of service as a model and to adapt the service when you have more experience. However, the number of hymns can be altered to suit the needs of the service. A service that has extra music, or a long anthem, may have only one or two hymns. The choice of hymns should be reviewed with the Music Director in order to avoid overuse of favorite hymns, but the Music Director will suggest appropriate hymns only if requested. Factors to be considered when choosing the hymns include style (for example, the final hymn is often lively to convey a sense of active commitment), familiarity to the congregation, and message. The “Topical Index of Hymns” at the back of *Singing the Living Tradition* is useful in selecting hymns on the topic of the service.

[]4. **Other Music.** Contact the Music Director, Mark Zimmerman, music@mvuc.org several weeks before the service to review your choice of hymns and discuss the theme of your service so the Music Director can choose music to be performed by the choir, the pianist, and any guest musicians. This usually includes Ingathering Music before the service begins, an Offertory, and Postlude when the service ends, and may include one or more periods of Musical Reflection.

First Service: On Sundays when there are two services, the first service is expected to be more contemplative. The Music Director can provide music for reflection during a meditation. If you need help in providing meditations or otherwise managing the contemplative aspect of the service, you can find resources on the UUA website <http://www.uua.org/worship/words/index.php>.

Second Service: On most Sundays during the regular church year, the choir sings during the second service. The Music Director will provide information about the songs the choir is to sing. These are usually an Introit to open the service and an Anthem after *For All Ages*.

[]5. **Children’s Story “For All Ages.”** During the regular church year, the *For All Ages* part of the service is most often presented by the Director of Lifespan Spiritual Growth (DLSG), but sometimes she arranges for someone else to present it. Contact her to coordinate the story with your theme at DLSG@mvuc.org. The DLSG will provide the title of the segment and the name of the presenter for the Order of Service. You or the guest speaker may wish to present the For All Ages segment yourself. If so, please coordinate your plans with the DSLG and include the title of the segment and the name of the presenter in the information you provide for the Order of Service.

[]6. **Readings.** Most services include a reading relevant to the sermon topic. If you have a reading, provide the title and author for the Order of Service. You may wish to use a responsive reading from the hymnal. Although a reading is not essential, most services have at least one reading in addition to the opening words and the closing words.

[]7. **Other Elements.** Other elements of the service include Opening Words and Chalice Lighting, words to introduce the Offering, and the call for Prayer and Meditation. Examples of what to say at these times can be found in the hymnal, in the “transition words” at the end of this document, or on the UUA website, <http://www.uua.org/worship/words/index.php>. Numerous other resources for planning a service can be found on the Joseph Priestley District website, <http://jpdoua.org/resource-library>.

Sample Transition Words for a Sunday Service

Hymn

Please stand as you're able in body and spirit to sing ...

Covenant

I invite you to bring your voices together to recite our covenant found in the back of the hymnal and within your hearts.

After "For All Ages"

Please join in singing the words printed in your order of service as our children go to their classes.

Responsive Reading

Please open your hymnals to responsive reading # XX and read the responses shown in italics.

Meditation

I invite you to make yourself comfortable; remove things from your hands, relax, and take several long, slow deep breaths. Let the grace and beauty of our sanctuary bring peace to your mind and heart.

Offering

As the ushers come forward to accept the morning offering, I invite this gathered community to demonstrate your generosity in providing financial support for the mission of this church. If this is your first time with us this morning, please accept our hospitality and let the basket pass you by. If you have joys or sorrows in your life, you're welcome to come forward and light a candle at this time.

Prayer, Meditation and Silence

I invite you again to make yourself comfortable and be at peace with the world. This is a time for personal prayer, meditation and sacred silence. May love and compassion fill your heart.

Sung Response

Please remain seated while we bring our voices together in prayerful response.

Closing

Please remain standing and as we extinguish the chalice, recite the communal words found are in your order of service.

Benediction

Now please take the hand or shoulder of the person closest to you.