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Unitarians Face A New Age Rev. Shawn Gauthier

CUC National Service Resources: May 2026

Thank you for engaging with these **CUC National Service Resources**, for use with your congregation. You will find the following info in this package:

- **Service Title & Description**
- **Speaker Bio: Reverend Shawn Gauthier**
- **Video of the Sermon: Unitarians Face A New Age** (2 formats)
- **Sermon Transcript** (for ease of service preparation)
- **Service Resources:** readings, music, etc.
- **Report**

New Format Note: The Canadian Unitarian Council will not be hosting a May 2026 National Service Zoom gathering; these resources are for direct congregational use.

The sermon has been generously provided by Rev. Shawn Gauthier and the Vancouver Unitarians. This package provides the essential elements for you to create your own style of live service, in your own setting, similar to [CUC Sharing Our Faith](#) resources.

You have told us that it's especially helpful to have service resources for 'the May long weekend'. You are welcome to offer this service any time in May 2026, or later.

The sermon is available in **two video formats**:

- A **Google video file** for you to download, then play (best quality) &
- A **YouTube link** that you simply click on to play (simplest option)

Google File VERSION: 📁 **Unitarians Face a New Age.mp4**
(download this video to your computer, then play, to prevent buffering issues)

YouTube VERSION: [Unitarians Face a New Age](#) video

Our profound thanks to Reverend Shawn Gauthier
for generously sharing his work with Canadian UUs.

Your [Congregational Life](#) Team:
Anne Barker & Nicoline Guerrier



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Service Title & Description: Unitarians Face A New Age

In the 1930s, our spiritual forebears bravely asked “whether the organised religious movement known as Unitarianism has any real function to perform in the modern world”. Come and hear their bold response, and Reverend Shawn Gauthier’s equally powerful invitations to us all.

This sermon was offered in October 2025 at the installation of Rev. Danie Webber in Hamilton, ON. This version was recorded in November 2025 at VanU.

Speaker Bio:

Rev. Shawn Gauthier is the Settled Minister at Vancouver Unitarians. Previously, he served for 16 years as the Minister at the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto. Rev. Shawn loves to travel, to take in theatre and classical music, and to explore alongside his husband Bob.

Video of the Sermon: (17:33 minutes total length)

Google File:  [Unitarians Face a New Age.mp4](#)

(download this video to your computer, then play, to prevent buffering issues)

YouTube: [Unitarians Face a New Age](#) (requires strong stable internet)



Sermon Transcript: [Transcript Unitarians-Face-a-New-Age Rev Shawn Gauthier.pdf](#)

Service Resources:

- Numbered items are from
 - Singing the Living Tradition (SLT) *and*
 - Singing the Journey (STJ)
- Strong themes in this service include: community, working together, sharing the load, reimagining, inclusion, and commitment.

Opening Words: *Rev Shawn opened the VanU service with these words*

We Gather In Reverence by Sofia Lyon Fahs #439 SLT

We gather in reverence before the wonder of life –
The wonder of this moment

The wonder of being together, so close yet so apart –
Each hidden in our own secret chamber,

Each listening, each trying to speak –
Yet none fully understanding, none fully understood.

We gather in reverence before all intangible things –
That eyes see not, nor ears can detect –

That hands can never touch,
That space cannot hold,
And time cannot measure.

Chalice Lighting:

by Dag Hammarskjöld #455 SLT

Each morning we must
hold out the chalice of our being
to receive, to carry, and give back.



Readings:

A Network of Mutuality by Martin Luther King, Jr. #584 SLT

We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality,
tied in a single garment of destiny.

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

There are some things in our social system to which all of us ought to be
maladjusted.

Hatred and bitterness can never cure the disease of fear, only love can do that.

We must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge,
aggression, and retaliation.

The foundation of such a method is love.

Before it is too late, we must narrow the gaping chasm
between our proclamations of peace and our lowly deeds
which precipitate and perpetuate war.

*One day we must come to see that peace is not
merely a distant goal that we seek
but a means by which we arrive at that goal.*

We must pursue peaceful ends through peaceful means.

We shall hew out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope.



Transcendental Etude by Adrienne Rich #665 SLT

No one ever told us we had to study our lives,

Make of our lives a study, as if learning natural history or music,

That we should behind with the simple exercises first and slowly go on trying the hard ones,

Practicing till strength and accuracy become one with the daring to leap into transcendence.

And in fact we can't live like that: we take on everything at once before we've even begun to read or mark time, we're forced to begin in the midst of the hardest movement,

The one already sounding as we are born.

Stand By This Faith by Olympia Brown #569 SLT

Stand by this faith. Work for it and sacrifice for it.

There is nothing in all the world so important as to be loyal to this faith which has placed before us the loftiest ideals,

Which has comforted us in sorrow, strengthened us for noble duty and made the world beautiful.

Do not demand immediate results but rejoice that we are worthy to be entrusted with this great message,

That you are strong enough to work for a great true principle without counting the cost.

Go on finding ever new applications of these truths and new enjoyments in their contemplation, always trusting in the one God which ever lives and loves.



Closing Words:

by Rev. Shawn Gauthier (*adapted from the sermon transcript*)

What if the muscle memory for doing and being community—
for being villagers who create and sustain the village—
is part of who we are,
and no small part
of what the world so desperately needs,
now and in the years to come?

Can we seize this moment to live into deepening integrity,
to live from our most heartfelt values, in ways that serve life
and will help to heal the torn and tattered strands
of the great web of life?

In these most consequential times,
may we all endeavour to be known as village people,
the people who take our place, in love and service,
around a beautifully and blessedly crowded table
that welcomes everyone who seeks to serve life
on this good green earth.

May we live our lives to make it so.

Chalice Extinguishing:

by Elizabeth Selle Jones SLT #456

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.



Music Suggestions:

Rise Up, O Flame #362 SLT

Just as Long as I Have Breath #6 SLT

Break Not the Circle #323 SLT

Rejoice In Love #380 SLT

Building A New Way #1017 STJ

Reflection Questions: *(for an inservice reflection, or conversation after)*

1. How does, or how might, your community strengthen a thriving culture of 'being a villager'?
2. In the 1936 Commission of Appraisal report, they state: "It should be sufficient to say that a religious value is something in which religious persons actually find value." Where do you - actually - find value?
3. What inspires or encourages you, as you reflect on today's message?

1936 Report: Unitarians Face A New Age

1936 Report of the Commission of Appraisal to the American Unitarian Association: Unitarians Face A New Age

 [1936 Commission Of Appraisal_unitarians_face_a_new_age.pdf](#)