

**Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fort Myers**  
**Order of Worship**  
**March 23, 2025**

*\*\* Please rise in body or spirit*

**Gathering Music**

**Welcome**     Leslie

Welcome to the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fort Myers where our mission is to Love, Serve and Grow.

**Pause**

To those on Zoom, welcome, we're glad you are here.

Welcome to you who are checking us out, may you find here what you seek.

Members and friends, welcome back.

To all participants in today's service: the musicians, the tech team, the welcome team and ushers, and Rev Sue your efforts are appreciated. Welcome.

Welcome with your anger, your fear, your brokenheartedness.

To those with hopes, with dreams, with determination, welcome.

Welcome to you who feel unseen, unheard, or outside the circle. Come in, you are welcome here.

We need one another. Welcome.

**Pause**

To our guests, we'd like to get to know you so please complete a Connection Card, found at the Welcome Table and take a yellow cup for your coffee after the service.

**Call to Worship** Poem by ee cummings Sue  
maggie and milly and molly and may  
went down to the beach (to play one day)  
and maggie discovered a shell that sang  
so sweetly she couldn't remember her troubles, and  
milly befriended a stranded star  
whose rays five languid fingers were;  
and molly was chased by a horrible thing  
which raced sideways while blowing bubbles:and  
may came home with a smooth round stone  
as small as a world and as large as alone.  
For whatever we lose (like a you or a me)  
it's always ourselves we find in the sea

**\*\*Chalice Lighting** Sue

**\*\*Covenant** by James Vila Blake Sue  
Love is the spirit of this congregation and service its law. This is our  
great covenant: To dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love,  
and to help one another.

**\*\*Opening Hymn** #146 Soon the Day Will Arrive Sue

**A Time for All Ages** *Building Cairns* Leslie

Stacking rocks, or building cairns is an ancient and timeless practice found in many cultures, used to mark

paths, burial sites, mountain summits, and other landmarks or sacred places.

The process of stacking stones requires patience, focus and perseverance, qualities which can help with goals and challenges.

Building cairns can be used to reach a sense of calm, grounding, inner peace or meditation.

Cairns can be used as an altar, where each rock can represent an intention of gratitude.

The act of carefully balancing stones can represent the **pursuit** of inner balance, harmony and stability in life.

Some people use the stacking process to focus their intentions or offer prayers, with each stone representing a specific thought or hope.

By interacting with the natural elements of stones, stacking can be seen as a way to connect to the earth and its energy.

You will find flat stones available on the floor and you are welcome to also use a stone from the bowls. I invite

everyone forward to build a miniature cairn, allowing the practice to move you in whatever spiritual way speaks to you. Please place your cairn where it will not be in the path where folks will be walking. We will build our cairns in silence to allow each builder the space to create in contemplation.

**After** There is both a permanence and an impermanence to cairns. Wind and floods as well as other natural events can cause a cairn to fall, but the stones the cairn is made of usually remain in their original form. It is considered impolite, dangerous or even illegal for anyone but the builder to destroy a cairn. These miniature cairns will need to be removed following the service, so if you would like to tear down your own cairn, please do so during the postlude.

If anyone decides to build a cairn during the remainder of the service, you may do so.

**Reflection** *The Woman Spirit Stone* Leslie

**Stones of Intention** Leslie

The power of a stone in the hand can be a tangible way to concentrate on our intentions, joys, sorrows and prayers.

By observing its attributes, its sparkles or cracks or striations, its smoothness or jagged edges, it may whisper an answer to whatever the moment stirs in us. I invite you forward as you warm the stone in your hand then place your stone in the bowls. I like to offer my loving support to this community by touching my stone to others. Whatever way you place your stone will bring a richness and value to the ritual. On Zoom, feel free to place a message in the chat box.

## **Special first or final stones**

### **Final Stone**

A final stone is placed for all that remains unspoken in our hearts. May our prayers be heard and our hearts be restored.

**Prayer and Meditation** Sue

**Reflective Hymn** #128 For All That Is Our Life (verses 1&2)

**Homily** Sue

**Offering** Leslie

Sometimes, especially during challenging times, we need a person or place that stands like a cornerstone, that we can trust to provide emotional

support, encouragement, comfort and positive influence, never swaying. UUCFM is such a place and our congregation are those people. For UUCFM to stand strong, it must be generously supported by our financial gifts. The UUA Disaster Fund also stands beside UU communities during hurricanes, floods, fires and other disasters.

Place UUCFM in the memo line of your check or on an envelope. If you don't indicate UUCFM, your gift will go to the UUA Disaster Fund.

Please be as generous as possible as the choir sings *Standing Stone* by Melanie DeMore.

**Offertory/Anthem**      *Standing Stone* UUCFM Choir

**\*\*Words of Gratitude Sue**

By the work of our hands, and the work of our hearts, our love is made real. May we be grateful for all that is given, and grateful for all that is shared.

**\*\*Extinguishing the Chalice** by Elizabeth Selle Jones Sue

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.

**\*\*Hymn #1021 Lean on Me** Sue

**Closing Words** Rev. Sue

**Farewell Words**

I'm so grateful you joined us today. After the Worship Team exits the sanctuary, please **Greet your neighbor** then join others in Hobart Hall for refreshments and conversation. On Zoom, please stay on for connection and

conversation with each other. We look forward to seeing you again next Sunday!

**Postlude**