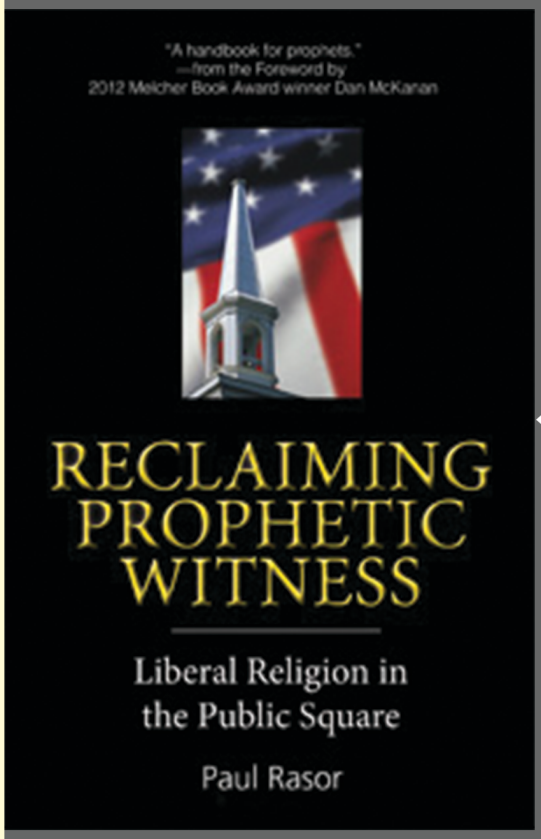
Common Read 2015



Discussion Guide

CONTENTS

1 x 90 minute session

3 x 90 minute sessions

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION

Introduction

Reclaiming Prophetic Witness by Paul Rasor (Skinner House Books, 2012) has been selected as the 2014-15 Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) Common Read. It points out a growing misconception that conservative Christianity is the only valid religious voice in our national social policy. The book includes insights from our liberal religious theological heritage that have bearing for us today, and calls us to prophetic, faith-based justice work.

Rasor explores the forces and tensions that have weakened our prophetic witness in the last quarter century. He also makes a strong case for the necessity of a liberal religious presence in the public square to complement and strengthen secular voices raised for social justice. *Reclaiming Prophetic Witness* offers new ways to think about how to remain culturally engaged and yet able to speak and act for justice from a faith-based position.

In addition to offering a framework for exploring and testing Rasor's ideas, this discussion guide suggests books and resources to help apply his insights to specific social justice issues—which may include ones nearest to your heart or to your congregation's justice ministry. As the *Reclaiming Prophetic Witness* Common Read prompts you to talk in the public square about your faith commitments, the issues about which you witness will depend on your own context and callings. We hope you will join Unitarian Universalists from all over in sharing this Common Read and in reclaiming the practice of prophetic witness.

The discussion guide is flexible. Adapt it to congregational, cluster, district or regional programming for adults of all ages and life stages, for campus groups or young adult groups, for youth groups, or for cross-generational groups. Two formats are offered:

- A single, 90-minute session
    - Can be expanded for a two-hour session
    - Can be offered in two parts to accommodate a 45-minute Sunday forum format
- Three, 90-minute sessions
    - Can each be extended to a two hour session by lengthening the amount of time for conversation, discussion, and sharing

Single Session

Goals

- Provide a framework for readers to respond to *Reclaiming Prophetic Witness* and to test Rasor's ideas against personal experience
- Invite readers to share their reactions, reflections, and stories in a safe and trusting community
- Provide an opportunity for readers to apply Rasor's ideas to a social justice issue or challenge that is present in their own communities and context.

Materials

- Chalice, candle and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation

- Write these covenant points on newsprint, but do not post:
    - We agree to speak from our own experiences and perspectives.
    - We agree to listen respectfully to the experiences and perspectives of other people.
    - We agree to pay attention to the group process, making sure that everyone has the opportunity to speak and to listen.
    - We agree to use this time as an opportunity for ethical, religious, and spiritual discernment, rather than as a time to debate politics or public policy.
- Write these reflection and sharing questions on newsprint, and post:
    - What from your own experience came to mind as you read *Reclaiming Prophetic Witness*?
    - What personal experience do you have of advocating for justice? Critiquing society?
    - On which values has your justice advocacy rested? Are they secular or religious—or both?

    - How might you do things differently going forward based on insights from the book?

- Title a piece of newsprint, “Core Theological Principles of Religious Liberals.” Write this list, but do not post:
    - The fundamental unity and interdependence of all existence
    - The transforming power of love
    - The inherent worth and dignity of all persons
    - Human freedom
    - Rejection of moral dualism (rejecting the sharp separation of good and evil, refusing to assign individuals and nations to one category or the other)
    - Social justice- enable all to live with dignity and respect
    - Cooperative power- persuasion over coercion
    - Religious freedom
    - Theological openness

Description

Chalice Lighting/Opening Reading (5 minutes)

Light the chalice and share these words, adapted from an essay by the Rev. Meg Riley, from *A People So Bold* (Skinner House, 2009); used with permission.

> *Our congregations [and faith communities] must be places where hope is understood as an existential choice, cultivated as a spiritual discipline, and offered through concrete forms of action. Prophetic congregations [and faith communities] put forward multiple opportunities for existential hope to emerge from joint action – people bearing together what we cannot bear alone. Often this begins with simply witnessing what seems awful – witnessing it with others instead of alone at the computer. It begins with watching what gives life and what drains life, and naming it in community. Then, as the Hebrew scriptures tell us in Deuteronomy 30:19, it requires choosing: “I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life.”…*

> *Prophetic UU congregations are grounded in centuries-old theologies, which teach that we have the power and responsibility to cocreate what is holy. They are communities where we and others are deeply valued and mutually known. Prophetic congregations [and communities] refuse to accept brokenness as a final answer, but work from realistic hope, choosing life, choosing to be a blessing.*

Creating a Covenant (5 minutes)

Post the covenant points you have written on newsprint. Propose them as guidelines. Ask if any points need to be clarified, added, or amended. Note changes on newsprint. When the covenant is complete, invite participants to voice or signal agreement.

Introductions and Sharing Stories (15 minutes)

Tell participants you will invite each person to introduce themselves and to relate a personal experience with critiquing society and advocating for justice. Call attention to the newsprint you have posted with reflection and sharing questions. Read aloud the questions you have posted, explaining that these questions may help them find their story. Allow silence for a minute or two for people to find their words. Then, invite each person in turn to speak briefly uninterrupted, asking them to share only a single story. Mention that for this conversation and any others, each person reserves the right to pass.

Discussion (20 minutes)

Read this excerpt from *Reclaiming Prophetic Witness* (p. 32-33):

> *Religious liberals today may also be reluctant to speak religiously in public contexts because they don't want to seem "too religious." Over the past quarter century, the most visible and vocal religious groups in the United States have been those of the religious right. Many of these groups aggressively link conservative or fundamentalist theologies to conservative political agendas that liberals rightly perceive as creating threats to basic liberties, including religious liberty. Religious liberals can all too easily buy into the widespread but erroneous assumption that if you're religious, you must be conservative. Religious liberals*

understandably want to avoid being perceived as conservative, so they keep quiet about their faith…

…[In addition, religious liberals] are heirs of the philosophical tradition that separates religion and politics. Some people think that this tradition requires not only the institutional separation of church and state but also a kind of intellectual separation of religious ideas and political deliberation…The danger is that delegitimizing public religious discourse encourages religious liberals to disguise their religious commitments and rationalizes their reluctance to speak publicly using religious language, thus undermining both clarity and the conviction of their message, and in turn weakening the liberal prophetic voice.

Lead a discussion, asking:

- How well does Rasor's assessment match with your own experience?
- Have your concerns about the faith-based arguments advanced by religious conservatives led you to shy away from making your own faith-based arguments?
- What concerns do you have (if any) about offering religious arguments in the public square?
- How might it change your speaking, writing, and witnessing on public issues if you included both faith-based reasons and democratic principles reasons for your positions?

(Optional break for 45 minute forums. If you are doing this in two sessions, begin the second session with a summary of the discussion from the first.)

Discussion (25 minutes)

Post the list of core theological principles of most religious liberals. Lead a discussion, asking, "Do you agree with Rasor's list? Are your Unitarian Universalist religious values reflected in this list?" Allow about 10 minutes for this part of the discussion.

Then say, "Rasor points out that there are many points of agreement between the core theological principles of religious liberals and the values that underlie democratic political structures. He cautions against religious identity becoming 'so thin that liberal

religion becomes indistinguishable from liberal politics.'" Lead a discussion using these questions:

- How are democratic values (small d) the same as religious liberal values? How do they differ?
- How do we maintain a prophetic stance based on religious values without becoming too closely identified with political candidates or parties? Why is it important to do so?

Discussion (15 minutes)

Invite participants to consider one or more justice issues of importance to their congregation. How can they reclaim prophetic witness in their work on that issue, naming faith-based values as well as political values in their public reason-giving? Consider making a commitment to read a second book particular to the chosen issue and discuss together how to frame faith-based reasons to support justice advocacy. Here are some suggestions, drawn from the excellent selection of nominees for the 2014-2015 UUA Common Read:

Global Warming and Climate Change

Early Spring: An Ecologist and Her Children Awake to a Warming World by Amy Seidl (Beacon Press, 2009)

Voting Rights and Civil Rights

The Selma Awakening: How the Civil Rights Movement Tested and Changed Unitarian Universalism by Mark Morrison-Reed (Skinner House, 2014)

Gather at the Table: The Healing Journey of a Daughter of Slavery and a Son of the Slave Trade by Thomas Norman DeWolf and Sharon Leslie Morgan (Beacon Press, 2013)

Immigration Justice

Hunting Season: Immigration and Murder in an All-American Town by Mirta Ojito (Beacon Press, 2013)

Faith-based Justice Advocacy Partnerships

Not For Ourselves Alone: Theological Essays on Relationship by Burton D. Carley and Laurel Hallman (Skinner House, 2014)

Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in Without Going Crazy by Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone (New World Library, 2012)

How might faith-based prophetic witness about the issue become part of your worship and education as well as your witness in the public square? Which individuals and groups are key to strengthening your witness for justice? Ask individual participants to commit to specific actions and timelines to bring others into the conversation and/or to plan and publicize a second book reading and discussion to help frame your prophetic witness in terms of religious commitments and values.

Closing (5 minutes)

Share this passage from *Reclaiming Prophetic Witness* (p. 51-52):

> *At a minimum, religious liberals need to be clearer and more intentional about the religious dimensions of our convictions. We can look at our complex tangle of motivations and try to discern how our religious commitments fit. We can say to ourselves, "Yes, my commitment to social justice is based at least partly on my religious convictions," and then try to express them in ways that address specific situations.*
>
> *…When we speak publicly, we can be intentional about saying that there are religious reasons, and that they matter.*

Extinguish the chalice.

Three Sessions

Goals

- Provide a framework for readers to respond to *Reclaiming Prophetic Witness* and to test Rasor's ideas against personal experience
- Invite readers to share their reactions, reflections, and stories in a safe and trusting community
- Explore ways in which the framework presented in the book can strengthen the social justice and witness work of a congregation, group, or individual
- Provide an opportunity for readers to apply Rasor's ideas to a social justice issue or challenge that is present in their own communities and context.

Session 1

Materials

- Chalice, candle and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation

- Write these covenant points on newsprint, but do not post:
    - We agree to speak from our own experiences and perspectives.
    - We agree to listen respectfully to the experiences and perspectives of other people.
    - We agree to pay attention to the group process, making sure that everyone has the opportunity to speak and to listen.
    - We agree to use this time as an opportunity for ethical, religious, and spiritual discernment, rather than as a time to debate politics or public policy.
- Write these discussion questions on newsprint, and post:
    - Do you agree with Rasor that there is a vital prophetic role for religious people to play in the public square?

  - How might religious liberals embrace that role? How does the prophetic witness of religious liberals contribute to a healthier and more just society?

- Write these reflection and sharing questions on newsprint, but do not post:
  - What from your own experience came to mind as you read Reclaiming Prophetic Witness?
  - What personal experience do you have of advocating for justice? Critiquing society?
  - On which values has your justice advocacy rested? Are they secular or religious—or both?
  - How might you do things differently going forward based on insights from the book?

Description

Chalice Lighting/Opening Reading (3 minutes)

Welcome participants. Light the chalice and share “Invocation” by the Rev. Angela Herrera from *Reaching for the Sun: Meditations* (Skinner House, 2012); used with permission.

Don’t leave your broken heart at the door;
bring it to the altar of life.
Don’t leave your anger behind;
it has high standards
and the world needs vision.
Bring them with you,
and your joy
and your passion.
Bring your loving,
and your courage
and your conviction.
Bring your need for healing,
and your power to heal.

There is work to do
And you have all that you need to do it
right here in this room.

Creating a Covenant (10 minutes)

Post the covenant points you have written on newsprint. Propose them as guidelines. Ask if any points need to be clarified, added, or amended. Note changes on newsprint. When the covenant is complete, invite participants to voice or signal agreement.

Introductions and First Impressions (20 minutes)

Tell participants you will invite each person to introduce themselves and take two or three sentences to share their responses to the question, "What stays with you after reading the book?" Allow silence for two or three minutes for people to find their words. Then, invite each person in turn to speak briefly uninterrupted, asking them to share only a single question, reflection, or impression from the book. Mention that for this conversation and any others, each person reserves the right to pass.

Discussion (20 minutes)

Share this quote from *Reclaiming Prophetic Witness* (p. 73):

> *Liberal prophetic practice is rooted in the tradition of the biblical prophets and sustained by the long-standing liberal religious commitments to social justice. Its passion, vision, and sources of inspiration lie in these religious traditions, not in any form of state sponsorship or control. Prophetic religion, if true to its heritage, can never become a tool of the state. Indeed, the state is often the target of liberal prophetic practice, and religious liberalism's independence from the state makes effective prophetic critique possible. A society that recognizes the vital role of the prophetic voice, a society that creates the legal and social space for it to be heard even when it makes us uncomfortable will be a healthier and more just society. And a religious tradition that values freedom can help preserve the social space for this critical prophetic voice.*

Lead a discussion, using the questions you have posted.

Sharing (35 minutes)

Post the newsprint with the reflection and sharing questions. Invite participants to relate a personal experience with critiquing society and advocating for justice. Ask them to reflect on how prophetic witness did or might have played a role in their stance and their actions at the time. Read aloud the questions you have posted. Allow silence for two or three minutes for people to find their words. Then, invite each person in turn to speak uninterrupted, asking them to share their stories. If there is time after all have spoken, invite conversation and discussion. Remind them that the group has covenanted to speak from personal experience and perspectives, rather than challenging the validity of another's experiences and perspectives.

Closing (2 minutes)

Extinguish the chalice and share these words from Dan McKanan's forward to the book (p vii – viii):

> *In times like these, prophets must speak loudly, clearly, and with many voices. We need prophets of economics to explain the cascading consequences of inequality and envision workplace democracy and socially responsible investment. We need prophets of science who can track the steady increase in global temperatures, chart its implications, and convey the urgency of those implications to policymakers. We need prophets of the arts to express their vision for social renewal in stirring songs and inspiring stories. We need prophets who testify to the human costs of inequality and oppression, and tell their stories of how individuals and communities are fighting back. And, of course, we need prophets of faith to bring the rich resources of religion into the struggle, making ancient traditions new by applying them to today's challenges.*

Invite participants to observe this week the ways in which public advocacy about an issue of concern to them is framed. On what values do social critiques and justice arguments rest?

Session 2

Materials

- Chalice, candle and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Covenant from Session 1

Preparation

- Post the covenant from Session 1
- Write on newsprint, and post:
    - What did you notice this week about how debates over issues are framed in the public square?
    - When ethical or moral arguments are made? On what sources or beliefs do they draw?
    - What religious moral arguments are being made? Did you discover moral or ethical arguments being made based on religious understandings with which you agree? With which you disagree?
    - What moral or ethical arguments seem to be missing or unspoken in public debates regarding this issue?

Description

Chalice Lighting/Opening Reading (5 minutes)

Light the chalice and offer these words by the Rev. Victoria Safford, from *A People So Bold* (Skinner House, 2009); used with permission.

> *On those occasions when the weight of the world is closing in and the evidence against hope mounts as I read the news, when I start confusing cynicism with pragmatism and begin muttering miserable, unrepeatable things as the radio, when I sigh, "I'm so tired, I'm so discouraged" – at those times, my partner, Ross, will say, in the kindest possible way, "What kind of self-indulgent whining is this? What kind of entitled grandiosity of privilege is this, to think that you or I or anyone has the right to sever the bright thread of hope, the tradition of dedication*

to the common good and faith in people's power to imagine great change, to imagine and take great risks? There is a beautiful, proud history of work for human rights and freedom, for social change and peace and protection of the earth. This is the story in which we choose to stand. This is not the story of oppression and imperialism and militarism and corporate greed and plunder, but that alternative story, equally true, of those who lived their lives and gave their lives for love, for a difficult and truly patriotic ideal – liberty and justice for all. This is an ideal that is gradually gathering up everyone – women and slaves and indigenous people; children and elders and the poor and the sick; the mentally ill; the workers, the farmers, the immigrants; those fighting for human rights and civil rights, for public schools and pluralism; every person, gay or straight, who would sit at the welcome table. We're only here to pass this story on," Ross tells me. "all you have to do it keep the fire burning for a little while, stoke it with your life, don't allow it to go out, and pass it on. You have no right to put it out." Not in so many words- but that's about what Ross will say.

Review the covenant from Session 1.

Discussion (20 minutes)

Invite people to share their observations concerning debates about current events and issues. Lead a discussion using the posted questions to guide you.

Discussion (25 minutes)

Read this excerpt from *Reclaiming Prophetic Witness* (p. 32-33)

Religious liberals today may also be reluctant to speak religiously in public contexts because they don't want to seem "too religious." Over the past quarter century, the most visible and vocal religious groups in the United States have been those of the religious right. Many of these groups aggressively link conservative or fundamentalist theologies to conservative political agendas that liberals rightly perceive as creating threats to basic liberties, including religious liberty. Religious liberals can all too easily buy into the widespread but erroneous assumption that if you're religious, you must be conservative. Religious liberals

understandably want to avoid being perceived as conservative, so they keep quiet about their faith…

…[In addition, religious liberals] are heirs of the philosophical tradition that separates religion and politics. Some people think that this tradition requires not only the institutional separation of church and state but also a kind of intellectual separation of religious ideas and political deliberation…The danger is that delegitimizing public religious discourse encourages religious liberals to disguise their religious commitments and rationalizes their reluctance to speak publicly using religious language, thus undermining both clarity and the conviction of their message, and in turn weakening the liberal prophetic voice.

Lead a discussion, asking:

- How well does Rasor's assessment match with your own experience?
- Have your concerns about the faith-based arguments advanced by religious conservatives led you to shy away from making your own faith-based arguments?
- What concerns do you have (if any) about offering religious arguments in the public square?

Invite people to share specific stories and examples. Allow about 15 minutes for this part of the discussion.

Then say, "Rasor suggests a different way to look at the issue. He says that fundamental to democratic principles is that people give reasons for their public positions. He further states that our prophetic witness would be both powerful and accessible if we included both faith-based reasons and democratic principles reasons in our arguments."

Lead a discussion, asking:

- How might it change your speaking, writing, and witnessing on public issues if you included both faith-based reasons and democratic principles reasons for your positions?

Sharing (35 minutes)

Share this passage from *Reclaiming Prophetic Witness* (p. 19-20):

> *Another dimension of liberalism's posture of engagement is its tendency to blur the distinction between religion and culture. This blurring is intentional. Religious liberals regard any separation of religion and culture as artificial and refuse to create moral distinctions between them. While this approach supports the social engagement required for prophetic practice, it also points to an important problem. Critics contend that liberalism's cultural orientation amounts to a total capitulation to culture. This critique is misguided; religious liberalism's core theological commitments do support a clear prophetic stance. But the liberal refusal to draw a sharp line between religion and culture can make it difficult to maintain the necessary theological clarity needed to ground an effective prophetic voice.*

Say, "In particular, Rasor talks about two 'theologies' that dominate the U.S. American cultural experience: the theology of redemptive violence and the theology of free-market fundamentalism. Using the theological term 'soteriology,' which means 'what saves us' he points out two dominant cultural narratives in which U.S. Americans are immersed: 1.) bad violence must be overcome by good violence; 2.) the free market creates order and balance."

Invite participants to reflect on how they have been influenced by the two cultural theologies that Rasor names—through media, conversation, narrative, and experience. Invite them to share, one at a time without interruption, reflections on the influence of these theologies on their lives, as well as times and ways in which they have been able to effectively critique these theologies. Remind them that the group has covenanted to speak from personal experience and perspectives, rather than challenging the validity of another's experiences and perspectives. If there is time after all have spoken, invite conversation and discussion, asking, "How might your faith commitments help you to better see the ways in which you are enmeshed in cultural theologies that might be at odds with liberal religious perspectives?"

Closing (5 minutes)

Share these words, taken from “Benediction,” by the Rev.Louise Green, from *A People So Bold*; used with permission.

> *Who is the prophet in these urgent times?*
> *You are the prophet, for there may be no other who will speak and act now.*
> *The prophet hears and responds to an insistent and urgent inner voice.*
> *The prophet speaks from an internal fountain, giving voice to another’s silence.*
> *The prophet sees and expressed in uncommon ways, upsetting the status quo.*
> *The prophet sends the wake-up call in the present, to shape the future.*

Session 3

Materials

- Chalice, candle and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Covenant from Session 1

Preparation

- Post covenant from Session 1
- Title a piece of newsprint, “Core Theological Principles of Religious Liberals.” Write this list and post:
    - The fundamental unity and interdependence of all existence
    - The transforming power of love
    - The inherent worth and dignity of all persons
    - Human freedom
    - Rejection of moral dualism (rejecting the sharp separation of good and evil, refusing to assign individuals and nations to one category or the other)
    - Social justice- enable all to live with dignity and respect
    - Cooperative power- persuasion over coercion
    - Religious freedom
    - Theological openness

Chalice Lighting/Opening Reading (5 minutes)

Light the chalice and share these words, adapted from an essay by the Rev. Meg Riley, from *A People So Bold*: used with permission.

> *Our congregations [and faith communities] must be places where hope is understood as an existential choice, cultivated as a spiritual discipline, and offered through concrete forms of action. Prophetic congregations [and faith communities] put forward multiple opportunities for existential hope to emerge from joint action – people bearing together what we cannot bear alone. Often this begins with simply witnessing what seems awful – witnessing it with others instead of alone at the computer. It begins with watching what gives life and what drains life, and naming it in community. Then, as the Hebrew scriptures tell us in Deuteronomy 30:19, it requires choosing: "I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life."…*
>
> *Prophetic UU congregations are grounded in centuries-old theologies, which teach that we have the power and responsibility to cocreate what is holy. They are communities where we and others are deeply valued and mutually known. Prophetic congregations [and communities] refuse to accept brokenness as a final answer, but work from realistic hope, choosing life, choosing to be a blessing.*

Discussion (40 minutes)

Post the list of core theological principles of most religious liberals. Lead a discussion, asking, "Do you agree with Rasor? Are your Unitarian Universalist religious values reflected in this list?" Allow 20 minutes for this part of the discussion.

Then say, "Rasor points out that there are many points of agreement between the core theological principles of religious liberals and the values that underlie democratic political structures. He cautions against religious identity becoming *'*so thin that liberal religion becomes indistinguishable from liberal politics.'" Lead a discussion using these questions:

- How are democratic values (small d) the same as religious liberal values? How do they differ?

- How do we maintain a prophetic stance based on religious values without becoming too closely identified with political candidates or parties? Why is it important to do so?

Reflection and Sharing (20 minutes)

Read this passage from *Reclaiming Prophetic Witness* (p. 51-52):

> *At a minimum, religious liberals need to be clearer and more intentional about the religious dimensions of our convictions. We can look at our complex tangle of motivations and try to discern how our religious commitments fit. We can say to ourselves, "Yes, my commitment to social justice is based at least partly on my religious convictions," and then try to express them in ways that address specific situations.*
>
> *…When we speak publicly, we can be intentional about saying that there are religious reasons, and that they matter.*

Ask, "How comfortable are you in naming religious reasons for your convictions in conversation with family and friends, in social media, and in public meetings or witness events? What help do you need from your faith community to be able to do that more effectively?" Invite people to share their responses, one at a time without interruption. If there is time after all have spoken, invite conversation.

Discussion (20 minutes)

Invite participants to consider one or more justice issues of importance to their congregation. How can they reclaim prophetic witness in their work on that issue, naming faith-based values as well as political values in their public reason-giving. Consider making a commitment to read a second book particular to the chosen issue and discuss together how to frame faith-based reasons to support justice advocacy. Here are some suggestions, drawn from the excellent selection of nominees for the 2014-2015 UUA Common Read:

Global Warming and Climate Change

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Voting Rights and Civil Rights

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Not For Ourselves Alone: Theological Essays on Relationship by Burton D. Carley and Laurel Hallman (Skinner House, 2014)

Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in Without Going Crazy by Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone (New World Library, 2012)

How might faith-based prophetic witness about the issue become part of your worship and education as well as your witness in the public square? Which individuals and groups are key to strengthening your witness for justice? Ask individual participants to commit to specific actions and timelines to bring others into the conversation and/or to plan and publicize a second book reading and discussion to help frame your prophetic witness in terms of religious commitments and values.

Closing (5 minutes)

Share “Prayer for Living in Tension” by the Rev. Joseph M. Cherry, from *Voices from the Margins* (Skinner House, 2012); used with permission.

If we have any hope of transforming the world and changing ourselves,
we must be
bold enough to step into our discomfort,
brave enough to be clumsy there,
loving enough to forgive ourselves and others.

May we, as a people of faith, be granted the strength to be

so bold,

so brave

and so loving.

Extinguish the chalice and thank participants.