

UU Wellspring: Sacred Arts

Revised June 2020



Background

Art matters, because the act of creating matters, because we are – as our examination of process theology shows us—that just as God is both creator and creating, we too are both a part of creation and are creators—and the moments of creation are the true reality. As writer Arthur Graham notes, “Each of us is an artist whose task it is to shape life into some semblance of the pattern we dream about. The molding is not of self alone, but of shared tomorrows and times we shall never see.”

Sacred Arts is meant to deepen our own sense of creation and creativity, to start the tiny revolutions of connection and resistance in our personal lives, our Unitarian Universalist communities, and the world.

In creating *Sacred Arts*, attention has been paid to not only the readings but also the process of our work together. We are engaging in different ways to decenter white supremacy culture in our programs. For example, we do not throw away the deep listening practices we have learned from Parker Palmer’s *A Hidden Wholeness*, but we do engage listening in some different ways besides silence, since silence is more common to white spaces than non-white spaces. We will also engage a different sort of covenanting process that addresses issues of power that often go unspoken in predominantly white spaces. Throughout the program, you will also note more activity and less sitting still. And yes, artists, theologians, and thinkers—we will engage are from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. We are under no delusion that we have a perfectly decentered program; however, we believe our efforts will help us be more expansive and inclusive.

Structure

We begin this journey together with an assessment of ourselves as creative individuals, and with an affirmation through covenant to be each other’s supporters – to be a validation squad. Participants will be encouraged to take up an art form as their spiritual practice for the duration – and as always, they are welcome to dabble or dive deep.

Over the next sixteen sessions, we will engage an art form—through information about the form itself, one practitioner of that art form, and an invitation to engage it outside the UU Wellspring session. The session will also feature engagement of a spiritual concept—through an essay or sermon about that concept, and then probing questions that might connect the art form to the concept and then finally to ourselves and to the world. There will be an invitation to engage creatively in ways that serve the congregation and the community—your group may decide to engage a project together or each engage individually.

In the closing session, we will celebrate the creativity of each person – the projects they have engaged and/or completed, as well as the creative work they have done in the congregation and the community.

UU Wellspring: Sacred Arts Topics



Session 1 — The Art of The Squad

Session 2 — Dance and the Art of Embodiment

Session 3 — Painting and the Art of Observation

Session 4 — Architecture and the Art of Human
Ingenuity

Session 5 — Sculpture and the Art of Simplicity

Session 6 — Composition and the Art of
Harmony

Session 7 — Cooking and the Art of Devotion

Session 8 — Textiles and the Art of Forgiveness

Session 9 — Fiction and Memoir and the Art of
Hidden Wisdom

Session 10 — Photography and the Art of Giving
Our Attention

Session 11 — Poetry and the Art of the Metaphor

Session 12 — Stand-Up Comedy and the Art of
Telling Our Stories

Session 13 — Improvisation and the Art of
Letting Go

Session 14 — Landscaping and the Art of the
Natural World

Session 15 — Installation Art and the Art of Being
an Earthling

Session 16 — Music Performance and the Art of
Choosing the Right Song

Session 17 — Theater and the Art of the
Ensemble

Session 18 — A Celebration of Creativity

Required Books

*Faithful Practices: Everyday ways to feed your
spirit*, edited by Erik Walker Wikstrom