

*“If we hope to write a new story, we must first change our minds about the nature of the divine and about our individual and collective power.” —Sacred Instructions, Sherri Mitchell*



March 2020

To Meadville Lombard students and alums,

This spring has been anything but usual. Our Commencement has been postponed, the MFC interviews have been moved to digital spaces, and if you are in the middle of the search process, it may not be clear how it will move forward. What the world will look like—socially, politically, economically, and religiously—in the near future is hard to imagine at this moment. Things have shifted.

Beloved ones, take heart and face this challenge, strengthened by the promise of our shared Unitarian Universalist faith. A faith that calls us to service, rooted in equity, justice, and compassion. Be courageous and step fully into ministering to a world in need of faithful witness. Share words with others from the depth of your theological convictions. Tell them hopeful stories of our shared faith nurtured by responding to sacred encounters with others and the divine.

A few pointers for creating a sacred space via Zoom:

- Find a space where you feel comfortable. Clear your space and get it ready for the spiritual work you will be doing in it. Practice your embodied or spiritual ritual of your choosing so that this place is imbued as a sacred space.
- Keep in mind that in technology-mediated communications, you don't have access to the range of non-verbal cues you would in a face-to-face meeting. So you have to be mindful of your communication, verbal and non-verbal.
- Be prepared for possible disruptions in connectivity. That is to say, if things go momentarily sideways with technology, do not get overly anxious. Something like this can likely take place. Center yourself and move forward with patience and grace.

We are here for you. May the flame of our chalice help you find a path through this uncertain moment. Step into the present in faith and live into your ministerial vocation of service to others. Sophia Lyon Fahs, that marvelous midwife of theological imagination once said, “It is indeed ‘too late for the old,’ but it is no longer ‘too early for the new...’” (*Worshipping Together With Questioning Minds*, 10). Your service will help give shape and envision Unitarian Universalist ministry anew. Take heart, be courageous, and beloved, be a faithful witness to the transformative power of the promise of our faith.

In service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elías Ortega', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Elías Ortega  
President