

Worship Associate Script intro (Anne Wagner):

BRIDGING CEREMONY

Today we honor a member of our congregation, Alana Henerlau, with a Bridging Ceremony that marks her transition from high school youth into young adulthood. To get us started, I will turn things over to Jocelyn.

Jocelyn Intro:

Thank you, Anne! I'm delighted to be part of this ceremony, and to have had the opportunity to get to know Alana as a beloved member of this community, and as a personal mentor and friend. Our bridging ceremony has three parts as we create a virtual bridge here in this virtual worship space: a beginning with Alana at "home" in her family nest, the crossing of the bridge into a new adult life, represented here by moving to a new solo device and a special chalice lighting and reading, and a closing where we'll get to hear a few words from Alana as she moves into this next phase of life and everything that it entails. I think this is also a good time to remind everyone that this virtual worship space itself would not exist in the same way without the efforts of the person we are honoring today, who has been instrumental to crafting it for us beginning in March, and has made it possible to sustain this new church experience over this summer and beyond by documenting and training members in everything that goes into it. Alana is leaving us with an incredible legacy and will be present with us through those efforts every time we gather here on Sunday mornings.

To begin our ceremony, I invite Linda Jo and Paul to share a reading from [Lindsay Bates](#) and also some space to share from their hearts.

Parents (with Alana on Family Device):

Linda Jo:

If prayer worked like magic—if I knew the words that would guarantee prayer's power—I know what I would pray:

Let life be always kind to our children.
Let sorrow not touch them.
Let them be free from fear.
Let them never suffer injustice,
nor the persecutions of the righteous.
Let them not know the pain of failure –
of a project, a love, a hope, or a dream.
Let life be to them gentle and joyful and kind.
If I knew the formula, that's what I'd pray.

Paul:

But prayer isn't magic, and life will be hard. So I pray for our children—with some hope for this prayer:
May their knowledge of sorrow be tempered with joy.
May their fear be well-balanced by courage and strength.
May the sight of injustice spur them to just actions.
May their failures be teachers, that their spirits may grow.
May they be gentle and joyful and kind.
Then their lives will be magic, and life will be good.

~ 30 seconds for personal reflections/blessings from parents here

Debra: Here are a few words on the process of Bridging from Jeff Liebmann:

The Bridging Ceremony celebrates the transition of our youth from their high school experience into young adulthood. It is a time of tremendous change—and stress—for our youth. It is a time when many of them will leave our particular church community to travel to other cities, into higher education, into careers, and possibly into new families.

The Bridging Ceremony is a rite of passage that welcomes these bright and energetic people into the rewards and responsibilities of adult life. The bridge has two sides. One is childhood and adolescence, where they have become leaders and role models for their younger friends and acquaintances. The other side is a scary and vast frontier of the unknown, full of boundless opportunities and new challenges. We, the adult members of this church community, also stand on the other side. We stand on the other side with our arms open to welcome them, our minds prepared to mentor and learn from them, and our hearts prepared to share life together with them.

Alana, I invite you to cross our virtual bridge today, while Jocelyn and I share a reading from Kate R. Walker, called “In Between.”

Jocelyn & Debra read parts while Alana moves to Solo Device for Special Chalice Lighting

Jocelyn:

In between, liminal, that space where we wait.
Between moments; events, results, action, no action.
To stand on the threshold, waiting for something to end,
And something new to arrive, a pause in the rumble of time.

Debra:

Awareness claims us, alert, a shadow of something different.
In between invitation and acceptance.
In between symptom and diagnosis.
In between send and receipt of inquiry and question.

In between love given and love received.

Jocelyn:

Liminality, a letting go, entering into confusion,
ambiguity and disorientation.

A ritual begun, pause ... look back at what once was,

Look forward into what becomes.

Identity sheds a layer, reaches into something uncomfortable to wear.

Debra:

In between lighting of the match and the kindling of oil.

In between choosing of text and the reading of words.

In between voices and notes carried through the air into ears to hear.

In between creation thrusts ever forward.

Jocelyn:

Social hierarchies may disassemble and structures may fall.

Communities may revolt or tempt trust.

Tradition may falter or creativity crashes forward.

Leaders may step down or take charge.

The people may choose or refuse.

Debra:

In between, storm predicted, the horizon beacons.

In between, theology of process reminds us to step back.

In between, where minutia and galaxies intermingle with microbes and mysteries.

In between, liminal, that space where we wait: Look, listen, feel, breathe.

Alana - chalice lighting:

I light this chalice as a symbol of my commitment to the values of Unitarian Universalism.

May its light be a beacon of hope to me,

and to all who seek freedom, truth, and meaning in life.

***~30 seconds for personal reflections from Alana here**

***~30 seconds for personal reflections from Debra here**

Jocelyn Closing:

For this closing, I invite everyone to come into your bodies, stand or raise your hands as you are willing and able, and say these words with me that will appear on your screen. You may also wish to bring into your mind and heart the other youth recently involved in our congregation and others going out into the world and into young adulthood in these especially tumultuous times.

Allanque [a-LAN-kwa] Henerlau, we bless you today.

<congregational reading slide starts here>

May your mind be on fire with wonder and wisdom;

May your heart be aflame with love for this life;

May your hands be ignited with purpose;

And may your spirit be aglow with courage and compassion.

Alana, you are a light unto the world,

and you carry our steadfast love with you wherever you may go.

We, your home congregation, bless you.

We love you.

May your life unfold with joy.

<congregational reading slide ends here>

Amen, Blessed Be, Ashe.

Thank you all. And now I'll turn things back to Anne.