

MUSIC AS A HEALING CHOICE

Sunday, August 3, 2008

CONNECTIONS

JEFF: Connections is a time of community and contemplation, where we share the joys and sorrows that are a part of our lives. This is not a time for announcements, political statements, or expressions of personal anger, but a time of deep sharing, where we are reminded that we are all human beings and we are all in this together.

In the light of recent events, we especially welcome sharing of remembrances and words of encouragement that reflect on that. Please be assured that we will all have an opportunity to discuss more practical matters as a group, shortly after today's service.

Enjoy the experience of sitting in restorative silence until you are moved to speak. Please allow a breath of silence after a person speaks, so that we may focus our attention on what has been said.

[after speakers finish]

Let us pause to dwell inward. Spirit of Life, please meet us where we are, in the moments that challenge us, in the ways we move forward in our lives, and bring our world forward with us. It is right that we pause to remember those who need love and support, who are ill or in pain, either in body or in spirit, who are lonely, or who have been

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wronged. Let us open our minds and hearts to a place of quiet, to a silent prayer for the healing of pain, and the soft, gentle coming of love. In this time of silence, let our thoughts be with those who have spoken, or been spoken of this morning.

Amen and Blessed Be.

I ask you now to rise and greet your neighbors at the door. Please welcome them into the sanctuary with a warm hand and a warm smile. Thank you.

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Chime to call the congregation in.

Prelude as Congregation is seated: "In My Life" - Karl Hunt & Rich Dwyer

Intro/Announcements

JEFF: Thanks so much for joining us in worship today. My name is Jeff Briere, and I am the Minister of the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Chattanooga. We hope you find the service rewarding, and that you leave here inspired and uplifted.

Please note the emergency exit over here to my right. Now is the time to put your cell phone in "Worship Mode." Childcare for the young and the restless is available downstairs in the nursery. After the service today, please join us for coffee and a bit of brief conversation in the fellowship area, followed by a special meeting for those who are interested in discussing the events that took place last week in Knoxville.

If you have a particular joy or sorrow, or something you'd like added to the Prayer of the People, please write it clearly on an index card and drop it in the basket on the table at the rear. You may sign it, or not, as you wish.

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A complete list of announcements is included in our bulletin and is available on our website. The best way to find out what's going on around here is to sign up for a weekly e-mail. To do that, please see Chris in the office.

Please open your hymnal and stand as you are able as Karl and Rich lead us in **hymn #112 - Sing and Rejoice**

[Hymn]

Margaret Hudson, would you please light our chalice?

In the light of truth and the warmth of love
We gather to seek, to sustain and to share.

Opening Words

DAIDEE: The Love of Morning

It is hard sometimes to drag ourselves

back to the love of morning,

after we've lain in the dark crying out

O God, save us from the horror

God has saved the world one more day;

even with its leaden burden of human evil,

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we wake to birdsong.

And if sunlight's gossamer lifts in its net

the weight of all that is solid,

our hearts, too, are lifted,

swung like laughing infants;

but on gray mornings,

all incident - our own hunger,

the dear tasks of continuance,

the footsteps before us in the earth's

beloved dust, leading the way -

all is hard to love again

for we resent a summons

that disregards our sloth, and this calls us.

Calls us.

The words of Denise Levertov

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DAIDEE: I invite the young and the young at heart to join Elaine for a [story about The Bremen Town Musicians](#)

Today I'm going to read a story to you about some friends. Who can tell me what a musician is?

Yes, a musician is someone who makes music. Some people play musical instruments, and some people make music with their voices, when they sing.

A lot of the time, when friends get together to have fun, they can have even more fun when there's music. Do you like to make music? Me, too.

Well, once upon a time there was a donkey who lived on a farm. This donkey worked very hard for many years. His name was Chanter. One day the farmer he worked for said, "Chanter, why don't you take some time off and go see the world?" The farmer patted him on his back, gave him a bag of corn, and wished him good luck.

Chanter began walking along the dusty road. He was walking toward the famous city of Bremen where all of the finest musicians in the world lived. He thought he would become a singer.

Chanter walked along the road for more than an hour. Suddenly a howl came up from the ground. He hadn't been

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looking where he was walking and had stepped right on the tail of sleeping dog! The dog jumped up as fast as an old dog can jump. Chanter quickly apologized for stepping on the dog's tail.

The old dog began to calm down and introduced himself as Ricardo.

Now, Ricardo was a baritone. Can anyone tell me what a baritone is?

A baritone is a singer with a deep voice.

So Chanter the singing donkey and Ricardo the baritone dog decided to sing together and off they went toward Bremen.

Later they came upon what looked like a furry speed bump in the middle of the road! Ricardo barked, and the ball of fur flew off the ground. Chanter dropped his bag of corn. But instead of corn, to everyone's amazement a dozen mice ran from the sack where they had sneaked in to eat. Things looked quite a mess. Someone was crying. It was a very old fat cat. The mice had all gone. The cat looked up at Chanter and Ricardo and purred out her name: it was Sanjay.

They told her that they were off to Bremen to sing. Her eyes began to glow and she asked if she could sing with them. They all became friends and walked close together.

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The more they talked to each other the closer they got until they thought that they must be the closest friends in the world.

It was almost dinnertime and they came to a farmhouse. On top of the barn was a rooster who looked so nervous they all thought he would fall off at any moment. And he was making a racket! He told them his name was Belmont. He lived with a farmer and his wife, but they had gone on a trip, and some strangers were in the house now. He was afraid they might try to make chicken soup out of him! If not for the strangers, he said, the house would be a cozy place to spend the night.

Chanter thought of a plan. He told his friends that if all of them sang nicely, whoever was in the house might appreciate it enough to feed them supper and let them spend the night.

They went to the window and began to sing. But they didn't know that the people inside the house were robbers. The robbers were having fun playing with all the things they had stolen, when they heard the combined sounds of the donkey, the dog, the cat and the rooster.

"Ghosts!" cried the robbers. Out of the front door they ran. They ran down the road until they could no longer be seen. Chanter, Ricardo, Sanjay and Belmont peeked in through

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the window and saw that dinner was still on the table. They ate it all up! The friends were tired. Each found a spot and they curled up for the night.

One of the robbers didn't believe in ghosts. He said that they must have been chased out of their home not by ghosts but by other robbers! He crept back to the house to see what or who was there. He went through the back door, looked toward the fireplace and thought he saw glowing coals there. But that was Sanjay, looking at the robber and not liking what she saw!

As the robber crept closer, Sanjay leaped right onto his face. She pulled his ears with her claws and slapped his head with her tail, yowling as loud as she could. The robber couldn't see. Poor Ricardo! He got his tail stepped on *again*, and got up howling and growling. Chanter was scared and kept hee-hawing and kicking the walls until Belmont, who was sleeping on the roof, woke up and started cock-a-doodle-dooing with all his might.

It was less than a minute after the robber had entered the house from the back door that he was running out the front door as fast as his feet would carry him, crying out that he believed in ghosts after all! His friends all screamed and ran after him.

The following morning Belmont woke his friends up. They

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had all slept very well. They looked at the house and the garden. They thought it was a better place to live than Bremen, and that they could sing with each other. In fact, they all live there today...the farmer and his wife, too. If you go past that house, you will hear them singing together.

So that is how these friends worked together, had fun together, and made music together. Thank you for listening to my story. Before you go downstairs, I have the plate here that we use to give a gift to help the church. I'm going to put my gift in now. And if any of you would like to put something in, you can do that too. Thank you.

We have a song we sing while you go downstairs.

CHILDREN'S RECESSIONAL

"As You Go"

We hold you in our love as you go, as you go
May your hearts be at peace as you go
To nurture the spark of your precious life
We hold you in our love as you go.

DAIDEE: Since we have the offering baskets handy, we'll now take up our offering, for the support and ministry of this church. If you have a payment toward an annual pledge, please make sure that's indicated. As always, the Dolores Wood-Louis Wilhoit Memorial Food Bank is

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happy to accept your donations of non-perishable food and household items, and the collection basket for that is always by the front door. Thank you very much for your generosity.

If you wish to light a candle of personal joy or sorrow, you may step up here and I will assist you.

OFFERTORY: Canyon Canon - Karl Hunt

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DAIDEE : Eternal Spirit of Life and Love, we are profoundly thankful for the blessings we experience every day. Would that we recognize what is truly valuable to us every day and be thankful for it. Please join us in our Hymn of Thanksgiving. The words are in your program.

Hymn of Thanksgiving

Oh, we give thanks for this precious day
For all gathered here and those far away
For the this time we share with love and care
Oh, we give thanks for this precious day.

ORISON

[Brief announcements about members of the congregation, if any]

DAIDEE: One week ago, while we were gathered here, news reports began coming in about the tragic events unfolding in Knoxville at the Tennessee Valley Unitarian-Universalist Church. The incident was announced, we shared some words and a bit of discussion during coffee hour, but most of us didn't really hear any details until we got home to our TVs and computers.

We've now had a week in which to reflect about a place that many of us have visited ... people that some of us know

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personally or through others. And even if that isn't the case, because it's a UU church, we feel we do know them. We can make some guesses about their lifestyles and interests, and the subjects that are close to their hearts. We can visualize what their worship services are like, and their outreach to their communities. We can even predict, to some extent, how the members of the congregation are responding to something the Knoxville police chief termed "horrendous."

A colleague of Jeff's shared the following:

It is liberal *theology*, particularly the central revelation of both Unitarianism, and Universalism, that is at the heart of this whole thing. The shooting took place in a church, and not at the Democratic Party headquarters. It is crucial to understand a distinction the shooter himself made, which is lost on times like ours, where partisan politics and liberal social policy are passed off as the whole of liberal religion and theology.

I would argue that it is not that we advocate for political rights for gay and lesbian people that is the threat to people like the shooter, but that We announce God's love for all souls and that each individual is made in the image of God. Through the rituals of Sunday worship, we manifest these by forming relationships (covenants) of obligation and responsibility one for the other; a view of the wider bonds of Affection that are holy and divine. Politics

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is transient and will change with changing political fashion. But the revelations we represent and seek to make real through worship and congregational fellowship are about a Love that is the source of Hope for all the ages and a Spiritual Freedom for all souls.

That kind of liberty of the spirit is frightening to those who refuse to walk toward their own "fear of the Lord," which is the beginning of wisdom. For some ironic and terrible reason I sure don't understand, a fear of God's Love explodes into a rage against God's children.

[pause]

Dona Nobis Pacem.

Give us Peace

Dona Nobis Pacem.

In these few moments of silence, let us hold near to our hearts all those who are suffering in this world, especially those who suffer the fallout of war.

Thou who art everywhere,

Many are your names.

May thy presence be with us,

May thy wisdom guide us,

In our deeds as well as in our dreams.

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May we have what sustains our body and soul.

Lead us to forgive the mistakes of others

As we hope our mistakes will be forgiven.

May we resist the temptation of the quick and easy,

And be delivered from that which demeans and destroys
life.

May we live purposefully and joyfully

In every moment

In every encounter

Now, and in the time to come.

Amen.

Dona Nobis Pacem.

Give us Peace

Dona Nobis Pacem.

When our hearts are in a holy place

When our hearts are in a holy place

We are blessed with love and amazing grace

When our hearts are in a holy place.

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Hymn #112: Do You Hear?

SERMON: Music as a Healing Choice

ELAINE: Very few of us can go through a single day without hearing music. I think most people probably wake up to a clock radio or an alarm that plays a chosen tune. While coffee is brewing, we listen to the perky theme music on the morning news shows and catch the latest commercial jingles in between segments. Or, perhaps we get reminded that “Barney” loves us, and we love him!

Music often gets us ready for the day by lifting our mood or cuing us to prepare for something to come. Here at this church, even before the prelude begins, we hear another pleasant sound [chime] that signals the beginning of worship.

Even a single tone is composed of many sounds, with a fundamental frequency and overtones. We hear and appreciate a sequence of tones and the relationship between them. Music and language both involve rhythm, tempo, and anticipation. Music can be generated internally, much like internal thought.

Both our right and left brain hemispheres appear equally able to process pure frequency tones, but in non-musicians,

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the right hemisphere is dominant for appreciation of melody and harmony, and the left for rhythm.

Music and language *communicate*.

There is no doubt that music can get people's attention like nothing else. Sometimes, music makes such a statement, it is used for the opposite effect – to make people go away. Certain public places such as office buildings and apartment complexes have experimented with playing classical and “easy listening” music over the speakers to discourage teenagers from congregating ... and it is said to work!

It is surely no secret to anyone that when services are planned here, the music is taken into careful consideration. Music can be almost a shorthand way of communicating a mood or a message. “Enter, Rejoice and Come In” is a far cry from “Rank By Rank.”

Anyone who grows up in a religious tradition also grows up in a musical tradition. Those of us who came from Catholic families know “Ave Maria,” or in a more contemporary vein, “Let Us Break Bread Together.” In a Jewish household, there's “Adon Olam,” “Hava Negilah,” and “Hatikvah.” Protestants are familiar with “The Old Rugged Cross” and “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.” Right now, I'll wager some of you started hearing one of those songs in your head as soon as I mentioned the titles.

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Quite a few of us also grew up as a member of the Scouts. That afforded us camp-out weekends and field trips by bus, in which we all helped the miles roll by a little faster by singing “This Land is Your Land” and “Puff the Magic Dragon.” At least, that’s what we sang during my Girl Scout days. On high school field trips it was more likely to be “99 Bottles of Beer on the Wall.”

[*This Land is Your Land* starts playing. Pause to listen. Music continues softly during next paragraph]

Hmm. “This Land is Your Land.” Woody Guthrie wrote that in 1940. The lyrics, that is, not the melody. The music was originally attached to a song by the Carter Family and was already familiar to Baptists at tent revivals and baptisms. It’s a catchy, up-beat little ditty, isn’t it? The words remind us of picture postcards with those “endless skyways” and “golden valleys.”...

But when Woody Guthrie wrote that song, despite his years of wandering, he wasn't thinking about a travelogue. He wrote it in direct response to Irving Berlin’s *God Bless America*, which Guthrie considered unrealistic and complacent. Tired of hearing Kate Smith sing it on the radio, he wrote a response originally called “God Blessed America for Me.”

Guthrie varied the lyrics over time, sometimes including more overtly political verses. Here’s one:

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[Karl plays guitar and sings]

In the squares of the city, In the shadow of a steeple;
By the relief office, I'd seen my people.
As they stood there hungry, I stood there asking,
Is this land made for you and me?

Happy music. Sad lyrics. A potent combination that has lent itself over the decades to such artists as John Lennon, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen and Janis Ian.

Certainly, through World War II, music was used to rally the troops, and to acknowledge the personal sorrows of war while at the *same* time managing to gloss over them. Songs of social protest, that questioned whether war was the answer, quite often suffered from bad timing. *The Ballad of October 16*, which questioned the wisdom of a peacetime draft, had no sooner been released than Hitler invaded the USSR. Our direct involvement in World War II began a few months later.

It is, perhaps, our very success in Europe and Asia in 1945 that made us focus all the more on the challenges that faced

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us back at home. With the threat of war briefly quelled, we had more time to reflect and ponder certain other unresolved questions.

[*We Shall Overcome* starts playing. Fades during paragraph]

This song gave hope and inspiration during the struggles for Civil Rights during the 1950s and 1960s. Pete Seeger, a contemporary of Woody Guthrie, had a deep understanding of how music, joined with words, could persuade as words alone could not. In fact, he referred to the Civil Rights movement as "the singin'est movement I've ever known."

Pete Seeger is now 89 years of age and recently gave an interview on National Public Radio. Almost casually, he dashed off what he called "four things that will save the human race." After hearing the interview I did some research and was not terribly surprised to hear that Mr. Seeger's forebears were New England Unitarians.

The first thing we can do to save the human race, he says, is participate. Get involved – rather than being a spectator,

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watching others go out and take action for something they believe in, try getting in on it. Whatever it may be. Write letters. Walk across a bridge. Attend a rally. Make your opinions a practice, rather than a theory.

The second thing, Pete says, is ask questions. That was the one that sent me over to Google to unearth those Unitarian roots. But it makes sense. You hear something on the news, you check it out. Why is it on the news? What's the rest of the story? You can pick any news story at random, even something you hear on the radio on the way home, and probably come up with a dozen spontaneous questions to ask. Who-what-when-where and why are a good start. Try to guess whether this will still be a big story -- or even "the" big story -- a year from now.

It's true that when we ask questions, we learn how that news item affects us. But what we may forget is that it also gives us an opportunity to find out if there's a way for us to get involved and have an effect of our own. If we want to, we can vote 365 days of the year. Not just the first Tuesday of November.

The third thing Seeger recommends is, learn how to give a report. How many times have you listened to the news, felt you had a good understanding of an issue, and then tried to convey it to someone else?

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“I heard the most amazing thing on the news!” you start out. But then, you get stuck. Who was that guy again? Was it in New York or Washington? How did it start? Then, if you’re like me, you head back to the internet. When do you feel you really understand something? When you can summarize it just as neatly as Paula Zahn. When you want others to know what’s important to you, it’s essential that you can package the information and pass it on accurately. Music often gives us the best means of doing just that.

The fourth way we can save the human race is by learning how to work with people. It comes back to participation. “No Man is an Island” – yet another song, derived from the John Donne poem we all learned in high school, and full of folk wisdom that sums up an essential need. Sharing ideas. Giving and receiving support. Feeling the energy.

Plenty of people were still singing as the 1960s began drawing to a close, but we were also listening like never before. By this time, rock and roll had exploded -- it was no longer some weird music you could turn your kids away from as easily as turning off the radio. In great part due to Bob Dylan and the Beatles, rock *lyrics* were part of everyday discourse...but it was the music that hammered the message home.

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According to Wikipedia, The oldest European protest song on record is "The Cutty Wren" from the English peasants' revolt of 1381 against feudal oppression.

When Neil Young sang about "Four Dead in O-Hi-O," he wasn't suggesting that we go overseas and fight.

He was suggesting that we stop and think.

I had the privilege of participating a month or so ago in the UUA's General Assembly in Ft. Lauderdale. On three separate occasions I was in a room with a large group of people. There were questions – lots of them. And there was music.

We were entertained and enlightened by a duo called The Good Asian Drivers. Reading directly from one of their websites, "[Kit Yan](#) is a transgendered slam poet and [Melissa Li](#) is a lesbian folkrocker." Trust me, they will wake up your consciousness before they ever sing a note! Melissa and Kit performed at the Bridging Ceremony for high school students moving up into the adult congregation. They made me take a fresh look at a world that lies far beyond the walls of this church, far beyond Chattanooga, and Tennessee. Far beyond this moment.

So, we've got Woody and Pete and Bob and Bruce and Melissa and Kit... but what about Kanye and Ziggy and

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Lauryn? That's right, we've completely ignored reggae and hip hop, so often unfairly maligned and stereotyped. Like any angry young music, some of it does, indeed, have a limited audience, and quite often is written and produced specifically to offend or to flout convention -- or just to make a quick buck. But looking beyond the superficial impression, rap lyrics can surprise and delight with their wit and insight. Reggae is quirky, joyous, transcendent.

So, how do you set out to find that buried treasure?

Well, you have to listen. Listen and you shall hear. College radio, satellite radio, Pandora radio, I-tunes can take you ten thousand miles away to a new musical universe in less than a second.

The Vietnam War is long over, but as long as there's unrest in the world, and suffering, and injustice, people will be working together to support each other and make the rest of us aware. They will be participating in political campaigns, rallies, and community action projects. They will be asking questions. They will be putting their impressions together and returning home with a report.

And they will be making music.

There's a lot going on, and still plenty to sing about.

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DAIDEE: Margaret, would you please extinguish our chalice.

We extinguish this flame,
But not the light of its truth,
the warmth of this community,
Nor the fire of our commitment.
These we carry in our hearts
And share with all the world.

Karl will close the service with *This Little Light of Mine*.
Feel free to join in if you wish.

Postlude - This Little Light of Mine

Thank you, and please join us for coffee and fellowship,
and a meeting to follow.