

Northshore Unitarian Universalist Church

Sunday, February 7, 2021 via Zoom

Black History Month

Music for Gathering	“Elijah” by Bill Harley, arr. Peter Amidon	
Welcome		Marty Langlois
Opening Words	from “Breathe: A Letter to My Sons” by Imani Perry	
Chalice Lighting		
Opening Song:	“I Know I Can” words by Dennis Hamilton, music by Jeanne Gagne	Rev. Suzelle Lynch
Sharing Cares and Celebrations		
Story For All Ages	“Something Happened In Our Town ” written by Marianne Celano, Marietta Collins and Ann Hazzard	
Meditation	“The Hill We Climb”	Amanda Gorman
Music for Meditation	“Be the Light”	Lea Morris
Reading	“Let America Be America Again”, by Langston Hughes	
Reflection		Rev. Carol Strecker
Music for Reflection	<i>Gospel Medley</i> : “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot”, arr Peter Wolf “Steal Away” and “Every Time I Feel the Spirit”, arr. Hugo Frey Piano, Judy Putnam	
Offertory		
Closing Song	“Siyahamba” South African, 20th century	Angel City Chorale
Announcements		
Closing Words	by Audette Fulbright Fulson	

Blessing

May love surround us,
May joy gladden us,
May peace lie deep within.
And may our lives,
And the lives of all
Those we touch, go well.

Edwin C. Lynn

Music Notes

Elijah

The song, *Elijah*, was written by Bill Harley to honor the memory of Elijah McCain, a 23-year-old black man who died at the hands of the Aurora, CO, police. This version is arranged by Peter Amidon and recorded virtually.

Bill Harley is a performing storyteller from Seekonk, MA, best known for his work with children and families. In a tribute to Bill for one of his lifetime awards he was noted for “building community; promoting our common humanity; and encouraging lifelong learning, exploring and growing.”

Peter Amidon, of Brattleboro, VT, is a choral arranger/composer/publisher. We have used many of his arrangements in services at NSUU and several of our members have participated in his many workshops of singing, dancing and bedside hospice music.

Elijah

Oh, Elijah

A child of God

What have we done to you?

What have we done?

Elijah

Oh, Elijah

I say your name

So many others, too

They all have names

Elijah

They say in other times

People could fly away

People could fly

Elijah

Spread wide your gentle arms

*Rise o'er this troubled world
And fly away
And fly away*

*Elijah
Oh, Elijah
A child of God
What have we done to you?
What will we do?
What will we do?*

I Know I Can

Written in the gospel style, and it is a collaborative effort between the composer, Jeannie Gagné, with lyricist, Rev. Dennis Hamilton, and arranger, Mark Freundt. It comes from hope, prayer, and a strong will. The melody came to Jeannie in about twenty minutes one evening, which she says happens rarely but when it does, she trusts it! They hope this hymn is as inspiring to sing as it was to write.

-from Notes from the Far Fringe, by Kimberley Debus

*Though days be dark with storms and burdens weigh my heart,
Though troubles wait at every turn, I know I can go on.*

*When sorrows heal my soul and burdens make me strong
Though troubles wait at every turn I know I can go on.*

*My sister in my heart, my brother in my song,
Though troubles wait at every turn I know I can go on.*

*And thought the journey is long the destination is near,
Though troubles wait at every turn I know I can go on.*

*So brothers take my hand and sisters sing my song,
When hope awaits at every turn I know we will go on.*

Be the Light

We were introduced powerfully to Amanda Gorman as the youth inaugural poet laureate at the inauguration of President Joe Biden.

Lea Morris was inspired by the words of Amanda Gorman to write the song we are hearing this morning. Born in Baltimore to a father who toured the world playing trumpet in the funk band Black Heat and a mother who dreamed of opera while performing with her siblings in the Jones Family Gospel Singers, LEA was singing on the pulpit of the Baptist church where she grew up as soon as she could speak. When she discovered the acoustic guitar as a teenager, she began teaching herself to play by writing songs. LEA's final year in high school in Germany at a

classical conservatory, where she sang with the jazz ensemble Black & White and co-wrote with the British pop trio Indigo Wild.

Gospel Medley

" **Swing Low, Sweet Chariot**" is an African-American spiritual song. The earliest known recording was in 1909, by the Fisk Jubilee Singers of Fisk University. It refers to the Biblical story of the Prophet Elijah's being taken to heaven by a chariot. In 2002, the US Library of Congress honored the song as one of 50 recordings chosen that year to be added to the National Recording Registry. It was also included in the list of Songs of the Century, by the Recording Industry Association of America and the National Endowment for the Arts.(Wikipedia)

" **Every Time I Feel the Spirit,**" African American Spiritual (ca. 1750-1875)This hymn was sung to portray the deeply emotional and moving experience of feeling the spirit of God.(Between the Lines, Sources for Singing the Living Tradition.

" **Steal Away.**" This traditional American song is a by-product **of the** so-called Underground Railroad, **the** catchall term used to describe means slaves used to escape their owners to go to **the** northern United States or on into Canada to live in freedom. "Steal Away" the song was composed by Wallace Willis, a slave of a Choctaw freedman in the old Indian Territory, sometime before 1862. Alexander Reid, a minister at a Choctaw boarding school, heard Willis singing the songs and transcribed the words and melodies. He sent the music to **the Jubilee Singers of Fisk University** in Nashville, Tennessee. (Wikipedia)

Siyahamba

Zulu: Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwnekhos. Siyahamb' ekukhanyen'kwenkhos'

English: We are marching in the light of God. We are marching in the light of God.

Siyahamba is a South African freedom song. The freedom songs give voice to protest, struggle and solidarity. The musical roots of these songs may be found in the long history of trade, commerce, and European missions with South Africa, beginning with the Dutch in the middle of the seventeenth century. The musical result was a synthesis of traditional African music and Western hymnody. South African freedom songs like "Siyahamba" often originated with Amadodana, a Methodist young men's group.

Usually translated as "We are marching in the light of God," "Siyahamba" contains layers of meaning. "We" is a word of community—the community of those living and the community of the living dead. In African traditional society, those who have died are still with us, and their witness may influence the actions of the living. "Marching" is an action that unifies the community, as they move physically and spiritually in the same direction. It is a bodily, kinesthetic response to the leading of the Spirit rather than a passive acquiescence.

“The Light of God” has meaning on several levels. While it is a symbol of creation and of Jesus Christ, the light of the world, it is also a common refrain in songs of healing or *ngoma* throughout Southern and Central Africa. According to Christian anthropologist John Janzen, “Let darkness be replaced with light” is coded language for “seeing clearly” (Janzen, 1992, 111–118). God is the source of clear sight in the midst of the struggle, the source of discernment and truth. As we march, we can see our way ahead. Our path is clear. Where there is light, there is hope.

-from History of Hymns, by C. Michael Hawn