

Northshore Unitarian Universalist Church

Sunday, March 7, 2021 via Zoom

Making Choices - Women's History

Music for Gathering "I Am Willing" Cascade UU Fellowship, East Wenatchee, WA
by Holly Near

Welcome Tracee Kneeland

Opening Words by Gloria Steinem

Chalice Lighting

Story for All Ages "Bread and Roses" by Rev. Laura Randall (adapted)

Opening Song: "Bread and Roses" Singing Group
words by James Oppenheim, music by Caroline Kohlsaar

Sharing Cares and Celebrations

Meditation by Teresa I. Soto

Music for Meditation "I Wish I Knew How" Nina Simone
by Billy Taylor and Dick Dallas

Reading from "The Opening Door" by Rev. Olympia Brown

Reflection Rev. Carol Strecker

Music for Reflection "Scottish Legend" by Amy Beach Piano, Judy Putnam

Offertory

Closing Song "I'm On My Way" Vocals, Helen Brandt and Terri Hansen
traditional African American folk Piano, Judy Putnam
arr. by Mary Allen Walden

Announcements

Closing Words by Dorothy Thompson

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

I Am Willing

*I am open and I am willing
To be hopeless would seem so strange
It dishonors those who go before us
So lift me up to the light of change
There is hurting in my family
There is sorrow in my town
There is panic in the nation
There is wailing the whole world round
May the children see more clearly
May the elders be more wise
May the winds of change caress us
Even though it burns our eyes
Give me a mighty oak to hold my confusion
Give me a desert to hold my fears
Give me a sunset to hold my wonder
Give me an ocean to hold my tears*

Holly Near has been singing for a more equitable world for well over 50 creative years. She is an insightful storyteller through her music, committed to keeping the work rooted in contemporary activism. In 2004, Near was invited to address the Unitarian Universalist Association as its Ware Lecturer. She gave a lecture entitled “Harvesting Hope through Social Consciousness.” Our hymnbook includes her song *We Are a Gentle Angry People*. Holly states:

“I do not separate my music from my heart nor do I separate my ideas from my daily life. I open myself up to learning as much as I can about humanity and this mysterious life experience, but I do not relate to political work as a series of ‘causes.’ Moment by moment, I integrate what I learn into my personal life, personalizing my politics. It is from this personal place that I write my songs.”

Bread and Roses

*As we come marching, marching, in the beauty of the day,
a million darkened kitchens, a thousand workshops gray,
are touched with all the radiance that a sudden sun discloses:
for the people hear us singing, "Bread and roses, bread and roses!"*

*As we come marching, marching, we battle too for men,
for they are women's children, and we mother them again.
Our lives shall not be sweated from birth until life closes:
hearts starve as well as bodies — give us bread, but give us roses!"*

*As we come marching, marching, unnumbered women dead
go crying, through our singing, their ancient song of bread!
Small art and love and beauty their drudging spirits knew:
yes, it is bread we fight for, but we fight for roses too!*

*As we come marching, marching, we bring the greater days:
the rising of the women means the rising of the race.
No more the drudge and idler, ten that toil where one reposes,
but a sharing of life's glories — bread and roses, bread and roses!*

In 1912 tens of thousands of textile workers walked off the job in Lawrence, MA, protesting long hours and low wages. The state had recently passed a law reducing the work week for women and children from 56 to 54 hours, and the mill owners responded by cutting those workers' pay proportionally. (Some took home as little as \$6 a week.) The workers responded, in turn, by striking. They were largely immigrants, women, and children; they came from 50 countries and spoke more than 20 languages. As a group of mixed heritage and language, they were predicted to fail, but after ten frigid weeks of protest they won. The union reached a deal with the mill owners, the workers returned to their shifts, and soon textile mills all over the region were raising wages, hoping to avoid labor troubles of their own.

Still one of the largest labor strikes in U.S. history—and still a conspicuous success—the Lawrence textile affair came to be known as the bread and roses strike. That phrase, "bread and roses," comes from Rose Schneiderman, a socialist, a feminist, and a union organizer who was born in Poland in 1882 and died in New York City in 1972. It refers to the notion that a political movement whose demand is mere subsistence suffers from a poverty of the imagination—that survival is far from enough. What Schneiderman fought for was "the right to live," she said, "not simply exist—the right to life as the rich woman has the right to life, and the sun and music and art. ... The worker must have bread, but she must have roses, too." (Schneiderman popularized the phrase even if she didn't actually coin it: it may have originated in Russia.) In

1911 James Oppenheim wrote a poem called "Bread and Roses," envisioning scores of women marching in the streets, demanding more. –from Sam Worley in Epicurious, January 19, 2017

I Wish I Knew How

*I wish I knew how it would feel to be free
I wish I could break all the chains holdin' me
I wish I could say all the things that I should say
Say 'em loud, say 'em clear for the whole round world to hear.*

*I wish I could share all the love that's in my heart
Remove all the bars that keep us apart
I wish you could know what it means to be me
Then you'd see and agree that every man should be free.*

*I wish I could give all I'm longin' to give
I wish I could live like I'm longing to live
I wish I could do all the things that I can do
And though I'm way overdue I'd be startin' anew.*

*Well, I wish I could be like a bird in the sky
How sweet it would be if I found I could fly*

*Oh, I'd soar to the sun and look down at the sea
Then I'd sing 'cause I'd know, yeah
And I'd sing 'cause I'd know, yeah
And I'd sing 'cause I'd know
I'd know how it feels
I'd know how it feels to be free, yeah, yeah
I'd know how it feels
Yes, I'd know
I'd know how it feels, how it feels
To be free, no, no, no*

This irresistibly catchy 16-bar gospel-jazz tune began life as an instrumental. Born in 1921 in North Carolina, composer Billy Taylor was a gifted pianist who had built an impressive jazz pedigree working in New York with bebop luminaries such as Dizzy Gillespie, Artie Shaw and Charlie Parker. By the 1960s, he was also a broadcaster and civil rights campaigner, and had recorded many albums, mostly with his trio.

Bucking that trend, the first recording of "I Wish I Knew" had a big-band line-up of 19 musicians. But the song had yet to be performed or recorded with lyrics. Billy Taylor's

daughter Kim Taylor-Thompson, a law professor in New York, had initially spurred her father to write the song when she came home from school singing a spiritual. As his daughter Kim recalled, “he had written the first verse of the lyrics pretty early on. He got stuck at one point and invited [lyricist] Dick Dallas to collaborate to help him finish the lyrics and that’s when we got the later verses. I’ve always felt that there was a difference between the first verse.”

As soon as Nina Simone sang, “I wish I could break all the chains holding me” on *Silk and Soul*, the floodgates were open. Simone’s artistry and passion took the song to another level, one that resonated not only with the civil rights movement but with issues of identity and individualism.

Scottish Legend

In 1884 a 17-year-old pianist named Amy Cheney made her debut with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. That same year she married Dr. H.H.A. Beach, a wealthy surgeon and she chose to perform under his name for the rest of her career. She abandoned performance while her husband was alive, and her creative impulses found an outlet through composition. She was spectacularly successful. She gained recognition for her songs and short pieces, which suited the popular taste, and her *Gaelic Symphony* was performed by the New York Philharmonic in 1896, the first symphony by an American woman composer to achieve this distinction. Her compositions also include a violin sonata, Op. 34, a piano concerto in F-sharp, a piano quintet, and a mass. After husband's death in 1910 she resumed her performing career and was involved in the foundation of the MacDowell Colony, an artist's retreat center in Peterboro, New Hampshire, one of the oldest of its kind in the US. (From: *At the Piano with Women Composers book*, Edited by Maurice Hinson. –from “Life of a Song”, by Solomon Burke

I’m On My Way

I’m on my way to the freedom land.
I’m on my way to the freedom land.
I’m on my way to the freedom land.
I’m on my way, great God, I’m on my way.

I asked my sister, come and go with me..

I asked my brother, come and go with me....

If they say no, I’ll go anyhow....

I’m on my way, and I won’t turn back

The civil rights song "I'm On My Way" is an adaptation of the African American Spiritual "I'm On My Way To Canaan Land" (also known as "I'm On My Way To The Kingdom Land" and "I'm Bound For The Promised Land.") Note that there are several Spirituals and other religious songs with the title "I'm On My Way To Canaan Land" or "Bound To Canaan" or similar title. "Canaan", "the Promised Land", and "the Kingdom land" were references to heaven. Some of the versions of those Spirituals had the same or nearly the same words that are used for the civil rights song. Only the meanings of those words are different. In the civil rights song, "freedom land" meant a land where everyone had equal rights under the law. –from "Civil Rights Songs", edited by Azizi Powell