

Soulful Songs and Stories

With a song and your stories, we co-create a soft place for hard conversations and a brave space for personal and spiritual growth.



Hi *Soulful Song Lovers and Story Tellers*,

This is the tenth of Friday emails that we're sending out or posting on the webpage about songs, stories, storytelling, community, or personal/spiritual growth until we meet again.

LAUGHTER has been one of the hallmarks of our *Soulful Songs and Stories* time together. We celebrate this in song with “*The Laughter Song!*” by Lisa Coleman, “*The Secret of Laughter*” by Swami Kriyananda, and Regina Spektor’s “*Laughing With.*” In word and story we have the wit and wisdom of two dozen people as diverse as *Reinhold Niebuhr* and *Kevin Hart*, *Viktor Frankel* and *John Cleese*. And yes, cartoons.

If you need *perking up* or *calming down*, we have additional musical selections for you to consider.

If you'd like to get these PDFs emailed to you, register with Jessica Pond, jpond@uucsr.org.

We sorely miss you and your stories. We miss hugs and laughter and coffee/tea with you. We know these mailings are no substitute for meeting face-to-face, but hope that they, in some small way, may fill the gap until we meet again. Take the spirit of *Soulful Songs and Stories* with you wherever you go; share it, and we hope to see you all, healthy and happy, sooner rather than later.

Namasté,

Alice and Steve

Laughter

God is a comedian playing to an audience too afraid to laugh.

—Voltaire

Laughter is one of the things that delights us about **Soulful Songs and Stories**. Much more than other groups or committees, we're relaxed and comfortable enough with ourselves and each other that we're free to laugh. (*Angels can fly because they can take themselves lightly.* —G.K. Chesterton) We're not going to do an examination or exegesis of laughter, or what is or is not funny, but we think denigrating someone for their otherness is not in keeping with our UU principles (or the Golden Rule), although we are mindful that "sacred cows make the best hamburger." Rather, by standing on the shoulders of giants, we're going to **celebrate and encourage laughter** as one avenue to our own well being—and to the holy.

Children are more spontaneous and uninhibited and gleeful than most grownups, so it's no surprise that **we start with a children's song...**

"The Laughter Song!," Lisa Coleman

I love to laugh, come laugh with me

<https://youtu.be/YHd-bFLTmrQ>

and continue with...

"The Secret of Laughter," Swami Kriyananda

The secret of laughter lies in the laughing / Not in the search for joy

<https://youtu.be/TVF8ne-o2qE>

and get a little more serious with...

"Laughing With," Regina Spektor

But God can be funny... / No one's laughing at God, we're all laughing with God (lyrics below)

<https://youtu.be/-pxRXP3w-sQ>

Laughter is the closest thing to the grace of God.

—Karl Barth

The most wasted of all days is one without laughter.

—e. e. cummings

The egotistical kind of leader fears humor in all its forms, since he or she knows that any kind of humor threatens self-importance.

—John Cleese

Life does not cease to be serious when people laugh any more than it ceases to be funny when people die.

—George Bernard Shaw

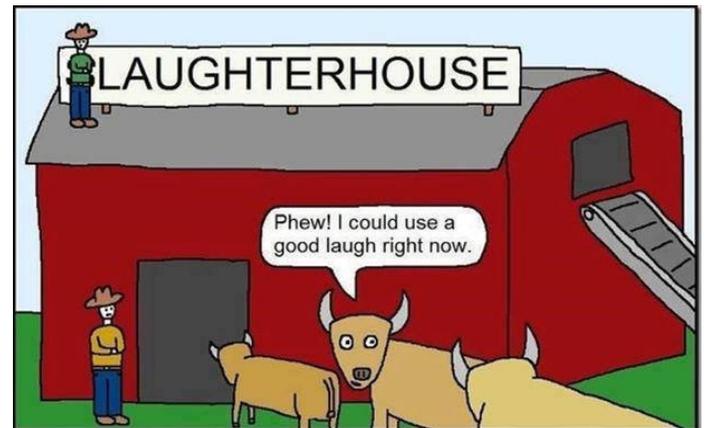


I guess it can't be too often that two people can laugh and make love, too, make love because they are laughing, laugh because they're making love. The love and the laughter come from the same place: but not many people go there.

—James Baldwin, *If Beale Street Could Talk*

This is my living faith, an active faith, a faith of verbs: to question, explore, experiment, experience, walk, run, dance, play eat, love, learn, dare, taste, touch, smell, listen, argue, speak, write, read, draw, provoke, emote, scream, sin, repent, cry, kneel, pray, bow, rise, stand, look, laugh, cajole, create, confront, confound, walk back, walk forward, circle, hide, and seek.

—Terry Tempest Williams, *Leap*



Laughter is the fireworks of the soul. —Josh Billings

Praise incessantly, hold high expectations, laugh, sing out loud, celebrate without cease the good luck of getting set down here on a lively earth.

—Barbara Kingsolver, “Civil Disobedience At Breakfast,” *High Tide In Tucson*

Humor is a prelude to faith, and laughter is the beginning of prayer. —Reinhold Niebuhr

I am the happiest creature in the world. Perhaps other people have said so before, but not one with such justice. I am happier even than Jane; she only smiles, I laugh. —Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*

I don't trust anyone who doesn't laugh.
—Maya Angelou

Laughter is carbonated holiness. —Anne Lamott

You have as much laughter as you have faith.
—Martin Luther

Laughter is more than just a pleasurable activity. When people laugh together, they tend to talk and touch more and to make eye contact more frequently.
—Gretchen Rubin, *The Happiness Project*

Those who do not know how to weep with their whole heart don't know how to laugh either.
—Golda Meir

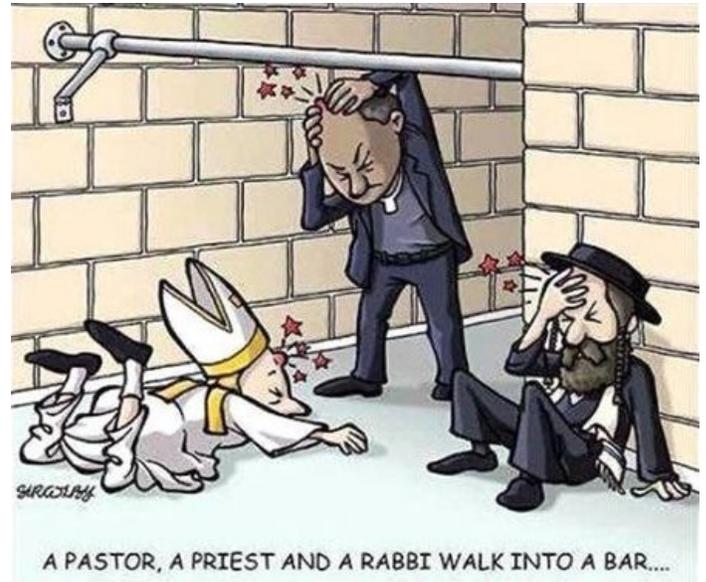
A priest once quoted to me the Roman saying that a religion is dead when the priests laugh at each other across the altar. I always laugh at the altar, be it Christian, Hindu, or Buddhist, because real religion is the transformation of anxiety into laughter.
—Alan Watts

In life, you can choose to cry about the bullshit that happens to you or you can choose to laugh about it. I choose laughter.
—Kevin Hart, *I Can't Make This Up: Life Lessons*

And the little prince broke into a lovely peal of laughter, which irritated me very much. I like my misfortunes to be taken seriously.
—Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*

I know why we laugh. We laugh because it hurts, and it's the only thing to make it stop hurting.

—Robert A. Heinlein



Laughter became unbearably sad when you caged it. It was worse than crying. —Isabelle Carmody, *Greylands*

Music that's Perky/Rousing

...when you have the **COVID-19 blues**

“**I Walk The Line,**” Johnny Cash/Tiffany Austin,
Marcus Shelby Jazz Orchestra

<https://youtu.be/hAE8UdfP8QQ>

“**Concerto No. 1 in C minor for Piano & Trumpet,**”
IV mov., Shostakovich/Yuja Wang, Omar Tomasoni

<https://youtu.be/U5tAyEC3igQ?t=880>

Pensive/Reflective

...think on these things

“**When Joy Comes Back,**” Sean Staples/Ruthie Foster
<https://youtu.be/ZXp4BfMtQ-c>

“**Be The Light,**” Alicia Mathewson, “We've gotta be the light / We always dreamed we'd be / Be the light for all to see” <https://youtu.be/-8XBV32R7OE>

Peaceful/Relaxing

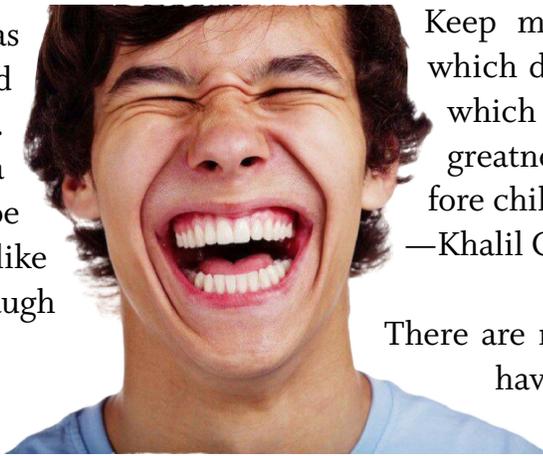
...to wash away the day's trouble in mind

“**Single Petal of a Rose,**” Duke Ellington/Aaron Diehl
https://youtu.be/Co4a4kb_JoY

“**The Swan,**” Saint-Saëns/Yo-Yo Ma, Kathryn Stott
<https://youtu.be/3qrKjywjo7Q>

Laughter is a holy thing. It is as sacred as music and silence and solemnity, maybe more sacred. Laughter is like a prayer, like a bridge over which creatures tiptoe to meet each other. Laughter is like mercy; it heals. When you can laugh at yourself, you are free.

—Ted Loder, *Tracks in the Straw*



Keep me away from the wisdom which does not cry, the philosophy which does not laugh, and the greatness which does not bow before children.

—Khalil Gibran, *Mirrors of the Soul*

There are many ways to the Divine. I have chosen the ways of song, dance, and laughter. —Rumi

Be joyful. Use your sense of humor. And laugh with the God who smiles when seeing you, rejoices over your very existence, and takes delight in you, all the days of your life.

—Father James Martin



Like most manifestations of human behavior, laughter it ranges from the loving to the hateful. The latter produces nasty racial jokes and savage teasing; the former, warm and affectionate banter, and the kind of inclusive humour that says, "Isn't the human condition absurd, but we're all in the same boat." —John Cleese, *So Anyway*

Spirituality and humor from Father James Martin
https://youtu.be/aZtEW_o3O6Q

What is this precious love and laughter / Budding in our hearts? / It is the glorious sound / Of a soul waking up! —Hafiz, *I Heard God Laughing*

When people laugh together, they cease to be young and old, master and pupils, jailer and prisoners. They become a single group of human beings enjoying its existence. —Gilbert Highet

Humor, more than anything else in the human make-up, can afford an aloofness and an ability to rise above any situation, even if only for a few seconds. The attempt to develop a sense of humor and to see things in a humorous light is some kind of a trick learned while mastering the art of living. Yet it is possible to practice the art of living even in a concentration camp, although suffering is omnipresent.

—Viktor Frankel,
Man's Search for Meaning



They laughed too, even Rose Dear shook her head and smiled, and suddenly the world was right side up. Violet learned then what she had forgotten until this moment: that laughter is serious. More complicated, more serious than tears.

—Toni Morrison, *Jazz*

“Laughing With”

Regina Spektor

No one laughs at God in a hospital
No one laughs at God in a war
No one's laughing at God
When they're starving or freezing or so very poor

No one laughs at God
When the doctor calls after some routine tests
No one's laughing at God
When it's gotten real late
And their kid's not back from that party yet

No one laughs at God
When their airplane start to uncontrollably shake
No one's laughing at God
When they see the one they love, hand in hand
with someone else
And they hope that they're mistaken

No one laughs at God
When the cops knock on their door
And they say “We've got some bad news, sir.”
No one's laughing at God
When there's a famine or fire or flood

But God can be funny
At a cocktail party when listening to a good
God-themed joke,
Or when the crazies say He hates us
And they get so red in the head you think
they're 'bout to choke

God can be funny,
When told he'll give you money if you just pray
the right way
And when presented like a genie
who does magic like Houdini
Or grants wishes like Jiminy Cricket and Santa Claus

God can be so hilarious Ha ha
Ha ha

No one laughs at God in a hospital
No one laughs at God in a war
No one's laughing at God
When they've lost all they've got
And they don't know what for

No one laughs at God on the day they realize
That the last sight they'll ever see is a pair of
hateful eyes
No one's laughing at God when they're saying
their goodbyes

But God can be funny
At a cocktail party when listening to a good
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Or when the crazies say He hates us
And they get so red in the head you think
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No one laughs at God in a hospital
No one laughs at God in a war
No one laughing at God in hospital
No one's laughing at God in a war
No one's laughing at God
When they're starving or freezing or so very poor

No one's laughing at God
No one's laughing at God
No one's laughing at God
We're all laughing with God

from the CD *Far*