

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 thirteenth Friday PDF that we're emailing or posting on the webpage about songs, stories, storytelling, community, or personal/spiritual growth until we meet again.

Sharing our stories, beliefs, and experiences around a theme suggested by a song is an act of kindness and generosity that's received with a lot of gratitude. What makes that sharing so special is that it's a "MINUTE PARTICULAR," a personal act of caring and vulnerability. Any "SCOUNDREL, hypocrite and flatterer" can wear a pin, throw money in a plate or at a problem, pledge allegiance to mom, apple pie, and the flag, and recite a prayer, creed, preamble, or principle without thought or commitment.

UUs (or almost anyone) would hardly disagree with "the inherent worth and dignity of every person." But there's too often a gap that rivals the "wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea" between espousing principles and embodying them. This week we're going to look at two lines from William Blake's epic poem, "Jerusalem" as it relates to creeds and deeds and calling out injustice.

We'll explore this in song with "The Water is Wide" (sung by Pete Seeger, Eva Cassidy), "Up Above My Head," "Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen," and more; and in story via the *NY Times*, the UUA, Martin Niemöller, Ann Patchett, Craig Ferguson, Hillel, Ricki Lee Jones, & Rabindranath Tagore, among others. We agree with Fred Friendly who said our "job is *not* to make up anybody's mind but to make the agony of decision making so intense that you can escape only by thinking."

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

If you who would do good to another, must do it in Minute Particulars, General Good is the plea of the scoundrel, hypocrite & flatterer

William Blake, 1757-1827, *Jerusalem: The Emanation of The Giant Albion* (composed 1804-c. 1820), Chapter III, page 55, lines 60, 61



We, the member congregations of the UUA, covenant to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Our greatest principle, and the refuge of scoundrels.

This week's piece builds on two previous pieces, the one on **Justice** and the one on **Speaking Out**. It is occasioned by the failure to live up to our first principle, whether through blindness, ignorance, or deliberateness, and our failure to speak out against it when we see it. UUs, on an individual, congregational, and denominational level, often toss around the first principle as if it were a get-out-of-jail-free card. If you'd like a classic, documented case of institutional blindness and greed, look here:

www.j.mp/UUAhiring

What is doesn't cover is the fact that UUA board members and officers resigned over this

issue with obscenely large golden parachutes.

We have many people at UUCSR individually and collectively working tirelessly for justice. We also have a tendency to use money as a cure for injustice. We have too many people afraid to speak out at congregational meetings, either because of fear of public speaking, fear of being looked at disapprovingly by "friends" who disagree, or because the odds are so overwhelmingly against them. At a very recent Zoom meeting, one person said "I could say something about [an issue], but if I spoke my mind, they'd kick me out of UUCSR." **OMG!**

Consider this in story:

First they came for the Communists and I did not speak out because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak out for me.

—**Martin Niemöller**, Lutheran pastor; poetic form of a prose post-war confession, 1946

We have seen that silence can be as deadly as violence.

—**Jimmy Carter**, Jun 3, 2020

If I speak with human eloquence and angelic ecstasy but don't love, I'm nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate.

—**Paul**, Corinthians 13:1, **Eugene Peterson**, *The Message*

Consider this in song:

Since the gulf between deeds and creeds is wide, how about **"The Water Is Wide,"** a folk song of Scottish origin. The modern lyric was consolidated and named by Cecil Sharp in 1906. The imagery of the lyrics describes the challenges of love: "Love is handsome, love is kind" during the novel honeymoon phase of any relationship. However, as time progresses, "love grows old, and waxes cold." Even true love, the lyrics say, can "fade away like morning dew."

—Wikipedia

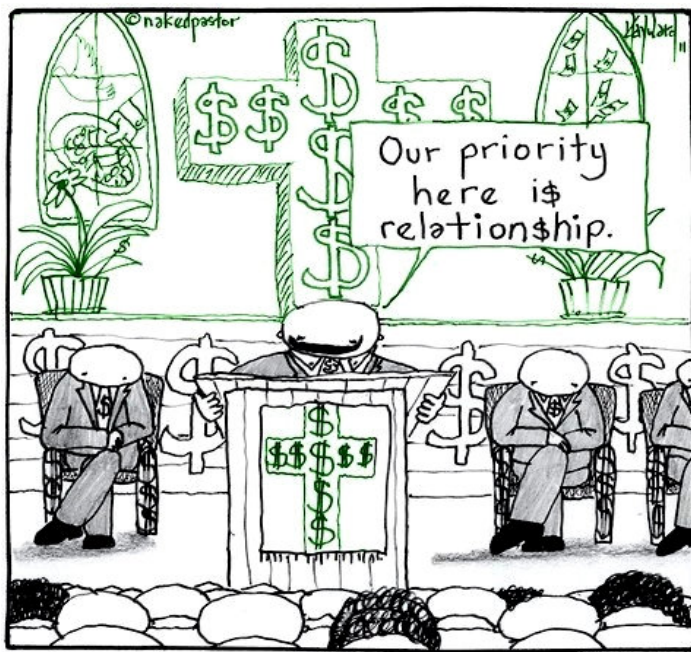
Pete Seeger & Gaudeamus (Union Baptist Church Singers) https://youtu.be/vzkdnf_3Fs4
Eva Cassidy <https://youtu.be/ADX8GRfRKHg>

More in story:

We affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

In 2019, *about* one in every four new members joined thanks to the LGBTQI+ committee and the presence/witness of people at the LGBTQI+ table in the lobby. But there has been pushback against LGBTQI+ for being too in-your-face.

General Good is the plea of scoundrels.



On May 19, 1896, the *NY Times* allocated a single sentence on page three to reporting the US Supreme Court's *Plessy v Ferguson* decision. Constitutionalizing Jim Crow hardly made news in 1896.

—**Ibram X. Kendi**, *The Atlantic*, Jun 1, 2020

From Sep 1939–May 1945, "The story of the Holocaust—meaning articles that focused on the discrimination, deportation, and destruction of the Jews—made the *NY Times* front page just 26 times, and only in six of those stories were Jews identified on the front as the primary victims."

—**Laurel Leff**, *Buried by the Times*

The question is whether or not you choose to disturb the world around you, or if you choose to let it go on as if you had never arrived.

—**Ann Patchett**

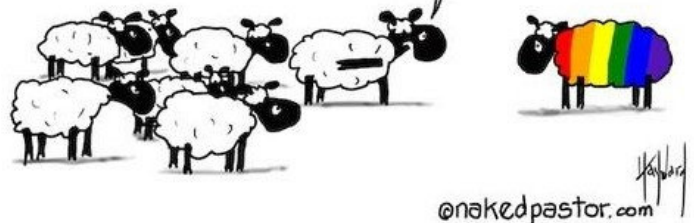
Before you say anything, you have to ask yourself three questions: Does this need to be said? Does this need to be said by me? And does this need to be said by me now?

—**Craig Ferguson**

If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, what am I? If not now, when? —**Rabbi Hillel**, *Pirke Avot* 1:14

When confronted with injustice, the proper form of politeness is attack. —**T-Bone Slim**

I would come out and support you publicly but I've got all these other relationships to consider!



We affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

But people of color at UUCSR have been demeaned and insulted in word and deed.

General Good is the plea of scoundrels.

We are all bastards, and God loves us anyway. —**Will Campbell**, *Brother to a Dragonfly*

A dysfunctional family is any family with more than one person in it.

—**Mary Karr**, *The Liars' Club*

Unless we are very, very careful, we doom each other by holding onto images of one another based on preconceptions that are in turn based on indifference to what is other than ourselves. Love is the honoring of others in a way that grants them the grace of their own autonomy and allows mutual discovery.

—**Anne Truitt**, *Daybook: The Journal of an Artist*

The depth of democracy is only as deep as the voices it protects. —**Ricki Lee Jones**

Concessions to bigotry or evil of any kind are dangerous. Policies that are simply designed to skirt the rules or find loopholes are only a short distance from complicity with the evil behind the rules. —**Gregory Dell**

Respect is carried not in great bold proclamations but in small moments of surprising intimacy and empathy. —**Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot**, *Respect: An Exploration*

Do good in Minute Particulars.

The false can never grow into truth by growing in power. —**Rabindranath Tagore**, *Stray Birds* <http://terebess.hu/english/tagore6.html>

The woman sets the table. She watches me beat the eggs. I scramble them in a saucepan. I take our plates, spoon eggs on them, we sit and eat. She and I and the kitchen have become extraordinary: we are not simply eating; we are pausing in the march to perform an act together; we are in love; and the meal offered and received is a sacrament which says: I know you will die; I am sharing food with you; it is all I can do, and it is everything.

—**André Dubus**, *Broken Vessels: Essays*

Do good in Minute Particulars.

Vulnerability is harder than having a strong moral stance. Surrendering to the flow is always more threatening to the ego than digging one's heels into dogma. —**Jonas Ellison**

Don't let your loyalty become slavery. If they don't appreciate what you bring to the table, them let them eat alone.

Sometimes I say to God: *You know what's wrong with you?* And God asks, *What?* And I begin to enumerate. *You love too indiscriminately. You trust people way too much. You're far too forgiving. And you're entirely too patient!* Having said that, I invite God to tell me what's wrong with me. But all I hear God say is, *You know, Honey, I really get a kick out of you!* Which only proves my point.

—**Melannie Svoboda**, *Everyday Epiphanies: Seeing the Sacred in Everything*

Hiding in what's comfortable robs you of your powerful ability to adapt, to explore, to wonder, to improve. Doing only what you've done before eats away at your options. If you think only what you've already thought, that's not really thinking at all. —**Ralph S. Marston** (no relation)

Music that's

Perky/Rousing

...when you have the Covid-19 blues

“**J'ai Vu Le Loup**” Balfa Toujours (Zydeco)

https://youtu.be/_QqPz1al6pU

“**Lonesome Road/Up Above My Head**”

Rhiannon Giddens

<https://youtu.be/IAEaNqRq-ZU?t=5>

Pensive/Reflective

...think on these things

“**Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen**”

Sam Cooke <https://youtu.be/rQz1zH5wymc>

“**Woke Up This Morning**”

Ruthie Foster https://youtu.be/rn_d4eWXoKo

Peaceful/Relaxing

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

“**Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen**”

Charlie Haden And Hank Jones (instrumental)

<https://youtu.be/E3EeMCog5go>

“**Sanctuaries of Silence**,” Gordon Hempton takes us on an immersive listening journey into Olympic National Park, one of the quietest places in North America. Listen with headphones/earbuds if possible.

<https://youtu.be/LUOzTsmugbo>

“**I Found God In Myself**,” Ntozake Shange

<https://youtu.be/q5T2FXEzmJI?t=2642>