

Worship transcript for September 27, 2020

*Prelude (members of the All Souls Jubilee Singers; Tim Rhodes and Ann Watters, soloists; Jenna Cameron, flute; Erin Vidlak, oboe; Corey Null, double bass; L. Starks, piano)*

“This River” (Uzee Brown and Ja Jahannes)

*Dedicated to the life and legacy of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg*

This river that runs through my life will never be uncrossable.  
This river that washes the shore from sea to sea;  
This river that calls my name from both shores just the same,  
This river shall never be uncrossable for me.

This river that runs through my life is a life line for me.  
This river that runs through my life is where I'll always be.  
This river will never be uncrossable for me.

These shores for which I stand upon shall never be unreachable.  
These shores that give me back my heart and guide my future sure,  
Shall never divide my love or keep me from thee above  
This river shall never be uncrossable for me.

This river that runs through my life is a life line for me.  
This river that runs through my life is where I'll always be.  
This river will never be uncrossable for me, for me, for me!

*Call to Worship and Chalice Lighting (Rev. Kathleen Rolenz)*

Welcome to this day of power and possibility to remind ourselves and one another of this great, Living Tradition of All Souls which we share. As we gather today we are challenged to be Explorers of this Spirit... Navigators of the unknown. We are lifelines and lifesavers. We are stewards of an ancient tradition. We are bearers of this flame, which we kindle now to engage the power of the gathered community. Come, let us worship together.

Please join me in singing our opening hymn together – O Sing Hallelujah. This piece will be offered by the All Souls Jubilee Singers, but you are invited to sing or hum or move along, with your computer on mute. O Sing, Hallelujah!

*Hymn (members of the All Souls Jubilee Singers; Erin Vidlack, oboe; Carolyn Davies, piano; Ann Watters, coordinator)*

217 “O Sing Helleluja”

O sing Hallelujah, O sing hallelujah  
All praise be to you through the high arch of heaven and praise be by sun, moon and stars,

By trumpet, harp and lute, with cymbals and strings and flute,  
With dancing, singing and music we praise you, Sing Hallelujah!

O sing Hallelujah, O sing hallelujah  
Our father and mother and sovereign of all mercies, we wish to be quit of all war  
By trumpet, harp and lute, with cymbals and strings and flute,  
With dancing, singing and music we praise you, Sing Hallelujah!

O sing Hallelujah, O sing hallelujah  
Our father and mother and sovereign of all mercies, inscribe us on pages of life  
By trumpet, harp and lute, with cymbals and strings and flute,  
With dancing, singing and music we praise you, Sing Hallelujah!

*Welcome (Michael Koehler)*

Good morning. My name is Michael Koehler and I am your Worship Associate this morning.

Welcome to our live long distance worship at All Souls Church. Where our name says it all.  
Where we seek to create a community where ALL people—people of all races, creeds, sexual orientations, gender expressions and abilities—where ALL people are welcome.

In a world of division, our mission at All Souls is to build what Dr. King called the “Beloved Community,” a diverse, spirit-filled, justice-seeking community that bears witness to the unity of the human family. We invite you to join us on this journey of faith and hope.

We extend a special welcome to our visitors and guests and all those who may be joining us for the first time.

Welcome to this special service, acknowledging the High Holy Days of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur – the Jewish New Year and the Day of Atonement. Our service will reflect these important themes.

If we were together in the sanctuary – this is the moment where I would invite you to “greet one another” and you still can! Although you’ll be on mute, simply take a moment to join us in the practice of beholding one another. Switch on camera, go to gallery view and give each other a smile, wave hello or drop a line in the chat! Take now a moment to do that. as a symbol of the love and welcome that are embodied in our name, All Souls.

*Announcements/Prayer (Rev. Tony Coleman)*

Good morning, All Souls, and welcome again! My name is Tony Coleman, and I serve as Minister of Adult Religious education, and I want to share with you some news about the life of our community.

We want to remind you that Religious Education for children and families happens every Sunday morning, beginning at 9:30 and continues throughout the morning. You can find more detailed

information about All Souls' Children, Youth and Family programming by checking out the e-newsletter that goes out each week.

We're very excited to announce that the Find your Ministry Fair is still happening! Now, we won't be able to meet in Pierce Hall and survey the splendor of opportunities for engagement and activity that this church offers. But, you can go to the All Souls website, scroll down just a bit, and click on the Find Your Ministry Fair logo. You'll then be taken to a whole suite of fun and informative videos from many of our community leaders and staff members sharing a bit about what they do and how you can get involved. So, after worship check out the website and see how you might like to share your gifts with us.

Let us now prepare ourselves for a time of prayer and reflection by sharing in the joys and sorrows of our community.

Peg Barratt expresses her gratitude for support and caring around the death of her husband Will Hayes, after complications from cancer. Will was buried in a private ceremony this week, and a virtual Celebration of Life will follow in a few weeks.

Tom Taylor, a long-time member of All Souls, died on Sept. 21 in Maryland hospice, after hospitalization for pneumonia. His son Keith and daughter Linda, who were raised at All Souls, were able to be with him. A small memorial will be held in coming weeks, and we offer condolences to family.

Kendra Hamilton, the niece of Dr. James Hill, let us know of the death of her uncle on Sept. 14. He was a retired professor of microbiology at Howard University, and had been active at All Souls in decades past. She is seeking more information on his D.C. life, so please be in touch with Rev. Louise Green if you knew him. We mourn with Kendra and extended family and friends.

We are sad to announce the unexpected death of Elandria Williams, after a brief hospital stay. Elandria was 41 years old, well known as a co-moderator of the Unitarian Universalist Association, a community organizer, and a founding member of Black Lives UU. When services are announced through Tennessee Valley UUC and the UUA, we will let you know.

This week we also mourn with the national wider community, and the family and friends of Breonna Taylor. A Louisville, KY Grand Jury declined to press charges against the officers responsible for her murder, and a number have been injured in the subsequent rallies. We pray for justice for Breonna, equitable accountability for police action, and say again with heavy hearts, Black Lives Matter.

In the silence that follows you I invite you to remain muted and name the person or places that are on your heart this morning, for joyful or sorrowful reasons.

Let us continue in prayer:

*Hymn 123 (Ann Watters and Nicole Rumeau)*

“Spirit of Life” (words and music by Carolyn McDade) (sung in English and Spanish)

Fuente de amor, ven hacia mi  
Y al corazon cantale tu compassion  
Sopla al volar, sube en la mar  
Hasta moldear la justicia de la vida  
Arraigame, liberame  
Fuente de amor, ven a mi, ven a mi

Spirit of life, come unto me  
Sing in my heart all the stirrings of compassion  
Blow in the wind, rise in the sea  
Move in the hand, giving life the shape of justice  
Roots hold me close, wings set me free  
Spirit of life, come to me, come to me.

*Reading (Rev. Coleman)*

“Ne’ilah” (Marge Piercy)

The hinge of the year the great gates opening  
and then slowly slowly closing on us.

I always imagine those gates  
hanging over the ocean  
fiery over the stone grey  
waters of evening.

We cast what we must  
change about ourselves  
onto the waters flowing  
to the sea.

The sins, errors, bad habits, whatever  
you call them, dissolve.  
When I was little I cried out I! I! I! I want, I want.

Older, I feel less important,  
a worker bee in the hive  
of history, miles of hard  
labor to make my sweetness.

The gates are closing  
The light is failing

I kneel before what I love  
imploring that it may live.

So much breaks, wears  
down, fails in us. We must  
forgive our broken promises—  
Their sharp shards in our hands.

*Sermon (Rev. Kathleen Rolenz)*

“The Story of Your Forgiveness”

*Reading 637: Litany of Atonement*

For remaining silent when a single voice would have made a difference  
We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

For each time that our fears have made us rigid and inaccessible  
We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

For each time that we have struck out in anger without just cause  
We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

For each time that our greed has blinded us to the needs of others  
We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

For the selfishness which sets us apart and alone  
We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

For falling short of the admonitions of the spirit  
We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

For losing sight of our unity  
We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

For those and for so many acts both evident and subtle which have field the illusion of  
separateness  
We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love

*Anthem (All Souls Jubilee Singers; Nicole Rumeau, soloist; Jenna Cameron, flute; Corey Null, double bass; L. Starks, keyboard)*

“Avinu Malkeinu” (traditional Hebrew liturgical prayer; arr. by Max Janowski)

*Offering (Michael Koehler)*

This summer was the most difficult time in my marriage thus far. My husband and I share a pretty small one-bedroom apartment – which has worked well for us – until the pandemic hit. The lockdown gave us the feeling that the walls were coming closer and closer every day.

The day George Floyd got killed, was the worst for us. I live in a multicultural, bi-racial marriage and while this country was confronted yet again with its centuries of trauma and injustice, it felt that our marriage was overwhelmingly resonating with that pain. While my husband mostly felt the anger about the injustices, I was just overwhelmed and anxious with confronting my own whiteness. As a German I've grown up with a lot of practice and education in dealing deeply with our Nazi history, but I've learnt in the last few months that doesn't automatically make me a good ally in the battle against racism. I've learnt how defensive I've been when it comes to issues of race.

All Souls was one of the core anchors for me to help me see what I had not been seeing. It helped me move from panic to learning, from reactive to creative, from arguing to listening. What helped me most – even through Zoom – were All Souls' sermons, the music, my deep friendships and last but not least, Rev. Tony's extraordinary pastoral care.

All Souls is sustaining me and my bi-racial marriage through this crisis. That's why I give generously and I hope you do, too.

You can do this by clicking on the link in the chat or following the giving information in the slide to follow. The offering will now be received.

*Hymn (members of the All Souls Jubilee Singers; Jenna Cameron, flute; Corey Null, double bass; L. Starks, keyboard)*

1011 "Return Again" (Shlomo Carlebach)

Return again, return again, return to the home of your soul.  
Return to who you are. Return to what you are.  
Return to where you are born and reborn again.  
Return again, return again, return to the home of your soul.

*Benediction (Rev. Rolenz)*

May we take the blessings of this hour not as a benediction, but a beginning. As we pray for an honest reckoning, a truer remorse, and a joyful repair, it is in this way we build up a bruised and broken world. Go forth from this place knowing you are loved – and now share whatever comfort, healing and hope you have found here – with others. Amen, Blessed Be and May it be So!

*Music (members of the All Souls Jubilee Singers; Erin Vidlak, oboe; Corey Null, double bass; L. Starks, keyboard)*

**“Hashivenu” (Israeli folksong; arr. by Michael Ryan)**