

Worship Transcript for August 1, 2021

Through an Ever-Enlarging Sphere: The Ripples of the Heiwa Peace Project in our community

Worship leaders: Mel Hardy, Chuck Wooldridge, Jen Hayman

Liturgist: Rev. Rob Keithan

Music: Jen Hayman/All Souls Choir

Coffee Hour: Rose Eaton

ASL Interpreter: Mia Engle

Prelude: "On Your Wings" by Iron and Wine, performed by Jen Hayman and Rochelle Rice, vocals, and John Lee and Matt McCleskey- guitars (from 5/3/21 worship)

God, there is gold hidden deep in the ground  
God, there's a hangman that wants to come around  
How we rise when we're born  
Like the ravens in the corn  
On their wings, on our knees  
Crawling careless from the sea  
God, give us love in the time that we have

God, there guns growing out of our bones  
God, every road takes us further from home  
All these men that you made  
How we wither in the shade  
Of your trees, on your wings  
We are carried to the sea  
God give us love in the time that we have

Call To Worship: Rev. Rob Keithan

For the bonds that connect us across distance, time, and struggle,  
And for the stories that help us make those connections,  
Come, let us worship together.

Chalice Lighting: Gretchen Jones

May this chalice sustain us though the wind has struck us hard, though fire has fallen on us, may it bring us together, may this chalice be a symbol of unity, hope and blessing.

Hymn Intro: Jen Hayman

Good morning, All Souls! Today's service focuses on how the stories we tell can help us honor the past, grow deeper in our relationships, and learn more about our connection to all beings and many stories. Sharing stories requires vulnerability, and our opening hymn invites, "Come, sing a song with me, that I might know your mind." I hope you'll join in singing and allow your voice to be part of our collective story this morning. The words will scroll on your screen.

Hymn: Come Sing a Song with Me

Come, sing a song with me, come, sing a song with me,  
come, sing a song with me, that I might know your mind.

And I'll bring you hope when hope is hard to find,  
and I'll bring a song of love and a rose in the wintertime.

Come, dream a dream with me, come, dream a dream with me,  
come, dream a dream with me, that I might know your mind.

(Chorus)

Come, walk in rain with me, come, walk in rain with me,  
come, walk in rain with me, that I might know your mind.

(Chorus)

Come, share a rose with me, come, share a rose with me,  
come, share a rose with me, that I might know your mind.

(Chorus)

Welcome & Land Acknowledgement: Mel Hardy

Once again, hello and welcome. I'm Mel Hardy and I will be serving as one of your worship leaders today. I use He/Him/His/They/and Theirs as my pronouns. And Welcome to a community where our search for spirituality and our passion for social action are both central. Where reverence for the Earth and belief in the dignity of every person informs our ethics. Where music is an expression of our joy, and acts of justice are a symbol of our hope.

Welcome to this place where ALL people — people of all races, national origins, creeds, gender identities and expressions, sexual orientations, ages and disabilities—where ALL people are welcome at this table of love and fellowship.

We extend a special greeting to our congregants and visitors from around the world, and those joining us for the first time. If you would like to receive our weekly email bulletins, please send a direct message to Gary Penn in the chat.

It is important to recognize the people who lived on the land where our church now stands. The closest village was Nacotchtank, from which the name Anacostia is derived. They were part of the Piscataway group of First Nations Peoples on this land. As we reflect on our role in building the beloved community, we summon our communal strength to inter-cultural acts of love, across the ethno-cultural spectrum of humanity, to include our 1st nation's brothers and sisters.

We acknowledge that indigenous peoples were here before us, are here with us now, and will continue to be with us as we look to the future. Let's take a moment of silence to reflect on whose land we each reside, in our many locations around the U.S., and on our planet Earth. [Silence]

Now we will greet each other in a time of "beholding." If you feel so moved, please turn on your camera, put your Zoom on gallery view, and scroll through the pages of beautiful souls. You can wave, say hello in the chat, and behold one another as we continue to create online community, together.

Beholding

Story for All Ages: Dolores Miller

Good morning All Souls. I'm Dolores Miller, your Director of Religious Education. Today you'll hear stories about our relationship with the Heiwa Peace Project. As Jen said, stories are important for deepening our connections. And you know I love stories. We all have them- well almost everyone, except maybe the person in this story!

"Why People Tell Tales" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-9tbdOpTh0&t=198s>

Narrator: Once there were three people who were traveling together. As day turned into night, they grew cold and tired. They looked for a place to spend the night. Up ahead they saw a cottage. They knocked on the door. An old woman answered.

Woman: What can I do for you?

Eden: May we come in?

Hazel: We need a place to spend the night.

Ben: We will gladly pay you.

Woman: You are welcome in my home, but you will each have to tell me a story.

Eden: Sure!

Hazel: Gladly!

Narrator: The 3rd Traveler said nothing. After they had warmed themselves by the fire and eaten soup, the woman said

Woman: Now I will have story from each of you.

Eden: Well, I have a really funny story about...

Narrator: And she told a story about a friend who played tricks on people. The woman laughed so hard she almost fell over!

Woman: (to Hazel): Now your story?

Hazel: My story is sad...

Narrator: And she told a story about some very lonely people. The woman wept.

Woman: (to Ben) And your story?

Ben: (shrugs shoulders) I don't really know any stories.

Woman: Everyone has a story. Something must have happened in your life. Tell us about it.

Ben: So I don't have a story, what's the fuss? I offered to pay you!

Woman: Well, if that's the way you feel, get out of my house!

Narrator: And she kicked him out without a coat or shoes. He knew he had to find shelter soon, so he ran to another house. But when he looked in the window, he saw the most alarming thing! He saw a snake, ready to pounce on a sleeping person! He ran to the next house. But when he looked in the window there, he saw a large mountain looming over another sleeping person! In horror he ran to another house. And there he saw 3 flames of fire circling 3 sound sleepers. The poor traveler had no choice but to go back to the house of the old woman.

Ben: (banging on door) Please, please. Let me in. I have a story to tell.

Narrator: He told them about the snake, the mountain, and the flames. Then the old woman spoke.

Woman: Now listen well. At the 1st house it wasn't really a snake you saw. But a belt that was left out. It was a warning to put your clothes away. At the 2nd house, it wasn't a mountain, but a mountain of toys that were left out. Don't be lazy, put your toys away.

Ben: So what about the 3rd house?

Woman: Ah, the 3rd house. In that house 3 people were sleeping peacefully after each one had shared a story. Each story turned into a flame to protect the house so no harm could come to the sleeping people. So, you must see how important it is to always have the gift of a story in your heart, and on your lips.

Narrator: The travelers never forgot her words. And from then on wherever the 3rd traveler went, he was never without a story. Of course, it was always the same story. It was about the time he had been a man with no story!

Announcements, Congregational Concerns, and Prayer: Rev. Keithan

Good morning! I'm Rob Keithan, your Minister of Social Justice, and I use he/him pronouns. It's wonderful to be back after a month of leave, and be part of a fantastic worship team this morning.

While today's service recognizes the anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, 1945, more importantly it recognizes and celebrates the work done since then to build relationships and work for peace. Much of this work is centered around what's known as the Hiroshima Children's Drawings, which you'll learn more about in the service. A documentary about the drawings, entitled "Pictures From a Hiroshima Schoolyard," will air tonight on Maryland Public Television at 5:00 PM. You can also buy it for home viewing from [hiroshimaschoolyard.com](http://hiroshimaschoolyard.com). It's a powerful film. Please be advised that it contains some graphic images that are not suitable for younger children.

There will also be a program Tuesday, on "Toward a Nuclear Weapons-Free World: Ethics, Social Justice, and Civil Society Activism," co-sponsored by the United Nations Association of the National Capital Area and All Souls Church. That's this Tuesday, August 3rd, from 6:00-7:30. The link for more information and free registration is in the chat: <http://www.unanca.org/news-events/upcoming/1594-save-the-date-august-3rd-toward-a-nuclear-weapons-free-world-ethics-social-justice-and-civil-society-activism>

Finally, a reminder that for the next 3 Sundays--August 8, 15, and 22--All Souls will be joining 4 other large congregations in the DC area for worship as part of "Preaching Up the Potomac." Check your e-news for times, as they vary according to host congregation. We strongly encourage you to tune in to both support and experience the powerful offerings of our sibling congregations.

We turn now to our pastoral concerns. We are sad to announce the death of Peter Sailer on July 22 after complications from heart surgery. We are sending love and condolences to spouse Laura, and children George, Fred and Lisa. Peter was a long-time member of all Souls, and active in many musical groups, including the Jubilee Singers. A memorial service is pending for the fall and will be announced soon.

We send healing wishes and prayers to several who are recovering:

To Marita Lee, who was in the hospital this week for heart issues and treatment.

To Anakin Frum, son of Shari Gilbert, who just had elective surgery on Wednesday.

To Claudia Leibler, who had hernia repair surgery last week, and is now at home.

To Maudie Taylor, the mother of Shirley Blakeley, who has been hospitalized in Alabama for a few weeks.

And to Fred Katz, who suffered a concussion after a bike accident this past week.

In the silence that follows, please say aloud the names of those you carry on your heart this morning.

Spirit of Life and Love, God who transcends time and tragedy,

Be with us as we wrestle with the routine challenges of life, as well as the additional hardship brought on by the pandemic.

Be with us also as we wrestle with the demons of our past, present, and future, the shortcomings and short-sightedness that led to such violence and suffering in our human family.

Help us, by opening up to each other across differences, by sharing our stories, to tell the truth. To heal, to learn, and to build a better world together.

Amen.

## Spirit of Life

Fuente de amor, ven hacia mi. Y al corazón cántale tu compasión  
Sopla al volar, sube en la mar. Hasta moldear la justicia de la vida  
Arraígame, libérame. 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.

## Moment of Silence + Chalice Viewing

Reading: Rev. Keithan

“The Great Family” by William Ellery Channing, from “The Perfect Life: In Twelve Discourses”

I am a living member of the great family of all souls,  
and I cannot improve or suffer myself  
without diffusing good or evil around me  
through an ever-enlarging sphere.

I belong to this family.  
I am bound to it by vital bonds.  
I am always exerting an influence on it.  
I can hardly perform an act that is confined  
In its consequence to myself.

I belong to this family.  
All others are affected by what I am, and say, and do,  
So a single act of mine may spread in widening circles  
Through a nation or humanity.

Reflection: Mel Hardy

I have many to thank for my discovery of social justice-seeking activism, and it comes through this church congregation. I have the benefit of being a staffer at All Souls Church starting in April, 2002. From that time, my life has been predicated (howsoever unevenly) on activism for “human flourishing and human betterment” On our website, a reading of our church’s social justice principles, paragraph 10, holds “Nourishing Leaders and Skills”. In that, having been so nourished, I play a role on the curatorial team for the Hiroshima Children’s Drawings, nurtured by so many in this church. By way of background, in August 2002, John Steinbach of the Hiroshima Nagasaki Peace Committee of the National Capital Area brought a group of Japanese visitors to the church to see the Children’s Drawings, about which I hitherto

had no knowledge. I had come to my role at the church as a long-time arts and culture advocate and professional. Upon finding the Children's Drawings in the safe, and displaying them in our library on the conference room table, I was struck by both the aesthetic simplicity and complexity that I saw in them. I was filled with questions, so many questions about how these works of art came to our church. I wondered about the matter of stewardship of these cultural objects from 1947. I then saw the visitors drawn to tears upon their seeing them. While their history is well known in Hiroshima and in Japan, it was at that moment, in my role as Administrator, that we, in this church, were to build a new ministry. Later, Chuck Wooldridge will expand on this in his sermon.

Many joined in that ministry, and internal coalitions were built to preserve and conserve the Drawings. Over time, they were presented for the first time, to our General Assembly in Salt Lake City with Rev. Louise Green and others in our congregation. That was in 2009. Subsequently, in 2010, they went on tour with members of our congregation back to Japan to reunite them with many of the artists that could be identified by partner Shizumi Shigeto Manale. We had an exhibition at the Honkawa Elementary School and associated museum on that tour. We developed relationships with our new Japanese Friends and other communities of faith. A documentary film was developed with All Souls Church and The Hiroshima Children's Drawings as the central actors. That film will be shown this evening on Maryland Public Vision, with information for access provided elsewhere during this service

Your curatorial team has also toured the Hiroshima Children's Drawings throughout the United States from California through Minnesota to much of the Mid-Atlantic. Both Jen Hayman and Chuck Wooldridge will present additional context and nuance about which our congregation is duly proud. Congregants at All Souls Church are represented in many of the global nuclear weapons abolitionist coalitions and institutions, including the United Nations, and many domestic and international civil society activist groups. All Souls Church is known globally in the nuclear weapons abolitionist movement.

Perhaps a highlight of my work with the Hiroshima Children's Drawings was our 2017 program on the marriage of our Hiroshima Children's Drawings with the Jacob Lawrence "Hiroshima Series". I knew both Jacob Lawrence and David Driskell in my work in the arts and culture eco-system. Jen will speak about our introduction of the late David Driskell to the church through the Hiroshima Children's Drawings.

I will leave my reflections here with comment that it may be the role of the arts, culture and the humanities that adds to our prophetic visioning, and voices for hope in our world. We lift the creative energies in which every human is endowed. We lift that foundational, ontological, character of that endowment to mine the humanitarian impulses within us all. We support the agency of each of us within the sound of my voice, to support the aspirations of us all to find our better and higher selves. It is my great effort to join you in building the community, that beloved community, which, in mutuality, predicates itself on "human flourishing and human betterment". May this be so.

Reflection: Jen Hayman

Thank you, Mel, for this testimonial. All Souls is a globally recognized church in the nuclear weapons abolitionist movement much because of your efforts. Thank you for all of the human betterment you have aided in this community and beyond.

This idea of human betterment and human flourishing ties so well to the reading by William Ellery Channing that Rev. Keithan shared earlier. I love this reading. I am so proud that a line from this text is carved into the chancel table in our sanctuary, and also adorns every order of service we print: "I am a living member of the great family of All Souls." I love that it was also the text source for the All Souls Cantata premiered by former music director Scot Hanna Weir and written by Scott Gendel. It feels like if any All Souls member was asked about the most important quote in our identity, it very well might come from this text. But my very favorite line? "I cannot improve or suffer myself without diffusing good or evil around me in an ever-enlarging sphere." This line is so evocative to me: I think of a pool of water, steady and still. Then I think of a drop of water dripping from one of my fingers, creating rippling, beautiful, mathematical concentric circles that did not exist before. This image was actually the inspiration for the multi-disciplinary arts experience we created and hosted in 2017 entitled "Hiroshima: An Introspective." The project, which brought together the worlds of visual art, dance, and music from within and beyond our church community, invited attendees to put themselves at the center of the story by bearing witness to the stories of others, and ask themselves how to create more love, more compassion, and more space in their hearts for the work of peace in the world. The marketing for the event even featured this concentric circle image, the brightest spot at the center, fading slightly with each new ring, a symbol of the rippling effects of Channing's "ever enlarging sphere."

The story of the Hiroshima Children's Drawings was one of the first stories shared with me when I arrived at All Souls in 2013. I remember the images had just come back from an exhibition, and I was elated when I had the opportunity to view them in person: they were full of life, color, innocence, dreaming. Thinking about how these children were at school on a day just like any other August day, and then, in a noiseless flash, their lives became forever changed. Thinking now of my own child, who will start school this fall, and how I want to believe in his safety and preserve his innocence and joy in a world that is so quick to steal those things. These drawings are a reminder of both the resilience and the emotional depth children possess, and also of the ability art has to speak when words fail.

My relationship with Mel Hardy has yielded many wonderful things over the years, but perhaps the richest connection was to Dr. David C. Driskell: visual artist, art curator, and widely regarded as the preeminent scholar on African American art and art from the African diaspora. I learned through Mel that Dr. Driskell's collection included Jacob Lawrence's Hiroshima series: a collection of eight paintings which accompanied John Hersey's book by the same name. Upon learning this information, my mind began to race with possibilities for an exhibition featuring both the Children's Drawings and Lawrence's paintings: both were reflections of the same event, but with very different imagery. I set about making plans to meet with Dr. Driskell to discuss my ideas.

We met at Dr. Driskell's home in Hyattsville. He made tea and we ate biscuits and chatted in general about art and music and church and after listening to my pitch, he graciously agreed to allow me to borrow the paintings. We made a simple, hand-written agreement (at my urging! I was nervous about security and temperature control and art boxes and lighting and all sorts of other stuff. I had never imagined it would be this easy!) And the deal was done! But then Dr. Driskell asked, "Do you know the inspiration behind Lawrence's paintings?" Going into our meeting, I had assumed the paintings were his imagined depictions of life in Hiroshima on the day of the bombing. I learned that day, however, that the images were Lawrence's depictions of African American life from his own lived experience in Harlem. And then, of course, I saw it: the children playing with the flightless kite, the figures holding up a crumbling ceiling, a family sitting at a dining table...they could be anyone. Anywhere. Through his



empathy and the universality of his images, Lawrence removes the ability for us to think of the victims of the Hiroshima bombing as those people over there. It makes them real and human, and when we see that, our own humanity grows. With this knowledge, Dr. Driskell invited me into an ever-enlarging sphere of understanding this story.

Hiroshima: An Introspective told the story of the Hiroshima bombing, the children's drawings, and Lawrence's urban allegory, but it also told the story of the Japanese senninbari, belts made by 1,000 women who each sewed a single knot into each belt as a prayer for soldiers going off to war, told through movement by our partners at Dance Exchange. It elevated the stories of captives and prisoners of war, whose words were saved and set to music for chorus, even though they themselves could not be saved. It honored stories of resilience of those who continued to create art under the most impossible circumstances. Attendees were literally surrounded by stories woven together in this immersive arts experience, and by the end, it wasn't just about Hiroshima, or WWII, or even war in general: it was about our interconnectedness, the "vital bonds" by which we are bound to one another, and the responsibility we hold in the ongoing work of peace and reconciliation.

Peace and reconciliation does not often come easy, and sometimes we must sit with uncomfortable truths, confusing emotions, and the grief of others. I think about the joy on the faces of the children at the Hankawa school as they opened art supplies from the youth of All Souls some 70 years ago, and the response from our youth when they opened their gifts of gratitude in the form of these beautiful drawings. I think of our Heiwa pilgrims, visiting Hiroshima with Japanese natives who had taken them into their homes, shared their tables and their stories with them. I think of those Japanese guests who came to DC, who saw the Enola Gay and wept with their American hosts. I think of the tears choir members shed when we sing the words of an unknown poet who died in a concentration camp: "I believe in love even when I feel it not." To allow these stories, these relationships, these moments, to seep into us and transform us: that, too, is part of the work of peace and reconciliation, the work that has been brilliantly exemplified by those involved in the Heiwa Peace Project. It is through these experiences that we come to know our own place in the story: as part of the great family of all souls.

Amen.

Anthem: "Earth Song" by Frank Ticheli, sung by All Souls Choir

Sing, Be, Live, See...  
This dark stormy hour,  
The wind, it stirs.  
The scorched earth  
Cries out in vain:  
O war and power,  
You blind and blur,  
The torn heart  
Cries out in pain.  
But music and singing  
Have been my refuge,  
And music and singing

Shall be my light.  
A light of song  
Shining Strong: Alleluia!  
Through darkness, pain, and strife, I'll  
Sing, Be, Live, See...  
Peace.

Offertory: Chuck Wooldridge

My name is Chuck Wooldridge and my pronouns are he/him. I joined All Souls in 2002 and in 2005 got involved in the Hiroshima Children's Drawings, now part of the Heiwa Peace Project. I've engaged in lots of different committees at All Souls. For me the one ministry that has continuously inspired, challenged, and anchored me is the Heiwa Peace Project.

My heart is full of gratitude for Memories, Experiences, and deep Connections to the many wonderful souls making this work possible.

For instance, I am grateful:

To have sung Amazing Grace with Hiroshima school children playing flutes crafted from the wood of a tree having survived the atomic bomb

To have placed a commemorative wreath with All Souls members at the Cenotaph at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. The inscription on the Cenotaph reads: "Let all the souls here rest in peace for we shall not repeat the evil." Struck by seeing the words "all the souls" we recognized these were the same "all souls" on our own table in the sanctuary where we place the chalice every Sunday. The 50 or more All Souls members who made the pilgrimage to Hiroshima continue to ask themselves what are we called to do so this evil is not repeated?

To have accompanied our guests from Japan to see the Enola Gay at the Air and Space Museum and to the Japanese American Memorial witnessing their sorrow, anguish, and questions

To have known some of our ancestors who started this work at All Souls that is now ours to continue: Bob Freeman, Paul and Jane Pfeiffer, Emily Dwyer. The Pfeiffers sold their car when they were no longer driving and donated the funds to this ministry. And it was a fine Cadillac in excellent condition.

For the hospitality repaid by many All Souls members who took into their homes our Japanese partners visiting All Souls. BTW - It was pretty amazing to have danced in Pierce Hall with 100 All Souls and Rissho Kosei Kai members to a live band playing Happy by Pharrell Williams. I was delighted to discover that my dance partner from Rissho Kosei Kai knew every word to the song and danced much better than me.

Today, I am grateful that our vision continues to evolve. As the global pandemic interrupted our plans for a pilgrimage to Japan this year, we have been compelled to reimagine our way forward. The Heiwa Peace Project discussed how our work can better align with and support the 8th Principle in all our future activities. We also developed an exciting and promising new partnership with the United Nations Association/National Capital Area. We are holding our first event on Tuesday focused on the question of nuclear disarmament with plans to consider working on a host of other human rights and humanitarian

relief issues. On October 24th we will observe United Nations Day with other UU Churches in the Potomac Cluster.

I financially support All Souls because it is a church that when it says All Souls it can imagine a love and justice large enough to extend across the Pacific and Atlantic and to all lands. It can imagine a world free of nuclear weapons and is willing to ask what we can do to advance that goal. Our mailing address may be Washington DC but our reach can be far beyond.

Please support the ministries of All Souls. The morning's offering will now be received.

<https://all-souls.org/donate>

Text ASCU to 73256

Hymn: This Is My Song

This is my song, O God of all the nations,  
A song of peace for lands afar and mine  
This is my home, the country where my heart is;  
Here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine  
But other hearts in other lands are beating  
With hopes and dreams as true and high as mine

My country's skies are bluer than the ocean,  
And sunlight beams on cloverleaf and pine  
But other lands have sunlight too and clover,  
And skies are everywhere as blue as mine  
Oh, hear my song, O God of all the nations,  
A song of peace for their land and for mine

Benediction: Rev. Keithan

The words of that hymn say it best:  
Oh, hear my song, O God of all the nations,  
A song of peace for their land and for mine.

May it be so. And amen.

Benediction in Music: "One Voice" by the Wailin' Jennys, performed by the All Souls Choir

This is the sound of one voice  
One spirit, one voice  
The sound of one who makes a choice  
This is the sound of one voice  
This is the sound of one voice

This is the sound of voices two  
The sound of me singing with you  
Helping each other to make it through  
This is the sound of voices two  
This is the sound of voices two

This is the sound of voices three  
Singing together in harmony  
Surrendering to the mystery  
This is the sound of voices three  
This is the sound of voices three

This is the sound of all of us  
Singing with love and the will to trust  
Leave the rest behind it will turn to dust  
This is the sound of all of us  
This is the sound of all of us

This is the sound of one voice  
One people, one voice  
A song for every one of us  
This is the sound of one voice  
This is the sound of one voice