

Order of Service/Script for May 7, 2017

11:00 AM

Welcome and Announcements:

Robert Hurt

Opening Words:

Cory

Maya Angelou turned forty on April 4, 1968. She had planned a big party in Harlem, with many of the day's black intellectual elite among the guests. History had other ideas; Dr. King's assassination sent Angelou into a weeks-long depression. It was fellow writer James Baldwin who helped her dig out of it. Angelou recalls Baldwin's assistance in her book *A Song Flung Up to Heaven*, where she writes that laughter and ancestral guidance got her through:

There was very little serious conversation. The times were so solemn and the daily news so somber that we snatched mirth from unlikely places and gave servings of it to one another with both hands. . . .

I told Jimmy I was so glad to laugh.

Jimmy said, "We survived slavery. . . . You know how we survived? We put surviving into our poems and into our songs. We put it into our folk tales. We danced surviving in Congo Square in New Orleans and put it in our pots when we cooked pinto beans. . . . [W]e knew, if we wanted to survive, we had better lift our own spirits. So we laughed whenever we got the chance."

Prelude:

Sharon Jaffee

Chalice Lighting:

Laura Esquivel's novel *Like Water For Chocolate*

Cory

Ask _____ to come forward and light our chalice.

"Each of us is born with a box of matches inside us, but we can't strike them all by ourselves; we need oxygen and a candle to help. In this case, the oxygen for example, would come from the breath of the person you love; the candle would be any kind of food, music, caress, word, or sound that engenders the explosion that lights one of the matches.

For a moment we are dazzled by an intense emotion. A pleasant warmth grows within us, fading slowly as time goes by, until a new explosion comes along to revive it. Each person has to discover what will set off those explosions in order to live, since the combustion that occurs when one of them is ignited is what nourishes the soul."

State: We will now stand and sing, "**Gather the Spirit, Hymn #347**, written by white musician and visitor to UUCSV, **Jim Scott**

Hymn#347: Gather the Spirit

Sharon Jaffee

Message for All Ages

Something on My Face: Learning How to Be in Community

Marie Francis

Before beginning, dramatically turn your back on the congregation and children, and place a smudge on cheek. It is important that this be a smudge that is large enough for the congregation to see, but does not cover the whole face. One cheek is good. Turn around.

I need some volunteers today to be human mirrors. One at a time, I'd like you to act like you are a human mirror. You can stand near to me and say, "You have something on your face!" After you do that, I am going to respond to what you have told me. And then it will be someone else's turn. Okay? Who will be first?

Responses:

- 1 "Ahhhh, nope. I don't have anything on my face."
- 2 "What are you talking about? You're wrong. I'm not going to listen to you."
- 3 "Funny you should say that because YOU are the one who has something on YOUR face."
- 4 "You must be joking. I am an expert face washer. I have studied face washing for YEARS!"
- 5 "How dare you tell me I have something on my face! You don't get to play with me anymore!"
- 6 "How dare you tell me I have something on my face! I'm going to leave the game now."
- 7 "I have something on my face?!? What's wrong with me? I'm going back to bed."
- 8 "Everybody has something on their face. So why mention it? There's nothing we can do about it. It's always going to be this way."
- 9 "I have something on my face? Thank you for telling me. I've been washing it away, bit by bit, but I guess some of it is stickier than I thought. I really appreciate you're letting me know. Would you be willing to help me wash my face?" *[provide moist wash cloths and jointly clean away that smudge...]*

When you think about being in community together and what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist, which response did you think was the best one?

[Let the children answer – possible follow up questions: why do you think that? If they are unsure, you can ask, “Was it the first one, when I said that there was nothing on my face? Was it the one when I told you that you couldn’t play with me anymore?]

Sometimes, when we are building community together, it’s important to listen to what other people have to say, even if we might not want to hear it at first. But we do that because it’s part of our covenant – our promise – to each other.

There are times when we need to hear news or feedback that causes us discomfort, but in hearing it and responding to it constructively, with curiosity and humility, we can more easily go about building Beloved Community. This is especially true when it comes to feedback about how cultural privilege -- along race, gender/gender identity, dis/ability, sexual orientation, class -- impacts others. This interactive story demonstrates the many ways that we respond, some unskillful, ending with one that affirms our covenant with one other.

State: We will now sing our children out to their class with “*Go Now in Peace*,” written by white musician Natalie Sleeth

Singing the Children Out, Hymn #413: *Go Now in Peace*

Cory

Introduction:

Cory

Today’s service today it is a bit different. It is different because we are about to explore a tough and challenging topic.

Let us begin with the provocative term - white supremacy as it relates to today’s topic.

From our Teach In leaders...

“White supremacy [is] a set of institutional assumptions and practices, often operating unconsciously, that tend to benefit white people and exclude people of color.” In 2017, actual “white supremacists” are not required in order to uphold white supremacist culture. Building a faith full of people who understand that key distinction is essential as we work toward a more just society...”

From Rev. Sofia Betancourt, a UU Minister shares with us...

State: Quote “Whatever your reaction was to the words White Supremacy, it’s a fair reaction. It’s real. It’s part of the journey... We are not saying there is an inherent evil in Unitarian Universalism, at all. We are saying there is a desperate need for the kind of beloved community work that we offer in the world and we want to do that work better.” **State: End Quote**

The first time I heard about the UU White Supremacy Teach-In, I was deeply uncomfortable about adopting this language. So I learned more about this term by quickly reading up on the subject and by attending several Webinars led by our Teach-In leaders and participated in conversations with ministers and my colleagues.

I turned to my curiosity, and listened. What I have learned and come to understand is that the term “white supremacy” is used by sociologists, academics, and many anti-oppression activists. I understand the term “white supremacy” to describe a culture that puts the experiences, needs, and voices of white people at its center. Whiteness becomes the norm against which all else is measured.

My colleague, Andrea James shares this visual:

“Like the fish that doesn’t realize it’s swimming in water - it just *exists* - we are all swimming in this culture. Picture an iceberg¹ with overt racism and actual white supremacists at the top; the part we can all see. Beneath the surface there is an even bigger area with more subtle, less outrageous but still damaging assumptions, behaviors, and attitudes. That’s the part the rest of us “swim” in - white people may not be *white supremacists*, but all people exist within a culture that values whiteness above all.”

So, where did this come from? Why a “teach-in”?

A hiring issue at the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) - to which we belong - sparked controversy and conversations about race and power within our denomination. *A lot* happened over a matter of days, and discussions were broad and deep, and spread well beyond hiring practices.

Within the early hours following this spark, a **small group of religious educators** - people of color (POC) and people they identified as their allies - gathered online to support each other and to figure out what needed to happen next. The **natural solution** for this group of religious professionals was to **Teach!**

A call went out to congregations to disrupt their “regularly scheduled programming” and teach instead, about white supremacy. I took this idea that was **just being introduced** (less than 24 hours) to the Worship Committee and to our minister, Rev. Savage, without hesitation, everyone agreed.

Your worship committee and our minister *understand that large shifts require work that will challenge our comfort levels. We believe that hundreds of UU churches signaling to their own members and to the larger community that this quote - “our faith takes racism seriously, especially within our own walls” - will push our faith toward the beloved community we all seek.*

When the original request went out there was hope to have **150 churches participate**. Now **we are participating in this teach-in with 650 681** churches and congregations that represent every state, as well as international UU’s from Mumbai, New Zealand, the UK and Canada.

What will our service look like today?

We will listen to several readings from our members. You are invited to listen closely and reflect. You may find today’s topics challenging for your soul, please know and understand you are not alone. We

are all struggling. Not one individual here today is an expert on this subject. This is why an experience like this must take place in community...so that we can grow and learn together. Today's service is not about guilt and shame. This work is essential. Together we will begin the work of "building a new way" so that we - our congregation and our denomination - can truly become a community for all.

Sharing of Joys and Concerns:
Spirit of Life #123 and Unspoken Joys and Concerns:

Cory
Sharon Jaffee

READING #1 The privileges of a racist system *by john a. powell*

Bob Gettings

"The thing that's really slick about whiteness, if you will, is that most of the benefits can be obtained without ever doing anything personally... There are a whole set of assumptions that flow from being white, just like there are a whole set of benefits that flow from being male—you know, being a man doesn't mean that you have antipathy toward women, but if society is patriarchal, which a lot of people say it is, it means that the way resources are distributed in society benefits men.

In that sense, men are not innocent, even though they may not personally have antipathy toward women. In the same way, in that sense, whites are not innocent. They're given the spoils of a racist system, even if they're not personally racist."

READING #2 The Nod *by Adam Lawrence Dyer*

Jane Laura Doyle

You've seen it. Two black men pass each other on the street. They nod. Subtle, sometimes imperceptible, but there *is* acknowledgement.

"Do you know him?"

"No . . . (yes)

. . . no."

I learned this from my father and my grandfather and my other grandfather and my uncles and my great uncle and from every other black man in my early life. Once, as a teenager, I didn't do it. I was verbally accosted from behind, "Don't you ever forget . . . *I'm all you've got!*" I've never forgotten since.

These days it gets harder. I walk through places where armies of broken black men inhabit the corners and wander aimless and beaten. When I cross their paths, I look for that acknowledgement, the one that says, "We are valid. We are real, we have a place, we have a family . . . *you are all I've got.*" When it doesn't come—obscured by drugs and desperation, or more often from just trying to live as part of this grand experiment called *America*, pressed down, shot at, torn apart, stolen from, talked about and not to, criminalized and caricatured—part of me dies inside.

The young brother passes without it. It is generational too. Fewer and fewer young people making this contact. I wonder if they really feel safe? So safe that they don't need this kind of community. Not just with skin color, but feeling no need to recognize each other for *any* reason. Maybe they are afraid because they see me as the unknown. *My God, we don't recognize each other!* Maybe we aren't teaching them that the struggle isn't over, that time hasn't healed a wound that opens, over and over again. That this simple acknowledgement . . . nod . . . was once all we had, and still, like it or not, *may be all we've got.*

Source: "[Love Beyond God](http://www.uuabookstore.org/Love-Beyond-God-P17877.aspx)" - <http://www.uuabookstore.org/Love-Beyond-God-P17877.aspx>

Don't speak to me of "healing" racism,
or "wounded souls" or the "painful hurt"
until you are willing to feel the scars
on my great-great-grandmother Laury's back.

Don't speak to me of "values"
or "justice" or "righting wrongs"
until you are able to feel the heartache
of my great-grandfather Graham
whose father may have been his master.

Don't speak to me of "equity"
or "opportunity" or the "common good"
until you are able to hear the fear
from my grandmother Mae
as the only black woman in her college.

Don't speak to me of "passion"
or "longing" or "standing on the side of love"
until you know the shame
felt by my mother Edwina
mocked by teachers for the curve of her back.

Don't speak to me of "together"
or "understanding" or "empathy"
until you know my rage
as a young actor hearing the direction
to "be more black . . . more male."

The pain you are trying to heal has no real name.
This "pain" you speak of has no story;
it is anonymous, vague, and empty.

Don't speak to me of "healing"
for I heal the second I am ripped apart.
My wounds self-suture,
and like the clever creature I am,
I just grow new legs to outrun the pain ever faster.
It is something I have had to practice for generations,
that feel like an eternity.

So, please don't speak to me of "healing"
because you cannot know what healing means
until you know the hurt.

Source: "[Love Beyond God](http://www.uuabookstore.org/Love-Beyond-God-P17877.aspx)" - <http://www.uuabookstore.org/Love-Beyond-God-P17877.aspx>

STATE: You are now invited to stand and sing **Hymn #170** "*We Are a Gentle, Angry People*, written by white musician **Holly Near**

Offertory Words

Cory

Individually and Together by Heather Christensen

Unitarian Universalism is a grand vision
of a world filled with peace and justice, love and joy.

That vision is embodied in a few large congregations,
numerous mid-sized congregations,
and many, many small congregations.

No matter its size,
every congregation depends on each of its members.

Each one of you,
by your commitment of time, energy, and resources,
helps make that grand vision real.

Individually and together,
we are Unitarian Universalists,
building a world filled with peace and justice, love and joy.

Offertory Music

Sharon Jaffee

READING #4 Visitors in the Struggle for Racial Justice *By Aisha Ansano* Joyce Badanes

No matter what tactics and methods racial justice activists use, the general response of society will be a collective head-shaking and *tsk-tsk*-ing — because what people are actually complaining about are not the specific tactics that are being used in the struggle for racial justice, but that the struggle for racial justice *exists at all*.

I imagine that for most people, the immediate reaction to that statement is defensiveness. “I really don’t think that the struggle for racial justice should exist,” some might respond. “I just think there are better ways to go about it than blocking traffic and making me late for work. I get annoyed and frustrated and it really doesn’t convince me to join your fight.”

What, exactly, is going to convince that person to join the fight? Picket signs on the side of the road? Then they’ll just think, “Look at those troublemakers disturbing the peace over there,” as they drive on their way to work. Then they’ll promptly forget about it.

It’s not the specific methods that are making people uncomfortable. It’s the fact that the struggle for racial justice is seeping into their awareness in ways that they can’t ignore.

Think about it in terms of this metaphor: You’re visiting a foreign country where the customs are very different from what you are used to, and the language is different, and some of the things they do are not only different but make you feel deeply uncomfortable. As a guest in that country, it is not for you to say that the things that people who live there are doing are wrong. Instead, your role is to learn, to pay attention and try to understand how things work, and to adapt. But if you do something

that goes against their norms, it's also your role as a guest to not insist that they let you do things however you want to do them. It is your role as a guest to pause and consider what you're doing.

White people tend to be visitors to the struggle for racial justice, ones that aren't forced to be there but can choose to come in and leave whenever they like. People of color reside in the struggle for racial justice by virtue of their race. As people who are constantly in the struggle, people of color have the right to make claims on what they find okay and not okay, what they see as helpful and not helpful.

READING #5 To the Death of Michael Brown: We Bear Witness *by Theresa Soto* Cory

Michael Brown, an unarmed African-American teen, was fatally shot August 9, 2014, by a member of the Ferguson Police Department. *Michael would have been 21 on May 20th.*

Turn and look at your neighbor. Not only can you probably see them. You can experience being in the same space with them today. If you were called as a court witness, you could speak to the truth that they exist.

Today, we will bear witness to the death of Michael Brown. I will offer a part of the story of Michael Brown. ***When I extend my hand to you***, please respond with, *We bear witness*.

Let's try it now. *We bear witness*.

With reverence and sorrow, we remember the death of Michael Brown. We know black lives matter.

We bear witness.

On Saturday, August 9, 2014, Michael Brown was shot by an officer of the Ferguson Police Department in Ferguson, Missouri. We know black lives matter.

We bear witness.

The media gives us conflicting stories. We know black lives matter.

We bear witness.

We are not distracted by misinformation. We know black lives matter.

We bear witness.

Misinformation encourages us to put our frustration and sadness somewhere outside of ourselves, outside of these walls. On the police, on the dead young man, on the system. We know black lives matter.

We bear witness.

As a community, we reflect on the thread that connects the actions of an armed police officer with our own. We examine our snap judgments. We challenge the times we have remained silent while another suffered. We know black lives matter.

We bear witness.

We recognize that in order to challenge a system that is built to maintain racism, we must contemplate the effects of our everyday actions. We know black lives matter.

We bear witness.

We do not look away from the things that are hard to see. We know black lives matter.

We bear witness.

When justice eludes us,

We bear witness.

We take courage.

We bear witness.

We extend love.

We bear witness.

A plaque was installed on a sidewalk near where he was fatally shot. On Michael's plaque you will find the following words...

In Memory of Michael OD Brown May 20, 1996 – August 9, 2014

I would like the memory of Michael Brown to be a happy one. He left an afterglow of smiles when life was done. He leaves an echo whispering softly down the ways of happy and loving times and bright and sunny days. He'd like the tears of those who grieve, to dry before the sun of happy memories that he left behind when life was done.

READING #6

The Offensiveness of My Pain *by* Shane Paul Neil

Bruce White

I'm on my way to a job where I am the only black person in my office. I work with people who either don't know or don't care about Alton Sterling or Philando Castile. They are going to ask me "How are you this morning?" and the simple truth is that I can't be honest. I can't say that I'm scared and angry and that I want to take a mental health day. I can't say that I and people like me subconsciously fear for our lives on a daily basis.

I can't say how I am this morning because it will make them uncomfortable and offended. The offensiveness of my pain is why we have to remind America over and over again that Black Lives Matter: because if you lack empathy for our tears it's likely that you lack respect for our lives.

STATE: You are now invited to stand as you are willing and able to sing "***When I Am Frightened***," #1012 When I Am Frightened (Teal Hymnal) written by white musician Shelley Jackson Denham who served as the music director in the 80's at the Heritage UU Church in Cincinnati, OH and passed away fairly recently in August 2013.

Hymn: #1012 When I Am Frightened (Teal Hymnal)

Sharon Jaffee

Call to Action:

Cory

The call to action is much bigger than this one service today. The call to action is about transforming oppressive structures and creating a more equitable, caring and beautiful world through reflection and action. When we open ourselves to learning and understanding we join in this transformation.

Take the coming days/weeks to think about what you have heard here today. You may have found or will find that this service invokes many questions for you. So, like we did back in November after the election with our

Question Cloud Wall we will do the same again. Upon reflection you are invited to write your question(s) on a post-it note for the next few weeks and place it on the corresponding poster in our narthex.

We will leave this activity up for the next few weeks; afterwards, a document with your thoughts and questions will be compiled and shared with Rev. Savage as well as our Adult Education and our Social Justice Committees. These committees will discuss and share your thoughts to see what next steps our church may want to take.

Finally, We have some participants here today from the Showing Up for Racial Justice Reading Group that have been confronting these issues. They will be available to talk to you from the front of the sanctuary after the service. Also note, that just because some of us have been involved with this work, we in no way claim to be experts. We are on this journey with you.

Benediction: Responsive Reading – See Insert

Nancy Ticknor

Before we read our responsive reading, I want to share with you a quote from the book *Soul Work: Anti-racist Theologies in Dialogue*, where UU minister and scholar Rosemary Bray McNatt relays the story of the time she talked for an hour with Coretta Scott King, widow of Dr. King.

Mrs. King told Rev. Bray McNatt, “Oh, I went to Unitarian churches for years, even before I met Martin. And Martin and I went to Unitarian churches when we were in Boston.”

Mrs. King continued, “We gave a lot of thought to becoming Unitarian at one time, but Martin and I realized we could never build a mass movement of black people if we were Unitarian.”

RESPONSIVE READING –

Dr. King’s “I wouldn’t stop there”

This is from Dr. King’s final speech, delivered April 3, 1968 in Memphis.

Can be read responsively with great energy

Leader: Something is happening in Memphis; something is happening in our world. And you know, if I were standing at the beginning of time, with the possibility of taking a kind of general and panoramic view of the whole of human history up to now, and the Almighty said to me, "Martin Luther King, which age would you like to live in?" I would take my mental flight by Egypt and I would watch God's children in their magnificent trek from the dark dungeons of Egypt through, or rather across the Red Sea, through the wilderness on toward the promised land.

Congregation: *And in spite of its magnificence, I wouldn't stop there.*

Leader: I would move on by Greece and take my mind to Mount Olympus. And I would see Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Euripides and Aristophanes assembled around the Parthenon. And I would watch them around the Parthenon as they discussed the great and eternal issues of reality.

Congregation: *But I wouldn't stop there.*

Leader: I would go on, even to the great heyday of the Roman Empire. And I would see developments around there, through various emperors and leaders.

Congregation: *But I wouldn't stop there.*

Leader: I would even go by the way that the man for whom I am named had his habitat. And I would watch Martin Luther as he tacked his ninety-five theses on the door at the church of Wittenberg.

Congregation: *But I wouldn't stop there.*

Leader: I would come on up even to 1863, and watch a vacillating President by the name of Abraham Lincoln finally come to the conclusion that he had to sign the Emancipation Proclamation.

Congregation: *But I wouldn't stop there.*

Leader: I would even come up to the early thirties, and see a man grappling with the problems of the bankruptcy of his nation. And come with an eloquent cry that [we have nothing to fear but "fear itself."](#)

Congregation: *But I wouldn't stop there.*

Leader: Strangely enough, I would turn to the Almighty, and say, "If you allow me to live just a few years in the second half of the 20th century, I will be happy."

Now that's a strange statement to make, because the world is all messed up. The nation is sick.

Congregation: *But I know, somehow, that only when it is dark enough can you see the stars. And I see God working in a way that we, in some strange way, are responding.*

Something is happening in our world. The masses of people are rising up. And wherever they are assembled today, the cry is always the same: "We want to be free."

Extinguishing the Chalice: Daring Vision By Maureen Killoran

Cory

We extinguish this chalice flame,
daring to carry forward the vision of this free faith,
that freedom, reason and justice
will one day prevail in this nation and across the earth.