



River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation



Spiritsong
Voices of Many Faiths
by Clif Hardin

The River Road Choir

May 22, 2022



Welcome to River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation
Our mission is to grow in fellowship, spirit, and service.

Please silence all electronic devices.

Chalice Lighting and Welcome

Rev. Amanda Weatherspoon

Announcements and Introduction to the Offering

Rev. Nancy McDonald Ladd

Extending the Offering

Action in Montgomery (AIM)

Text to give at 73256

Offertory *Alla Danza* from *Water Music* G.F. Handel

Teri Lazar, Jennifer Rickard, Osman Kivrak,
and Marion Baker, Quartet

Introduction to the Composition and Performance

Rev. Nancy

Spiritsong: Voices of Many Faiths

Clif Hardin

The River Road Choir

Benediction



*Special thanks to Allan and Wendy Williams for commissioning
the composition and supporting the performance of Spiritsong.*

Texts and Translations

I. Om/Veni Creator Spiritus

Sanskrit and Latin chants

<i>Om</i>	Sacred syllable in Hinduism
<i>Namaha</i>	I bow
<i>Swaha</i>	I salute
<i>Veni, Creator Spiritus, Mentes tuorum visita, Imple superna gratia, Quae tu creasti pectora.</i>	Come creator spirit, visit the souls of your devoted: with your divine grace fill the hearts which you have created.
<i>Qui Paraclitus diceris, Donum Dei altissimi, Fons vivus, ignis, caritas, Et spiritalis unctio.</i>	You are called comforter, gift of the highest God, fount of life, fire, love, and spiritual unction.
<i>Accende lumen sensibus, Infunde amorem cordibus, Infirma nostri corporis, Virtute firmans perpeti.</i>	Enkindle your light in our minds; Infuse your love into our hearts; Strengthen the frailties of our flesh by your perpetual power.

II. Pilgrim

Poetry by Rumi, Persian poet and Sufi mystic (1207 – 1273)

Would you be a pilgrim on the road of love?
Then the very first condition
is that you make yourself as humble
as dust and ashes.
Then come, pilgrim come.

Come, oh come, whoever you are,
wanderer, worshiper, lover of leaving.
Ours is no caravan of despair.

You've broken your vows a thousand times,
still, come!

III. Brāhmavihārā (Heavenly Abodes)

Ancient Buddhist text, English text by Jan Elicker

<i>Mettā</i>	Loving-kindness
<i>Karunā</i>	Compassion
<i>Muditā</i>	Joy
<i>Upekkhā</i>	Equanimity

May I let kindness flow into my heart as gentle rain.
May true compassion fill my soul as warming fire.
May I be touched with joy as bright as crystal light of dawn.
May I be steady as the willow meets the winter wind.

IV. Tikkun Olam

Hebrew texts from Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers) and the Kabbalah, English text by Clif Hardin

<i>Alshlosa d'varim</i>	On three things
<i>Ha'olam omed:</i>	does the world depend:
<i>Al ha'torah, v'al ha'avodah,</i>	On Torah, on labor,
<i>V'al gimilut hasadim.</i>	and on acts of loving-kindness.
<i>Tikkun olam.</i>	Repair the world.

Out of shards of broken light, may love com shining through.
Out of tears from broken hearts, may hope be born anew.

V. Chief Joseph Speaks

Chief Joseph, Nez Percé tribe, from the closing words of his speech given in Lincoln Hall, Washington, DC on January 14, 1879

When we are treated all the same, then we will have no more wars.
We shall be alike, brothers and sisters of one father and one mother,
with one sky above us.
Then the Great Spirit Chief, who rules above, will smile upon the
land and send rain to wash out the blood that was spilled by brothers'
hands from the face of the earth.
I hope that no more cries of wounded men and women will ever go
to the ear of the Great Spirit Chief above,
and that all people may be one people.
For this time, we are waiting and praying.

VI. With Beauty I Walk

Navaho prayer

With beauty before me, I walk.
With beauty behind me, I walk.
With beauty above me, I walk.
With beauty around me, I walk

In beauty all day long may I walk.
Through returning seasons may I walk.
On the trail marked with pollen may I walk.
With dew about my feet, may I walk.

In old age wandering on a trail of beauty, lively may I walk.
In old age wandering on a trail of beauty, living again may I walk.
It has become beauty again.

VII. Ashe

From the Yoruba tradition, English text by Clif Hardin

Ashe The divine force, energy, and power
incarnate in the world.

This I do pray: Open my heart,
and fill this seeking soul with love.
This I do pray: Open my eyes,
to see all the beauty around me, radiant with spirit.

VIII. Sanctus

From the Christian Mass

<i>Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus</i>	Holy, Holy, Holy,
<i>Dominus Deus Sabaoth.</i>	Lord God of Hosts.
<i>Hosanna in excelsis.</i>	Hosanna in the highest.
<i>Pleni sunt coeli et terra</i>	Heaven and earth are full of
<i>Gloria tua</i>	Thy glory.
<i>Hosanna in excelsis.</i>	Hosanna in the highest.

IX. Prayer for Peace

“Peace” as spoken around the world

<i>Dona nobis pacem</i> (Christian)	Grant us peace.
<i>Salaam alaikum</i> (Islamic)	Peace be unto you
<i>Shalom aleichem</i> (Jewish)	Peace be unto you

Peace:

Alafia (Yoruba – Nigeria) | *Walakota* (Lakota – Native American) | *Shanti* (Bengali – Bangladesh) | *Sipala* (Hopi – Native American) | *Utifafa* (Ewe – West Africa) | *Maluhia* (Hawaiian) | *Ashtee* (Farsi – Iran) | *Musango* (Duala – Australia) | *Nanna ayya* (Chicksaw – Native American) | *Hasiti* (Kurdish – Iraq, Turkey) | *Perdamaian* (Indonesian) | *Nirudho* (Pali – India) | *Béke* (Hungarian) | *Irini* (Greek) | *Pyung hwa* (Korean) | *Salama* (Swahili – East Africa) | *Amani* (Swahili – East Africa) | *Samadhanam* (Malayalam – Kerala, India) | *Mir* (Ukrainian, Russian) | *Hé ping* (Mandarin – China) | *Frieden* (German) | *Udo* (Igbo – Nigeria)

We pray for peace.



Program Notes

Through the past several years, we have been suffering an epidemic from a virus, but even worse, an epidemic of distrust, falsehood, hate and xenophobia. *Spiritsong* was written as a response to this second plague. It is written to lift up and celebrate the beauty of our highest aspirations found in all cultures and faiths. At our best, we seek to love one another, search for what is felt to be divine, and labor to bring about a just and peaceful world.

Almost all of the texts for *Spiritsong* are sourced from major world religions and are expressions of the high aspirations of those traditions. In this piece, there are texts from Hindu, Christian, Islamic, Buddhist, Jewish, Native American, and Yoruba sources and traditions. Following is a more detailed description of the texts and their sources.

The first movement, *Om/Veni Creator Spiritus*, uses texts from both the Catholic and Hindu traditions. It opens with the Hindu word *Om*, which is commonly used as a chanting tone in meditations and mantras. Many Hindus also believe that the creation of the world came with the word *Om*. Next, the Catholic chant tune *Veni Creator Spiritus* enters, set to a more modern harmonization. The chant is as an invocation to the creator spirit. The Sanskrit words from a Hindu chanting tradition are then introduced: *namaha* (I bow) and *swaha* (I salute).

The second movement, *Pilgrim*, uses translations of two writings by Rumi, Sufi poet and mystic. The first is a call to pilgrimage of love and the first step of humility that is necessary to make that journey. The second poem is an invitation to all to join in that journey, no matter one's failings or where one has been.

The third movement, *Brāhmāvihārā*, is a setting of the "Four

Immeasurables” or the “Heavenly Abodes” in Buddhism. They are four virtues and the meditation practices made to cultivate them.: *Mettā* (unbounded kindness), *Karunā* (unbounded compassion), *Muditā* (unbounded wholesome joy), and *Upekkā* (equanimity). New words by Jan Elicker are incorporated as a reflection on those four immeasurable qualities.

The fourth movement, *Tikkun Olam*, combines texts from two different sources in Judaism. The first is from *Pirke Avot*, and is found in the *Talmud*. It calls for following the Torah, labor, and acts of loving kindness. The second text, *tikkun olam*, comes from the medieval Kabbalah, and relates the mystical concept of divinity being shattered into many shards and the need for people to repair this shattered world. The added text is a reflection on that concept of Tikkun Olam.

The fifth movement, *Chief Joseph Speaks*, uses words from a speech that Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce Tribe gave at Lincoln Hall, Washington, DC in 1879. In his speech, Chief Joseph details all the hardship, suffering and death that his tribe was subjected to at the hands of the United States government and military. He closed his speech with a poignant plea for brotherhood and sisterhood so that the “Great Spirit Chief might smile upon the land” and “that all people may be one.” Words for this solo were excerpted from that moving conclusion of his speech.

The sixth movement, *With Beauty I Walk*, is a setting of a Navaho prayer. Instead of the focus of the prayer being on the self, the words place the person evoking these words in the midst of something far greater than the self: “With beauty before me I walk. With beauty behind me I walk. With beauty around me, I walk.” This orientation of being part of and connected to all of creation is common among Native American cultures and is a perspective I believe is sorely needed in much of our current culture.

The seventh movement, *Ashe*, is a setting of that one word from Yoruba religion and culture. "Ashe" is a word used to describe a higher energy that is found in all things - people, animals, plants, rivers, rocks, and all. The added English words express what I think is a deeper human need to connect with a spiritual energy, no matter how one names, or defines, or interprets it.

The eighth movement, *Sanctus*, is a text from the Catholic mass, but some the words of the Sanctus are also found in Isaiah and other earlier texts. The Sanctus is a song of praise of God and all creation, especially "*pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua*" which means "Heaven and earth are full of thy glory"

The ninth and last movement, *Prayer for Peace*, is a setting of phrases that are invocations for peace from different faiths: *dona nobis pacem*, *shalom aleichem*, *salaam aleikum*, and the word "peace" as spoken in different cultures and countries. The origin of the different expressions is found in the translations part of this program.

I had originally thought of *Spiritsong* to have only eight movements and ending with the boisterous *Sanctus*. However, that began to seem like an incomplete ending. Yes, it is indeed a fine way to end a piece with an expression of deep gratitude for all creation. But, I realized that I really wanted to end with the wish that we all have in our hearts: that we might find a way to peace on earth and goodwill toward all. May it be so.

--Clif Hardin

Special Thanks

to our audiovisual team:

Dave Leonard, Marcia Leonard, and Scott Shuman.

The River Road Choir

Dr. Clifton Hardin, Director of Music • Dr. Shuai Wang, Accompanist

Sopranos

Diane Bean
Jan Elicker
Jessica Estepa
Diane Garibaldi
Elaine Johnson
Joan MacFarland
Crescent Martin
Emily Mendenhall
Lisa Moore
Linda Ryden
Claire Saxton
Steff Schick
Ailea Sneller
Grace VanderVeer

Basses

Gregg Grisa
Brock Holmes
Kevin Krug
Kevin Lee
Greg Lewis
Joe Saliunas
Walt Scott
Allen Sokal
Darryl Yeagley

Altos

Jane Baluss
Marty Brown
Beth Dewey
Eleanor Fox
Diana Gilpatrick
Jennifer Greene
Catherine Hackett
Andrea Herman
Alda Mandell
Carol Nicotera-Ward
Naomi Schick
Kim Weichel

Tenors

Eric Axelrod
William Bailey
Kyle Burke
Barry Galef
Jill Martin
Mike Matheson
Josh Mohr
Michael Nansel
Arthur Paterson
David Potts-Dupre

Orchestra

Violins

Teri Lazar
Jennifer Rickard

Viola

Osman Kivrak

Cellos

Sean Neidlinger
Marion Baker

Bass

Mark Stephenson

Flutes

Elisabeth Plunk
Maria Luisa De La
Cerda Rohde

Oboe

Katelyn Kyser

Clarinets

Jeremy Eig
Cheryl Sanborn

Percussion

Chris Mauro
Adam Green

Welcome!

If you are worshipping with us for the first time, we invite you to sign the guest book in the foyer. We will be pleased to send you information about events in this diverse and active congregation. After the service, please enjoy refreshments and conversation in the Fellowship Hall.

Unitarian Universalists believe that each individual has the right and responsibility to form his or her own religious convictions, and that this is best done in the context of a nurturing and challenging community. We are adults, children, and youth, learning together the practices of openness of heart and mind, and of living our faith through justice.

The heart of this congregation is open to people of all ages, races, genders, sexual orientations, and physical abilities. We invite you to get to know us and to consider joining us in membership.

Our Vision is to grow and deepen in Fellowship, Spirit, and Service for all ages.

Fellowship draws us into deeper relationship to our congregational community, so that we might choose connection over isolation.

Spiritual growth draws us into deeper relationship with the sacred, however we might experience it or name it, so that we might be connected to the sources of our strength.

Contact Information

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