

In Memory and Celebration – Jan. 10, 2015

Prelude

Spare Parts: *When a Man Loves a Woman* (slide), *I Wave Bye Bye* (slide)
First U Dulcimer Ensemble: *Amazing Grace* (slide)

Lighting the Chalice (mural slide)

Singing Together (black slide)

Stand by Me (5 lyrics)
I Send My Love (5 lyrics)

Announcements (black slide until interlude)

Introduction to the Service

Interlude: You Don't Own Me (slide automatically blacks out photo but not title)

Meditation: (black slide)

Amazing Grace: (title slide while dulcimers play, then 4 lyrics slides while congregation sings along)

(black slide)

James Galasinski: Inventions and Originality

To make our world as beautiful and wonderful as it is, we need originals, inventors, people that seize the day and put their own unique stamp on life. We honor those originals that they may inspire us to be original.

As you approached the church building today in your car, you may have noticed dozens of Pink Flamingos. We got flocked or flamingoed. These were placed here by the youth of Immanuel Lutheran church, a fundraiser they do. We had this done in honor of the creator of the pink flamingo, Don Featherstone (slide). He was a trained artist who did many sculptures in his lifetime. Kitschy as they are, the pink flamingos are what caught on to become a cultural icon in lawns across U.S.

We may be familiar with Weight Watchers but perhaps not its founder, Jean Nidetch 1923-2015, (slide). A Jewish woman from Brooklyn, she had training business and worked for the IRS among other jobs but after getting married she described herself as an overweight housewife with obsession for eating. Nidetch had experimented with

numerous fad diets then followed a regimen prescribed by a diet clinic. After losing 20 pounds, and finding her resolve weakening she contacted several overweight friends and founded a support group which developed into weekly classes, and incorporated on May 15, 1963, into the Weight Watchers. She later sold the company but remained on as a consultant.

Vincent Marotta Sr, (1924-2015)

Can you picture drinking coffee at home from a percolator? Where would we be today without home drip coffee machines? Vincent Marotta Sr, (slide) invented one of the first automatic drip coffee makers, Mr. Coffee. He was the son of Italian immigrants. Mr. Coffee's original retail price was \$39.99, about \$226 in today's dollars — about four times that of a percolator, yet consumers still clamored for the machine.

Dr Charles Townes, (1915-2015)

Charles H. Townes (Slide) was a visionary physicist whose research led to the development of the laser, which he won the Nobel prize for. Lasers make it possible to play CDs, scan prices at the supermarket, measure time precisely, survey planets and galaxies, and even witness the birth of stars.

Dr. Robert L. Spitzer 1932-2015 (slide) was considered one of the most influential psychiatrists of his generation. He headed the effort to more rigorously categorize mental disorders for the handbook used by health care professionals. His most lasting legacy may have been his successful effort to stop treating homosexuality as an illness.

Rosie, (Slide of Rockwell's Rosie) was an iconic painting by Norman Rockwell. It became a symbol for millions of women that went to work in factories and other jobs outside the home during World War II. But hardly anyone remembers that the image was based on actual person, Mary Doyle Keefe (slide), who in 1943 at the age of 19, became the face of a newfound feminine independence and empowerment and really a modern woman. Keefe, the 19 year old telephone operator would become the model for Rockwell by chance because she was a neighbor of the popular artist. Keefe later became a dental hygienist.

Ornette Coleman (slide) - Was of one of the last great innovator of jazz. He invented and popularized something tore the jazz world in two: Free jazz. There was jazz before Coleman and jazz after.

Meadowlark Lemon (slide) Dubbed the "clown prince" of one the most beloved sports teams of all time, the Harlem Globetrotters, of which he played, 16,000 games for. Seeing Lemon play with the Globetrotters was part athletic event and part theater but always 100% entertaining. Meadowlark flare for showmanship and his patented hook

shoot had influence on today's NBA game. An ordained Christian minister and actor, he promoted basketball and laughter around the world

Yogi Berra (slide) The famous baseball player and manager was an 18-time all-star catcher and winner of 10 World Series but was known outside of baseball for his original impromptu witty sayings like "90% of it is half mental". And perhaps a comment on a life in general, not just sports "It ain't over till it's over."

For these originals and inventors we are reminded that life may be over for them but that life still moves on and the world is better for their creations, their laughter, their wit, and their ingenuity. These inventors and icons of originality coax us to not copy them but to be true to our own originality within. As Yogi Berra put it "If you can't imitate him, don't copy him."

(black slide)

Vance Bass: B.B. King (slide)

Riley B. King was better known as "The Beale Street Blues Boy", then "Blues Boy" King or, finally, B.B. King. He was the last of the towering figures of blues music who grew up poor and black in the rural American south. He was born in 1925 on a plantation near Indianola, Mississippi and dropped out of school at age 9 to pick cotton. He got his first guitar at age 12 and taught himself to play by listening to his relatives sing or to the radio. Orphaned in his late teens, he began sharecropping and finished the first year deep in debt to his landlord. But he landed a job playing at a party and went from making 75 cents a day picking cotton to \$12 a night playing guitar. He never looked back.

His cousin played guitar with a slide, which allowed him to have a more voice-like vibrato. B.B. tried to imitate that sound without a slide, and soon developed his own instantly recognizable style of finger vibrato. When I was a young guitarist, I remember that learning to make your guitar sing with a B.B.-King-style finger vibrato was a major milestone.

B.B. played the "Chitlin Circuit" of small, African-American nightclubs and began a life on the road, playing more than 340 one-night stands one year, and two to three hundred a year the rest of his life. But by the mid-1950s, the blues were falling out of favor with young African-Americans. Meanwhile, the white kids in the Folk Revival were rediscovering hillbilly music, old English ballads, and the blues. In 1968, King was booked at the Fillmore Auditorium, a famous psychedelic hall in San Francisco. Seeing the hippies queued up for tickets, he told his road manager "I think they booked us in the wrong place", but the sold-out show went wild for him. He became an overnight superstar -- after almost 30 years on the road.

B.B. King became a millionaire, was in the Blues and Rock and Roll Halls of Fame, was awarded 15 Grammys, a Kennedy Center honor and a Presidential Medal of Freedom. Singing the blues was definitely a better gig than sharecropping.

King's view of life expresses a deeper philosophy than you might expect from a third-grade dropout. In a 1980 interview with *Guitar Player* magazine, he said

"We all have the blues – red, white, black, brown, yellow, rich or poor. You can be successful and still have the blues. ... I look around and read the papers and I see money troubles. Food is running low in some places. There are oil problems. I go to the prisons and see what's happening there. I think of my people – the ones I left behind in Mississippi, and **all** the people in **all** the Mississippis. We are part of each other, you know. When one person is hurt, it hurts me, too.

I've always tried to defend the idea that the blues doesn't have to be sung by a person who comes from Mississippi, as I did. People all over the world have problems and as long as people have problems, the blues can never die."

That, to me, sums up the universality of the blues as an expression of the human condition. And no one was more of a personification of the blues than B.B. King.

(black slide)

Offering There Must Be a Better World Somewhere (slide)

(black slide)

Angela Herrera: "Run-Ins with Authority"

We are in that phase of history when many notable people from World War II and the Feminist and Civil Rights movement are passing away. More than any other group this morning, these folks had every reason to wonder if they'd make it to old age.

Sir Nicholas Winton, (slide) known as "Britain's Schindler," rescued Czechoslovakian children who were destined for Nazi concentration camps. Placing ads in papers, he found homes to receive 669 of them, and arranged their travel through four countries, on eight trains, persuading authorities to ignore their lack of official documentation. He used bribes and forgery, and attracted Nazi attention. Despite his success, few people knew his name until 1988, when Winton's wife found a scrapbook in their attic, with names, pictures, and documents. In 2003 Queen Elizabeth knighted him. He died at the age of 106.

Meanwhile, across the ocean, (slide) 120,000 Japanese Americans were imprisoned in US “internment” camps. Snatched from their communities, they lost jobs and businesses, and, unable to pay their mortgages and taxes, also homes and farms. Al Tsukamoto approached **Bob Fletcher**, and asked him if he’d take over his payments and tend the crops, in exchange for the profit from the harvest. Fletcher, who didn’t have any experience with those crops, said yes, and quit his job as an agriculture inspector. Over the next few years, he worked 18 hour days on 90 acres and paid the bills of three families, saving half the profits for them. When the Tsukomoto family returned, they found their farm in good condition, money in the bank, and Mr. Fletcher’s wife had prepared their house to welcome them home.

Despite the fact that their families were being imprisoned, thousands of Japanese American soldiers enlisted in the US military in World War II. **Ben Kuroki** (slide) was the only Japanese-American pilot who fought in the Pacific Theater. He fought in 58 missions and died last year at the age of 98.

Kurt Masur (slide) also died last year. He was a conductor who transformed the New York Philharmonic in the 1990s. But before that, he did something even more interesting. A well loved conductor in East Germany, he had won the favor of many communist leaders and served as a diplomat at a most crucial moment. When democracy protesters faced off with armed police in front of the orchestra hall, Masur invited everyone inside to talk, and recorded a message, broadcast by radio and loudspeaker, calling for nonviolence. He is credited with avoiding another Tiananmen Square.

Fatema Mernissi (slide) also stood up to authorities, as one of the founders of modern Islamic feminism. Mernissi spent her childhood in a domestic harem in Morocco, but went on to go to college, eventually earning a PhD from Brandeis. Her first book, *Beyond the Veil*, was a historically and scripturally grounded critique of the oppression of women in Islam. She went on to write many more books. Her critique was not limited to the Islamic world. She argued that while Western men did not put women in harems, they made women invisible in other ways.

“The Western man,” she wrote, “declares that in order to be beautiful, a woman must look 14 years old. If she dares to look 50, or worse, 60, she is beyond the pale. By putting the spotlight on the female child and framing her as the ideal of beauty, he condemns the mature woman to invisibility.”

Reies Lopez Tijerina (slide) died this year. Fiery preacher and Chicano activist, Tijerina got involved in the Tierra Amarilla land grant dispute in New Mexico. After being stolen from native people, the land had been granted to farmers and ranchers as part of

Mexico. After the Mexican-American war, a treaty stipulated that the land remain with its current inhabitants. But then, the US senate got involved, and soon greedy investors from as far away as Boston and England bought and sold the land, right out from under the farmers and ranchers. In the 1960's, their descendants, many of whom identify as Chicano, tried to claim their inheritance.

Leading them, Tijerina threatened to seize private lands, organized sit-ins, and attempted to make citizen's arrests of political figures, including the chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. (Correia)

Thousands of heirs to the land rallied. A gunfight at the Rio Arriba County courthouse ensued in which two officials were shot and two people kidnapped.

Later, Tijerina would be asked to stand in, along with Ralph Abernathy and Jesse Jackson, for Martin Luther King Jr, after King was killed.

Rosalyn Baxandall (slide) was a feminist historian who served on the frontlines of the feminist movement in the 1960's, including picketing the 1968 Miss American pageant, the event that came to be associated with what the media called "bra burning." Reflecting back she once said that the one thing she had against books about that era was that "they talk about all the politics and the splits... but they don't talk about the joy and fun we had... We knew we were changing history, and it was terrific."

Amelia Boynton Robinson (slide) was a leader of the Civil Rights Movement in Selma, matriarch of the voting rights movement, and a pivotal figure in the 1965 Selma to Montgomery marches. On Bloody Sunday she was knocked unconscious and left for dead by a white police officer, but last March on the 50th anniversary of that day, she visited the same bridge, holding hands with our nation's first black president.

Speaking of Barack Obama, one of his mentors, **the Rev. Willie T. Barrow** (slide), died this year. At the age of 12 in 1936, young Willie decided she'd had enough of walking to school while white students took a bus, so she got onboard, telling the driver, "We all alike — we've all got butts... And you got plenty of room." After that, black students rode, and her calling was clear. She too was active in civil rights, and although she was just 4'11" tall, she became a giant in Chicago politics.

The lifelong activist for peace and justice, the **Rev George Houser**, has also died. After spending some time in prison as a conscientious objector to World War II, Houser cofounded the Congress of Racial Equality in 1942, and was the last living member of the first Freedom Ride.

Talking about the Civil Rights Movement, we feel the hard truth that racism still kills. **Police violence**, especially toward black people, continued sparking protests. **The Black Lives Matter** movement shines a light on the way state violence, through policing, judicial bias, incarceration, lack of access to health care, economic abuse, homophobia, sexism, and other interwoven systems of oppression, takes the lives of black people, specifically, and disproportionately.

We believe that black lives matter. This spring we will continue offering opportunities to learn and get involved, beginning with next Sunday's guest preacher and the conversation afterward, in faith that racism can be dismantled, unlearned, and overcome.

(black slide)

Vance: Guy Carawan

On May 7th of this year, Guy Carawan's (slide) obituary in the New York Times began like this:

On an April night in 1960, Guy Carawan stood before a group of black students in Raleigh, N.C., and sang a little-known folk song. With that single stroke, he created an anthem that would echo into history, sung at the Selma-to-Montgomery marches of 1965, in apartheid-era South Africa, in international demonstrations in support of the Tiananmen Square protesters, at the dismantled Berlin Wall and beyond.

The song was "We Shall Overcome." Carawan did not write "We Shall Overcome," nor did he claim to. The song, at times a religious piece, a labor anthem and a hymn of protest, had woven in and out of American oral tradition for centuries, embodying the country's history of faith and struggle. But in teaching it to hundreds of delegates at the first meeting of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in 1960, Carawan gave birth to the musical anthem of the integration movement.

Now, let's join together in singing "We Shall Overcome". (5 lyrics slides)

(black slide)

Christine Robinson: Rehearsing Our Future

Oliver Sacks (Slide)

We tend to think that what we experience, think, feel, is what is really there, that our senses and cognition give us “reality”. It takes someone like Oliver Sacks to disabuse us of this rationalism. Sacks spent his career digging into the human brain, and not only with the usual tools of science, but by taking various medications to experience their effects for himself. As a physician, he specialized in helping people whose brains were giving them difficulties. As a writer, he introduced the public to the difference between perception and reality. He made enormous contributions to human knowledge.

He did so in spite of an inability to recognize faces..and a probably related “crippling” shyness. He also felt obliged to hide his homosexuality until the last few years of his life, when, delightfully, he fell in love. His life also teaches us that what we think about what we can do and what our life can be like, may be just as flawed as our perceptions.

How do we imagine something different for ourselves and our societies? One way is through Science Fiction, which tends to take society as we know it and make some discrete, but often enormous change which is explored so thoroughly that the reader or viewer starts to think.... “We could do that.” Or “Well, that’s why we should not ever do that!”, or, “maybe that’s not so weird after all.” Science Fiction tends to be pretty much like our society except....it is considered absolutely shameful and cowardly to use a gun. Or...It’s pretty much like our society except...people of different races and nationalities and genders get along pretty well together.

That was Star Trek’s vision. (slide) The Russians and the Celts and the Blacks and the Whites and the Japanese and the Americans and the women and the men and even a certified non-human alien all friends and co workers. During the cold war, the Viet Nam war, the 60’s....this bordered on visionary.

(By the way, if you resonate with that vision, it’s no accident; the founder of the series, Gene Roddenbury was a UU whose goal was to bring what he considered UU values into a TV show. He did an even better job of bringing them into the movie world with the movies that the show spawned.)

(slide) And it always seemed to me that the enigmatic Spock, played by Leonard Nimoy, my teenaged heart throb, was not only the most obvious symbol of this visionary society, but (if you will excuse my saying so,) it’s heart. In Spock we saw the struggle with difference; the hard side of the romantic cultural vision, the lonely life of the token, the divergent thinker, the person with autism, the vegetarian, the one who struggles with what to keep and what to leave behind. The man who made Spock real, Leonard

Nimoy, died in 2015. Both he and his character lived long and prospered. May his vision do likewise.

Sometimes, the way things are is so much a part of our world which, even though we worry about it and despise it, we can see no clear way to make a change. It was thus, 40 years ago, with the national security doctrine called (slide) “Mutually Assured Destruction” strategy of making the consequences of attacking a nuclear power so swift and catastrophic, that no rational leader would attack.

This was reasoning worthy of Mr. Spock. It fueled the arms race, and the arms race not only got more and more expensive, the weapons got more and more dangerous. By the 1970’s it was cleared that Mutually Assured Destruction actually meant, “Mutually accomplished Annihilation.”

This was so frightening that nobody could even think about it except the kids, who complied with duck and cover drills to humor the foolish adults around them. Looking back, the only thing I can say about it is, “By the grace of God, and the courage of at least two military officers who refused to follow a plan of attack and one dictator who backed down, we, our civilization, and the ecosystem that supports higher life on the planet are still here.”

One major force that dismantled Mutually Assured Destruction was the awaking of the populace to the... the word danger doesn’t even begin to be a big enough word....and insisted on change. (slide)

The Nuclear Freeze Movement of the 1980’s was the brainchild of a woman who made a radical proposal: Both sides have enough weapons. Freeze production, then begin to disarm. She proposed to pressure the national government through state education and referenda campaigns.

This insipient movement was fueled by the publication of a book which vividly described the likely effects of one thermonuclear attack and counter attack...the dropping of just a few of the thousands of weapons in the world’s arsenal. The effect was described in the sub-title: “A Republic of Insects and Grass.” The title of the book was *The Fate of the Earth* by Jonathan Schell. Mr. Schell died last year. (Slide)

Mr. Schell was a writer, not a scientist, and the information he published was not new knowledge, but he wrote the right book at the right moment, and everything changed. The summer after the publication of this book, a million people showed up in Times Square to press for a Nuclear Freeze, Referenda passed in a third of the states, and Washington sat up and took notice. So did the world. President Reragan moderated his rhetoric. A Soviet politician named Mikhail Gorbachav took some risks for peace. The results were complicated for the Soviet Union but a boon for the world.

Of course, Nuclear, even Hydrogen, weapons still exist in the world, and some are in the hands of very scary people, as we were reminded just last week. And even one such weapon is dangerous beyond most of our imaginations. But the hair-trigger has been locked, and although disaster is a possibility, we are no longer poised to doom higher life on our planet.

Take a Note: The ways of society which everybody knows and hates but puts up because the way to change is not clear CAN change. Keep pressing on.

(black slide)

Closing Song (4 lyrics slides)

(mural slide)

Benediction

We build on foundations, we did not lay.

We warm ourselves at fires, we did not light.

We sit in the shade of trees, we did not plant.

And drink from wells, we did not dig.

We profit from persons, we did not know.

We are ever bound in community.

Live Long, and Prosper