

Outline of Worship

Season after Epiphany

Feb 23rd, 2025

Worship leaders: Simba at SUC Lesley at NUC

Pianist: Julie at NUC

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND INTRO OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Simba

MAKING A DIFFERENCE: Mission & Service Stories – Video

WE GATHER

NUC-Lesley

We gather *today* to pause, to learn, to sing and to praise together. Everyone belongs. As a community of faith, we are called to seek justice, to resist evil and to live with respect in creation.

We celebrate the land and all that it sustains;
powerful in spirit and mystery.

The story of this land was shaped by the Anishinaabe, Cree, Dakota and the Red River Metis.
The story continues.

May all who dwell here now strive to live in right relations together, and with all creation.

We hold this vision and these intentions before us.

So, we light these candles,
symbolizing the sacred light which is within and among all of us.

SONG: MV14 Where Two or Three Are Gathered x2 (*remain seated*)

Words and music copyright © 2002 by Bruce Harding based on Matthew 18:20

Where two or three are gathered in my name,
I am there, I am there.

LIFE AND WORK of our churches and communities

Lesley/Simba

SONG: MV1 Let Us Build a House vs 1,4,5

Words and Music: Marty Haugen copyright © GIA Publications, Inc.

Let us build a house where love can dwell and
all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell how
hearts learn to forgive,
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of
faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:

*All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach, and
live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger, bear the
image of God's face;

let us bring an end to fear and danger:

*All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

Let us build a house where all are named, their
songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed
as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter, prayers of
faith and songs of grace;
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:

*All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

PRAYER

Gathered in your presence, engulfed by your mystery. We open up to your spirit, to guidance and to your challenge. Meet us in ways that may quicken our hearts, our faith and our hope.

THEME TIME: *Quilt story indicating a safe house*

NUC-Judy

SONG: VU646 We Are Marching vs 1-2

Words, Music: South African traditional song, 20th century. Words, Music: Public domain. English Translation, Arr. copyright © Walton Music Corp

We are marching in the light of God,
we are marching in the light of God.
We are marching in the light of God,
we are marching in the light of God,

Si ya hamb' e ku kha nyen' kwen khos',
si ya hamb' e ku kha nyen' kwen khos'.

*Si ya hamb' e ku kha nyen' kwen khos',
si ya hamb' e ku kha nyen' kwen khos'.*

kha nyen' kwen khos'.

We are marching, marching,
we are marching, marching
we are marching in the light of God.
We are marching, marching,
we are marching, marching
we are marching in the light of God.

Si ya hamba, hamba, si ya hamba, hamba,
si ya hamb' e ku kha nyen' kwen khos'

kha nyen' kwen khos'.

Si ya hamba, hamba, si ya hamba, hamba,
si ya hamb' e ku kha nyen' kwen khos'.

SPIRITUAL READINGS:

Scripture: Luke 6: 27-38

SUC-Jan

²⁷ "But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you. ²⁹ If anyone hits you on one cheek, let him hit the other one too; if someone takes your coat, let him have your shirt as well. ³⁰ Give to everyone who asks you for something, and when someone takes what is yours, do not ask for it back. ³¹ Do for others just what you want them to do for you. ³² "If you love only the people who love you, why should you receive a blessing? Even sinners love those who love them! ³³ And if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you receive a blessing? Even sinners do that! ³⁴ And if you lend only to those from whom you hope to get it back, why should you receive a blessing? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount! ³⁵ No! Love your enemies and do good to them; lend and expect nothing back. You will then have a great reward, and you will be children of the Most High God. For he is good to the ungrateful and the wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful just as your Father is merciful. ³⁷ "Do not judge others, and God will not judge you; do not condemn others, and God will not condemn you; forgive others, and God will forgive you. ³⁸ Give to others, and God will give to you. Indeed, you will receive a full measure, a generous helping, poured into your hands—all that you can hold. The measure you use for others is the one that God will use for you."

SONG: Swing Low, Sweet Chariot vs 1,2,4

NUC-Judy

*Swing low, sweet chariot,
coming for to carry me home.
Swing low, sweet chariot,
coming for to carry me home.*

I looked over Jordan, and what did I see,
coming for to carry me home.
A band of angels coming after me,
coming for to carry me home.

*Swing low, sweet chariot,
coming for to carry me home.
Swing low, sweet chariot,
coming for to carry me home.*

If you get there before I do,
coming for to carry me home.
Tell all my friends I'm coming too,
coming for to carry me home.

*Swing low, sweet chariot,
coming for to carry me home.*

*Swing low, sweet chariot,
coming for to carry me home*

I'm sometimes up and sometimes down,
coming for to carry me home.
But still my soul feels heavenly bound,
coming for to carry me home.

*Swing low, sweet chariot,
coming for to carry me home.
Swing low, sweet chariot,
coming for to carry me home*

REFLECTION

Jesus is teaching his followers about the unjust socio-political landscape, addressing the religious values that might help in dealing with the matter. His approach transcends the usual way of understanding differences and other relational issues. In his longest sermon ever recorded, Jesus said; "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, give but expect nothing."

The tradition is being upset here. The call is going beyond the previously held understanding of loving your neighbor as yourself. The meaning of the word "neighbor" was fluid and elusive. No one could pin down exactly what it means. No wonder that lawyer came to Jesus asking; "who is my neighbor?" Thus, by charging the community to love their enemies, means that Jesus is calling them to go beyond the expectation. What is good is not enough. Jesus is calling for over compliance.

We Are Called to "Seek Justice & Resist Evil"

Communal Resistance & Subverting the aggressive forces: The other issue was that of inequality. The Jewish people were under the Roman empire, the social structure was fixed. Like the Caste System in the Hindu Community, where one is born & dies in same caste. (In this case, the Jews were being treated as a "**subaltern people.**" That is, second in rank & file. Never to be equal with the other. Permanently disenfranchised. That is more than being subordinate. **Jesus sought to create a community that would engage in fighting abuse and dominance in a very civil and gracious way.** The people needed to deal with violent and aggressive Roman soldiers in ways that would give them a voice. They needed to be directly involved. Sometimes change or transformation requires the coming together of a community, and adopt principles that work. It takes all of us to confer dignity and integrity to every person and even creature.

In the past, somewhere in the 1970s, I know of a place and country where **black people were not allowed to enter the supermarkets but buy from the window.** Then a group of black lawyers came together, decided to go and buy bicycles. After making their payments, they were asked to go inside to pick their items. Then they said; "**but we are blacks. We are not allowed to go inside.**" The cashier told them that they were going to dismantle the bikes because they could not fit through the

small window. They refused, saying, “we bought bikes, not their parts.” The cashier called the manager, & he immediately realized that it was a tactical but legal protest. In short, that was end of segregation of black people in supermarkets in that country. The next few days, all the signs that prohibited blacks from entering the supermarkets were brought down. Not by violence, but over-compliance.

Jesus’ Tips on How to deal with Violence & Dominance:

1. **They should give the second cheek.** The practice was to hit the slave or subaltern with the back of your hand. But when they offer the other side, the soldier had to use the other side of the hand, which is a usual slap. That make them equals. It is enduring pain but gain the dignity from your oppressive & aggressive opponent. One common virtue in all these approaches is courage. Do not be afraid to confront the oppressive forces. No violence is taught here but courage that breaks the shackles of abuse.

2. **They should go for another mile:** In Matthew 5:41, “If anyone forces you to one mile, go two miles with them.” It was common practice that soldiers would force any civilian to carry their bags for a mile by force. Jesus says, go for two miles. In the strict military discipline, no one would be forced to carry for more than a mile. Thus, the soldier would be forced to ask you to stop. That is negotiation. That makes the slave an equal. One who can negotiate, discuss and make their own decision or at least contribute to towards the decision. Over-compliance would force the soldiers to negotiate, thereby **conferring the victim the status of an equal**. That was a way in which the community would invest in the dignity of each other. Soldiers had to think twice before they could abuse them. **What is the common form of abuse in our community how can we fight abuse in a gracious but strong way?**

3. **Protesting against aggressive insiders.** Jesus equipped the listeners by **sharing how to expose their aggressive oppressors, but also forceful business elite** by over-compliance. In their community, those with less would borrow from those with excess, but if they fail to pay, the owner would confiscate something special as a way to hasten the need to pay & redeem their precious item taken. They were often asked to pay by their coats. Jesus said, give even your inner garments. If you want to punish, then go ahead and get more. **One could not do that in their religion & culture, otherwise you lose your own dignity**. That will force the oppressor to negotiate, making the victim an equal colleague.

Compassion is higher than patronage: Coming to the issue of doing good to those that love you falls under patronage, not compassion. The difference is that, patronage is where you have your clique, closed groups, tribes, clubs and unions that not everyone else is eligible to join. If you have any clubs that you are aware of, you might relate. These cliques of people love each other, but for the most part, it’s all about protecting or advancing their interests, (in extreme cases, feed their ego). Even if some are meant to support the cause of the majority, the weak & the vulnerable, they belong together. That’s patronage. Jesus says, “love your enemies.”

Jesus calls out this crowd to look beyond patronage. True personality is tested by how we relate with our opponents, & detractors. Jesus calls us to a place where we need to transcend our common interests, relationships, cultures, personal identity, as the basis of good or healthy ecological

relationships. We need to create a healthy ecological society that respects all people & creatures, that gives voice to all, and treats everyone the same way, or at least with dignity. Even if there are differences, one must differ with dignity. Treat your opponents with integrity.

As a church, what principles are we going to adopt as we respond to our own world? what options do we have as we deal with our own systems and seek to level the ground? We are called to seek justice & resist evil.

SONG: VU702 When a Poor One vs 1,2,4

Words, Music, Arrangement 1971 J.A. Olivar, Miguel Manzano © Oregon Catholic Press. English Translation © The United Methodist Publishing House.

When a poor one who has nothing shares with
strangers,
when the thirsty water give onto us all,
when the wounded in their weakness
strengthen others,
then we know that God still goes that road with
us,
then we know that God still goes that road with
us.

When at last all those who suffer find their
comfort,
when they hope though even hope seems
hopelessness,
when we love though hate at times seems all
around us,

then we know that God still goes that road with
us,
then we know that God still goes that road with
us.

When our homes are filled with goodness in
abundance,
when we learn how to make peace instead of
war,
when each stranger that we meet is called a
neighbour,
then we know that God still goes that road with
us,
then we know that God still goes that road with
us

OFFERING INVITATION

We are invited to participate in this ministry through tangible offerings and other means as our hearts are moved. Let us give in ways that invest dignity on the lives of the less privileged.

SONG: VU575 I'm Gonna Live vs 1

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I'm gonna live so (live so) God can use me
anywhere, Lord, any time!
I'm gonna live so, God can use me
anywhere, Lord, any time!

OFFERING PRAYER

God who clothed the forests with beauty. May these gifts and our ministry be send out to confer integrity and dignity to our declassified or dehumanized neighbors. Bless the givers and accept the gifts. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Having gathered as a community, seeking to connect with the greatest Being, wholeness and finding peace within ourselves, we offer our prayers to the Creator. In all our situations, we worship. We boldly pray for our Church, our faith and our community. Our lives are often troubled by illnesses, grief, loss, rejection, loneliness and others. We pray for those in pain, despair, anxiety, and those who struggle with any challenge. May each one of them feel your presence, find peace in your assurance, and hope in your promises. May all those in need of your sustaining love find comfort.

We pray for those facing traumatic situations, those dealing with terrible news, those struggling with decision making, and whatever situation they face. May they find wholeness in you. We pray for our members, near & far, our church, and the country. Bless us as a people and as a nation. This we ask, we recite the prayer taught by Jesus

Our Father.....

SONG: MV212 Sent Out in Jesus Name *(first part x2; second part x1)*

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Sent out in Jesus' name,
our hands are ready now
to make the world the place
in which the kingdom comes.
(x2)

a world of hurt and pain
into a world of love,
of justice and of peace.
The task is ours to do
to set it really free.
O, help us to obey,
and carry out your will.

The angels cannot change

BLESSING

May the grace of Jesus, the love of God expressed in the Christ Child and the fellowship of the eternal Spirit be with you all. Amen.