

THE WILL TO GO ON
ANNUAL SPRING SERVICE/CONCERT
Rev. Dr. Edward Thompson, Choirs and Soloists
March 21, 2021 10 AM

WELCOME AND OPENING WORDS	Rev. John Morehouse
CHALICE LIGHTING	
COVENANT	
Love is the spirit of this church, and service its law. This is our great covenant: to dwell together in peace, To seek the truth in love, and to help one another.	
INTRODUCTION to The Will to Go On	Rev. Thompson
I've Been in the Storm So Long (Traditional Spiritual)	Rod Hines
Fear No More the Heat of the Sun (Vaughan Williams)	Chris Beaurline and Mike Costantino
In These Hard Times (Thompson)	Women's Septet
Storm or Rain? (Dalai Lama)	Children's Choir, Esa O'Reilly, soloist
Waiting Both (Harding/Finzi)	Michael Costantino
SINGLE CANDLE	Rev. Morehouse
PRAYER AND MEDITATION	Rev. Thompson
Let It Rain (Poley)	Tom Hearne and Dave Caplan
Healing River (Hellerman)	Once & Again Singers
All Things on Earth, music /montage(Wolfe/Len Handler)	Quartet
Love Can Save Us All (Gundell)	Andy Gundell
OFFERING  https://vop.tucw.org/	David Vita
Keep Your Lamps (arr. Andre Thomas)	Women's Septet
In Whatever Time We Have ("Children of Eden"/Schwartz)	Jenna McPartland
The World Stands Out (Edna St. Vincent Millay/Thompson)	Quintet
No One Is Alone("Into the Woods"/Sondheim)	Marcella Calabi
Being Alive ("Company"/Sondheim)	Rod Hines
CLOSING WORDS	Rev. Morehouse
The Impossible Dream ("Man of LaMancha"/Leigh)	Chris Beaurline

CHILDREN'S CHOIR
Zoe Balmer, Kiera Colligan, Sierra Iacovella, Esa O'Reilly, Dylan Staub, Ryan Williams

WOMEN'S SEPTET
Beth Cliff, Carol Hamilton, Linda Hudson, Wendy Levy, Catherine Onyemelukwe, Cathy Paine, Trina Wong

ONCE & AGAIN SINGERS
Steve Axthelm, Sari Bodi, Joann Coviello, Jamie Forbes, Kristi Hardin, John McWeeney, Gian Morresi, Julyen Norman, Cathy Paine, Bart Stuck, Andra Vebell, Tina Wong

QUARTET FOR HANDLER
Barbara Zay, Judith Malafrente, Erik Paul, Brian Tippy

QUINTET
Cathy Paine, Wendy Levy, Linda Hudson, Doug Flam, Tom Hearne

The Ides of March marks one year that we have been in lock down or isolation because of the COVID pandemic. I believe it is both fair to say, and obvious, that most of us are tired and aching to return from isolation back toward communicating in-person in real time and real place. The title of this event is “The Will to Go On” and concerns itself with the matter of endurance. The famed theologian, Soren Kierkegaard, once said that confidence is the present tense of hope. I say that endurance is the present tense of having faith. In spite of inconvenience, loss, boredom, restrictions, chaos, death, change and transformation, we go on. Only the future will permit us to see some of the benefits that we have received during this time, either by accident or by design. But in the meantime, we go on.

We begin by hearing an amazing version of the traditional spiritual **I’ve Been in the Storm so Long**. Although it is not one of the better-known spirituals, it is a reminder of the racial issues that we face and how the lives of the African Americans are a symbol of endurance. The lyrics also point to a future time (we can only hope sooner rather than later) when we will be at the other side of these challenging issues. **Fear No More the Heat of the Sun**, a sonnet of Shakespeare, was set to music by Ralph Vaughan Williams. Shakespeare pens lyrics that suggest we endure to the end, whatever and whenever that is for each of us. It is not over until it is over. **In These Hard Times There Will Always Be Music** is a short piece that I wrote for the Women’s Septet. I have observed how music can hold us, support us, nurture us and inspire us, no matter what is happening in the world around us. Several weeks ago, I happened upon this short quip by the Dalai Lama “Life isn’t about waiting for the storm to pass; it’s about knowing how to dance in the rain”. If there were ever a time when this was true, this is it. I set it for Children’s Choir and called it “Storm or Rain?” because each day we are faced with circumstances that require a response. Will we engage (dance) with life or avoid it? Dancing is an artform that requires skill, and that skill requires the imagination of our inner child. The singing by these youth reminds us that we, too, can enter into a dance with the ‘rain’. Writing in the late nineteenth century, Thomas Hardy wrote **Waiting Both** as a means of suggesting that there are certain things which can only be understood with time and experience. In the interchange between a star in the heavens and the poet, the star asks, “What do you mean to do?” The poet answers, “For all I know, wait, let time go by, till my change come.” There are issues for which patience is the means of endurance. The musical setting is by Gerald Finzi, written in 1938. Joyce Poley is a UU composer who lives in Vancouver. In defiance to the storm clouds and rain she suggests, “Let it rain on my face”. It is a poetic way of saying no matter what our challenges, we will endure. Ever the optimist, Joyce says, “When the clouds fill up the sky, I will look beyond to where the rainbow bends.” With **Let It Rain** we can find that the ‘glass’ is half full. **Healing River** was written by Fred Hellerman in conjunction with lyricist Fran Minkoff. Mr. Hellerman was a songwriter and singer with a group known as The Weavers from the mid 40’s to the late 60’s. In his later years he lived just around the corner in Weston, CT. His contributions to the world of folk music are well known and demonstrated in this song which was written in connection to the civil rights movement. When it says, “This land is parching, this land is thirsting; heal us now, send your waters down. Let the seed of freedom awake and flourish,” it is referring to the fact that not all people have freedom. Regarding the martyrdom of those who perished in this matter, the song says, “Send down your waters and wash the blood from off the sand.” We sing it for those who gave their very life for the

endurance of an ideal. Len Handler, a long-time member of TUCW is a multi-talented instrumentalist, composer, and photographer, among other things. For **All Things on Earth** he used some lines from the writings of Thomas Wolfe that capture the enduring qualities of life. He then superimposed his own photographs to give an additional layer of meaning. Thank you, Len! **Love Can Save Us All**, written by long-time member Andy Gundell, is a reminder of the importance of gratitude in spite of the difficulties we face. Each day is a chance for us to decide how we will view the time we have on planet earth and how we endure. Another characteristic of endurance is the matter of vigilance. **Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning**, arranged by Andre Thomas, is a spiritual based on the Biblical story of the virgins who are told to keep their lamps burning since no one knows when the Bridegroom will come. That would be allegorical language which suggests that we do not know the time of our passing, and therefore we need at all times to embody our spiritual principles. **In Whatever Time We Have** is from the musical "Children of Eden", written by Stephen Schwartz. In the musical, this piece happens after the flood, after so much has been destroyed. This song pertains to those who endured the flood. It says, "All we know for sure is this: though the world could end tomorrow, you and I will be together in whatever time we have." In the time of reconstruction, in Biblical times or the present moment, it underlines the fact that no one needs to be alone. **No One Is Alone** is from the musical "Into the Woods", music by Stephen Sondheim. Near the end of the musical, after so many of the characters have perished or have been displaced, the characters need to form a new family, a new community in order to survive in the new world after the death of the giant. It is a poignant reminder of the importance of community in order to thrive and carry on our lives. **Being Alive** is another piece by Sondheim. In this case the singer expresses his discomfort with all of the 'annoyances' of his existence. Near the end he confesses, "I'll always be there, as frightened as you, to help us survive being alive!" In other words, what we perceive as hurts, nuisances, admonitions, supports, false praise, are all ways of making us feel alive and not alone. Perhaps they are not about our perceptions at all. Of course, the great icon of perseverance is Don Quixote from "Man of LaMancha", the hero figure of Cervantes' great seventeenth-century epic novel "Don Quixote". **The Impossible Dream** captures the feeling of strength, endurance, will power and imagination that is at times required from each of us.

May you be blessed with the will, the strength and the endurance to live through these times of isolation and onward into a new world graced with light and community.