



# Musically Speaking

While the March Third service is meant to be a celebration of the entire music program at UPCC, classic and contemporary (not in binary isolation), the centerpiece of the service consists of the suite (or "a **cycle** of spirituals", as the composer names it) **Feel The Spirit**, by *John Milford Rutter* (born 1945). It's a well-considered journey, from vetero-testamentary vigor (in Joshua), through thoughtful, Ecclesiastes-like pessimism (in *Sometimes I feel...*), to the promise of Redemption, a joyful procession of rather unruly "Saints Marching In".

At least one word of gratitude is due, among others but *primus inter pares*, to Pastor Kris, who has supported this event, from her choir participation to organizing, advertising, and being overall supportive. Thanks to the kindred souls who invested in our valuable organ gaining new life and renewed usability. Also "thank you" to church members who went beyond the call of duty in rehearsing intensively and intently complicated scores - choir singers, Eric, Sarah...

I was grateful to find a "dream" soloist in ShayLyssa Alexander, a genuine Talent, within an ample range of vocal, idiomatic, and emotional values. Too many times, perhaps, we ("we" in a broad sense) are quick to celebrate the vapid, the vulgar, the ideological and the trendy in our culture, while ignoring timeless, subtle, **universal** cultural treasures, expressed in both inspiring scores and gifted performers, which and who convey an enlightenment transcending fashion. ShayLyssa takes us beyond the episodic and unto the Substantial.

The substance of the Rutter cycle comes from cherished black spiritual tunes we are mostly familiar with. However, where the British composer "goes beyond" is in emphasizing, elaborating, fulfilling the inherent and valuable *universality* of these gems. His inspiration goes beyond mere arranging. A lonely soul searching for divine meaning is indeed about a haunting Black experience, but *also* about *anybody* going through sadness and untimely separation. The contagious, unbridled joy in "Ev'ry time I feel the spirit" is *also* about humanity's ability to rejoice in communal experiences, beyond narrow lines of demarcation.

John Rutter approached these cultural gems with more than due respect (his scholarship is immaculate), bringing out the symphonic, *once-again-universal* latencies of precious seeds of inspiration. Join as we enjoy together this event of musical and spiritual enrichment.

*Samiz*

## Disciple Women

Join us for the next meeting on Monday, March 11 at 7:00 p.m. Come and discuss what is important in the life of women everywhere.

## Food Pantry

Would you like to give food to help our pantry shelves stay stocked? We can use canned vegetables and boxes of pasta.

## Flowers?

Do you have time on your hands? Would you like to become the new flower person for UPCC? It includes calling people to donate flowers, letting Kim know who is giving each week and making sure that all runs smoothly. This ensures that there are bouquets each week for worship then for giving to others.

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## Reflections of Light

Lent 4.5 is a seven-week faith formation program which inspires and informs Christian communities on how to use the traditional Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting and almsgiving to protect God's creation, embrace Gospel justice and nurture spiritual fulfillment. It offers practical opportunities for people of faith to apply the values of Christian Simplicity to their everyday lives.

Returning to this program, which we used five years ago, in 2019 we will be exploring the theological and spiritual importance to Christians of our relationship with the natural world. "For God so loved the world ..." we read in John 3:16. And throughout the scripture, from Genesis through Revelation, our sacred texts are filled with references to trees and mountains, seas, rivers and pools, fields of flowers and the abundance of foods given to us from healthy soils grounding this generous earth.

The Bible also teaches the importance of self-regulation, self-emptying, generosity, restraint and mindfulness. Especially in the reflective season of Lent, we are called to examine our lifestyle practices to take note of how self-giving and other-focused we are, or how self-absorbed and unregulated our daily lives have become. The Lent 4.5 program combines these two important threads of spiritual growth – gratitude for the gifts of a generous God, and awareness of our human folly in mismanagement of life-sustaining gifts.

Join us as we listen attentively to scripture each week in Lent, and we learn to be better stewards of the gifts of God.

We will begin the season of Lent with our Ash Wednesday worship service at 7:00 pm on March 6.

Blessings,

Pastor Kris