

**Order of Service**  
**August 3, 2014**

**Gathering music:** Wayne Smith

**Announcements:** Board Member

{ **Bell:** Jim }

**Prelude:**

**Call to Worship** – Jim Fisher

Come down off the ladder.  
Wash out that paintbrush.  
Shake the sand out of your shoes.  
Get up off your muddy knees,  
and give the garden a morning off.  
Fold up the newspaper.  
Turn off the coffeepot.  
Close up your calendar,  
already filled with dates,  
and times,  
and people,  
and places that claim you.  
This church is ready for you to fill its rooms,  
to create its spirit, to generate its warmth,  
to kindle its light.  
This church is ready for you to make community,  
to create beauty, to bend it toward justice,  
to serve its ideals.  
This church is ready for you to be here,  
honoring our past,  
invigorating our present,  
and dreaming our future.  
This is your church.  
Here we are home.  
Here we are whole.  
Let us begin.

Source:

Published in *A Temporary State of Grace: Meditations*, by David S. Blanchard. Boston, Skinner House Books, 1997, 4.

## **Chalice lighting** - Jim Fisher

Congregation: \*We light this chalice\*

*We light this chalice,  
for the light of truth,*

*We light this chalice,  
for the warmth of love,*

*We light this chalice,  
for the fire of commitment.*

*We light this chalice,  
As a symbol of our faith, as we gather together.*

## **Opening hymn:** Give Peace a Chance (John Lennon)

### **Welcoming visitors:**

Each week we welcome visitors and those who have been on a long sojourn. Please raise your hand (if you feel comfortable) and >>>> will bring you a microphone so that you can let us know who you are and whence you come.

### **Children's Story / Time for All Ages**

- Dobbie
- Winkie
- Kreacher



### **Readings**

Religion must mainly be a matter of principles only. It cannot be a matter of rules. The moment it degenerates into rules, it ceases to be a religion, as it kills responsibility which is an essence of the true religious act.

#### **B. R. Ambedkar**

For a successful revolution it is not enough that there is discontent. What is required is a profound and thorough conviction of the justice, necessity and importance of political and social rights.

#### **B. R. Ambedkar**

Unlike a drop of water which loses its identity when it joins the ocean, man does not lose his being in the society in which he lives. Man's life is independent. He is born not for the development of the society alone, but for the development of his self.

## **B. R. Ambedkar**

I must study politics and war, that my sons may have the liberty to study mathematics and philosophy, natural history and naval architecture, in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, tapestry, and porcelain.

[John Adams quotes](#) ([American](#) 2nd US [President](#) (1797-1801), [1735-1826](#))

Martin Luther King, Jr.- Letter from a Birmingham Jail

In no sense do I advocate evading or defying the law, as would the rabid segregationist. That would lead to anarchy. One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty. I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law.

[Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)

There's several ways of saying what's on your mind. And in states and counties where it ain't too healthy to talk too loud, speak your mind, or even vote like you want to, folks have found other ways of getting the word around. One of the mainest ways is by singing.

[Woody Guthrie](#)

**Hymn:** 149 Lift Every Voice and Sing

**Lift Every Voice and Sing** — often referred to as "The Negro National Anthem"— is a song written as a poem by [James Weldon Johnson](#) (1871–1938) in 1899 and set to music by his brother [John Rosamond Johnson](#) (1873–1954) in 1900.

On January 20, 2009, the Rev. [Joseph Lowery](#), past president of the [Southern Christian Leadership Conference](#), read the song's third stanza to begin his benediction at the inauguration ceremony for [President Barack Obama](#).

God of our weary years,  
God of our silent tears,  
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;  
Thou who has by Thy might Led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.

## **Spoken meditation**

Meditations: “A Prayer for the People of Israel and Palestine”

[Eric M. Cherry](#) (adapted)

*(Originally part of UUA President William Sinkford's statement in response to events in Burma in September 2007, this prayer can be adapted for use in other circumstances)*

Spirit of Life, Justice and Creation,  
You call us to embody equity and freedom in our lives.  
You are present in every struggle to overcome oppression with peace and justice.  
And though our sisters and brothers in Israel and Palestine are half a world away from us,  
yet we seek to be as near to them as we might in spirit and in prayer.

Provide further courage and strength to the noble cause of the citizens and religious leaders of  
Israel and Palestine.

Inspire wisdom, understanding and compassion in the hearts and minds of the members of their  
governments.

Comfort those who suffer in this struggle, and in all struggles for peace and justice in our world.

We seek to be useful instruments in solidarity with the people of Israel and Palestine, and so we  
rededicate ourselves to living lives examined through the lens of right relationship  
internationally.

Our prayer is that in this very moment wisdom and compassion will guide our hands and our  
hearts.

May it be so.

## **Silent Meditation and Musical Response**

### **Offering**

*Erik Walker Wikstrom*

*Before:* It is said, “The Lord loves a cheerful giver,” yet we’ll accept from a grouch as well. As  
the ushers prepare to take this morning’s offering, may each of us look into not just our wallets  
or our checkbooks to see how much we have with us. Let us look into our hearts, as well, and see  
what is available there—how much love, how much generosity, how much faith, how much  
gratitude, how much hope—and let us take our offering from that account.

*After:* For the gifts which we have received—and the gifts which we, ourselves, are—may we be  
truly grateful. Yet more than that, may we be committed to using these gifts to make a difference  
in the world: to increase love and justice; to decrease hatred and oppression; to expand beloved  
community; to share, and to keep sharing, as long as ever we can. Amen.

### **Joys and Sorrows**

Each week we invite members and visitors to briefly share a personal joy or sorrow such as a  
birth, death, move or significant family event. If you raise your hand >>> will bring you a  
microphone.

Tess Baumberger

Spirit of life and spirit of grace,  
Rest with us this day, in this place.  
We lift up every joy, every gladness,  
We hold up every hurt, every sadness  
Spoken in this good company  
As well as every secret feeling  
Held quiet in the hollows of our hearts.

**Congregational Response:**

Thus do we weave our lives together.  
We mourn. We rejoice. We will remember.

**Musical interlude:**

**Sermon:** The Revolution Will be in G Major

**The Revolution will be in G Major**

Perhaps this service should have begun with the Beatles song Revolution. Prior to the release of Revolution, the Beatles were not an overtly political band. John Lennon composed the lyrics in 1968 while studying meditation in Rishikesh, India, a once small city nestled in the Himalayan Mountains. I think John Lennon was seeking a balance between the anti-war, anti-establishment revolution and his spiritual quest inspired by his study of transcendental meditation.

“You say you'll change the constitution  
Well, you know We all want to change your head  
You tell me it's the institution  
Well, you know You'd better free your mind instead  
Don't you know it's gonna be alright, Alright, alright”



I'm sure that there was a lot going on in the head of John Lennon. He was beginning his second opus, if you will, with Yoko Ono. The Beatles were finding their way through a tumultuous cultural landscape and were producing music that was a part of the process of cultural change. Their music carried many of us along, inspiring us to look both inward and to each other for direction.

Ever the late bloomer, I made my pilgrimage to India nine years later in 1977. While I had a transformative adventure in the Himalayas including Rishikesh and Haradwar, two of the great spiritual centers of this very spiritual land, I was in India as an exchange student attending the University of Pune Ranadae Institute.

My academic track at the time could probably best be described as confused. I had declared in junior high school that I would pursue a doctorate in public administration or planning. I doubt even I took this proposal seriously. Several years later, in 1975, I was accepted into Bowdoin College with an intended major of Anthropology and Sociology, and in 1977 “found myself” in India trying to reconcile my desire to be a part of social change with my fascination for music. It made sense at the time to find a project that would allow me to do both.



Think for a minute. You want to save the world, or at least help people that are in desperate circumstances. You have convinced your academic advisors and your indulgent parents to send you to India on a study abroad program. You drop from Brunswick Maine into the bustling city of Pune, India – with a population more than double that of the state of Maine and currently more and four times Maine’s population.

- Pune, the great cultural center of Maharashtra in the center of India.
- Pune, with extensive challenges of a fast growing city with too few jobs, too little housing and scarcity of water, sanitation, and other services.

Here, amidst so much need for solid programs in economic development and civil engineering I elected to consider the transformative power of music for cultural change.

I started private study of sitar, perhaps channeling George Harrison, taking a range of social science classes and conducting a bit of ethno-musicological research for my capstone paper. You never know how chance events will change your life, but this one was a life changer. I cannot say who pointed me to BR Ambedkar and the movement of Mahar Untouchables to conversion to Buddhism, but I was hooked.

I want to tell you about this remarkable man and his movement, but let’s step back for a minute and consider this social, religious, political, cultural movement in a broader context.

Social movements take many forms.

- Some are passing fads built around a product (beanie babies), media successes (bluegrass music following the dueling banjos scene in *Deliverance* or more recently everything to do with zombies), or fads driven charismatic individuals (pill box hats of Jacqueline Kennedy).
- Some movements take on more epic proportion such as the civil rights movement in the US, the French revolution, and independence movements of India and the United States against colonial powers.
- Some social movements act slowly over the course of decades or centuries, while others happen suddenly in spontaneous and seemingly chaotic acts of collective behavior (The Occupy Wall Street movement).

- Some social movements are reactionary and sanctioned by established religions or traditional social institutions, such as the pro-life movement, while others are evolutionary, challenge religious traditions, creating new institutions and transforming religious practice, such as the marriage equality movement.
- Some movements succeed, some do not, and many change direction.

I could go on with all the dimensions of social movements, and there are many. To summarize the few I just listed, movements can be small, large, fast, slow, backward, forward, successful and not. Many movements follow a life-course pattern of birth, rapid, maturity and decline. (Sketch the pattern in the air) The same can be said for the life cycle products and ideas as they go from invention to obsolescence.

If I lost you in that three minute introduction to social movements, you should be able to pick up the pieces as we consider Dr. BR Ambedkar's personal journey and how he lead 500,000 people to religious conversion.



Bhimroa Ramji Ambedkar was born in 1891 into an untouchable Mahar family. He was the 14<sup>th</sup> child, and against all odds he was the first in his family to complete high school. He doggedly pursued higher education eventually earning a masters and doctorate of Economics (Columbia University) and a doctorate of political science at the London School of Economics plus a law degrees (Grays Inn, London) and subsequently two honorary doctorates. He pursued a variety of careers in law, education, accounting, writing, and politics. He was the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, making India the biggest democracy in the world. With all that, he was still denied access to public drinking water and looked down upon for his untouchable status.

Babasaheb, as he became popularly known, tried in many ways to end the oppressive concept of untouchability in Hindu practices. He struggled to overturn the caste system, and for a time sought to create a sort of homeland for untouchables separate from wider society. He ultimately decided this revolution would be personal. He considered all of the local alternatives including Islam, Sikhism and Christianity. He decided very late in his short life to convert to Buddhism. Being a scholar he delayed his conversion until he had written a book [\*The Buddha and His Dhamma\*](#), in 1956. He, his wife and 500,000 followers converted to Buddhism following the recitation of 22 vows: (Read a couple) . It is difficult to imagine the spectacle of that many people converting religions at one.

He built on traditional Buddhist affirmations, creating a list of 22 vows he and his followers recited:<sup>[9]</sup>

1. I shall have no faith in [Brahma](#), [Vishnu](#) and [Maheshwara](#) nor shall I worship them.
2. I shall have no faith in [Rama](#) and [Krishna](#), who are believed to be incarnation of God, nor shall I worship them.

3. I shall have no faith in [Gauri](#), [Ganapati](#) and other gods and goddesses of Hindus nor shall I worship them.
4. I do not believe in the incarnation of God.
- 5. I do not and shall not believe that Lord Buddha was the incarnation of Vishnu. I believe this to be sheer madness and false propaganda.**
6. I shall not perform [Shraddha](#) nor shall I give [pind](#).
7. I shall not act in a manner violating the principles and teachings of the Buddha.
8. I shall not allow any ceremonies to be performed by [Brahmins](#).
- 9. I shall believe in the equality of man.**
10. I shall endeavour to establish equality.
- 11. I shall follow the [noble eightfold path](#) of the Buddha.**
12. I shall follow the ten [paramitas](#) prescribed by the Buddha.
- 13. I shall have [compassion](#) and [loving-kindness](#) for all living beings and protect them.**
14. I shall not steal.
15. I shall not tell lies.
16. I shall not commit carnal sins.
17. I shall not take [intoxicants](#) like [liquor](#), drugs, etc.  
(The previous four proscriptive vows [#14–17] are from the [Five Precepts](#).)
18. I shall endeavour to follow the noble eightfold path and practice [compassion](#) and [loving-kindness](#) in every day life.
- 19. I renounce [Hinduism](#), which disfavors humanity and impedes the advancement and development of humanity because it is based on inequality, and adopt Buddhism as my religion.**
20. I firmly believe the [Dhamma](#) of the Buddha is the only true religion.
21. I consider that I have taken a new birth.
- 22. I solemnly declare and affirm that I shall hereafter lead my life according to the teachings of Buddha's Dhamma.**

The movement struggled as BR Ambedkar died within months of the conversion due to complications from diabetes. A wonderful bit of research was being carried out in Pune at the same time I was doing my work, but I found out only years later when that research was publishing in a delightful book, Jai Bhim!. The author, Terry Pilchick travelled around Maharashtra in 1977 to attend Buddhist prayer meetings. These traveling prayer meetings were one part prayer, one part education, one part community organizing.



Even so, 2001 census data indicated that there were almost 6 million converted Buddhists in Maharashtra (home state for Pune).

That's a big backdrop, and much of it I understand much better now than I did back in 1977. Oh to have had the resources of the internet, youtube, smart phones and digital media.

I wanted to understand what part music played in this social, political, religious movement. Fortunately I had a cassette recorder and a camera. I was able to record just three songs performed by an elderly Buddhist who was among the original converts. He earned a small living as a street musician in Pune, playing an ek-tar and singing. On the street he was pragmatic and sang what would earn tips, but we met one evening and he sang and spoke for my research.

Here's a clip from one song:

### **Ali Ali Bhimaci Mail**

Come, Come Bhim's Train ... Ring the bell  
The Train is coming to the station fast. It has come to India  
And Untouchables are on that train  
It gives people inspiration.  
He's getting people to sit on this train  
We given fuel to this train, the fuel is law  
The main station is Delhi.  
Delhi is where the train begins.  
Buddha Bhagwan is the ticket master.  
The train is starting to move.  
So everybody is rushing.  
The train is full of untouchables.  
Seeing that everybody is rushing the train,  
The capitalists are amazed.  
The train went to that land and liked it  
Bhim is on the horizon  
All the untouchables are indescribably happy.



Fig. 3: From birth to parinirvana, the life of Dr. Ambedkar, poster.

Each of these songs demonstrates significant characteristics of protest songs or songs in social movements. The music is not revolutionary. In fact these appear to be very traditional melodies from Hindu Bhajans, or faith songs. The singing style is also very rooted in village faith songs. Only the words have changed.

Of these songs, the train song (mail was delivered by train) is perhaps the most familiar to the western ear and mind. It is quite like a number of civil rights songs of Freedom Summer at the height of the civil rights movement, like "We Shall Overcome", "Hold On" and "Get on board".

The gospel train's a-coming  
I hear it just at hand  
I hear the wheels a-rumbling  
And rolling through the land

### **I am an Old Boat**

From this bank to the other I have to go  
For that thing please give me Darshan. Oh Buddha, I want to see you.  
I am in the middle of the sea (water)  
My boat is going to sink, so please come and help  
I can protect only with the views of education  
My boat is rocking.

For that trouble you come quickly  
You made me in my mother's womb.  
I had to come out, but now I've forgotten you  
Like me there are a lot of people.  
Those people have everything in life, but still they have forgotten  
We are waiting with love to remember God.

I am an Old Boat has an obvious parallel in "Michael, Row the Boat Ashore". How often in our inner or outer lives to we feel like boats tossed upon the sea. We want to get to shore, but we're not sure we can get their on our own.

### **The chain is broken**

Indian Mother, start singing  
Babasaheb has fought for truth and removed capitalism  
Study, boys and girls. Bhim caused them to study.  
Twenty rupies per month pay has started.  
They are fighting to live, some have done bad to the untouchables.  
Like the Muslims are surrounded and machine gunned.  
Like this many people have died on the road.  
Many of them ran away.  
Slavery has gone. The chain is broken.

Hinduism's now outlawed caste system ascribed status at birth, with rules for employment, diet, access to water, habitation and more. The system is clearly breaking down in urban India where

the complexity of society and the rule of law are placing a growing premium on what you can do rather than religious prescription. These songs make a clear connection between exploitation of untouchables by higher castes and by capitalists. The correlation of caste with economic class in India is fuzzy, particularly where high wages do not necessarily flow to ministers and university professors (sound familiar?)

The story of Ambedkar's revolution is still being written. The shift of more than five million people from Hinduism to Buddhism did not assure deliver economic prosperity. Maharashtra Buddhists are still among the poorest sub-populations in the state. They are still classified as "dalits", an economic underclass. India, like the US, provides some affirmative action support for historically repressed people. The struggle for economic emancipation will take time.

Babasaheb Ambedkar through remarkable intelligence and perseverance and several fortunate twists of fate gave his nation great gifts, including a constitution and a will banish repressive elements of the caste system. His goals changed throughout life, and in the end he found his path through religious conversion.

Here at home, we have suffered a similar hated institution of racism that, like the caste system, judges people by their birth rather than their merit. Martin Luther King, Jr. hoped our nation would achieve desegregation on the road to integration. He hoped that we too would break down barriers and reach a future in which "people are not judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."

As the worlds to greatest democracies, India's story and our story will be woven together over a great course of time.

Barack Obama, in a 2010 address to the Indian Parliament said, "We believe that no matter who you are, no matter where you come from, every person can fulfill their God-given potential. Just like a dalit like Ambedkar could lift himself up and pen the words of the constitution that protects the rights of all Indians."

Finally, In the words of Unitarian Universalist Minister Mariso Caballero,

"Diversity and tolerance are not good enough... We need to accept people, and rather than simply making room for them at the table, we need to encourage them to be a voice in shaping our growth and our future. We need to move beyond seeking to be diverse, and work to integrate and cherish the whole individual..."

May it be so.

"**This Land Is Your Land**" [Woody Guthrie](#) 1940 based in response to [Irving Berlin's](#) "[God Bless America](#)". Tired of hearing [Kate Smith](#) sing it on the radio, he wrote a response originally called "God Blessed America".<sup>[1]</sup>

*One bright sunny morning in the shadow of the steeple  
By the Relief Office I saw my people —  
As they stood hungry, I stood there wondering if  
~~God blessed America for me.~~*

(Wikipedia)

**Hymn:** This Land Is Your Land (Woody Guthrie)

There's several ways of saying what's on your mind. And in states and counties where it ain't too healthy to talk too loud, speak your mind, or even vote like you want to, folks have found other ways of getting the word around. One of the mainest ways is by singing.

**Woody Guthrie**

**Benediction**

Out from the gloomy past,  
Till now we stand at last  
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

**Postlude:** Wayne Smith

## **This Land Is Your Land**

**Words and Music by Woody Guthrie (D-G-A)**

**This land is your land. This land is my land.  
From California to the New York island;  
From the red wood forest to the Gulf Stream waters.  
This land was made for you and Me.**

**As I was walking that ribbon of highway,  
I saw above me that endless skyway:  
I saw below me that golden valley:  
This land was made for you and me.**

**I've roamed and rambled and I followed my footsteps  
To the sparkling sands of her diamond deserts;  
And all around me a voice was sounding:  
This land was made for you and me.**

**When the sun came shining, and I was strolling,  
And the wheat fields waving and the dust clouds rolling,  
As the fog was lifting a voice was chanting:  
This land was made for you and me.**

**As I went walking I saw a sign there  
And on the sign it said "No Trespassing."  
But on the other side it didn't say nothing,  
That side was made for you and me.**

**In the shadow of the steeple I saw my people,  
By the relief office I seen my people;  
As they stood there hungry, I stood there asking  
Is this land made for you and me?**

**Nobody living can ever stop me,  
As I go walking that freedom highway;  
Nobody living can ever make me turn back  
This land was made for you and me.**