



WITNESS OUR WELCOME
INTERFAITH CELEBRATION

June 5, 2022

OUR PURPOSE

Love God • Love Each Other • Be God's Love in the World

At Danville Congregational Church we welcome you to a progressive spiritual community that is open and affirming, celebrates differences, and encourages alternate views. We explore the Bible with curiosity and enthusiasm, taking it seriously but not literally. Taking Christ's call passionately to love our neighbor, we extend our faith into action for the betterment of all. Wherever you are on life's journey, we offer you a place of peace and hope.

Danville Congregational Church is an Open and Affirming church, welcoming all of God's people – of diverse race, gender, sexual orientation, family status, economic condition, and physical, mental and emotional ability.

A NOTE TO WORSHIPERS

It is our preference that you wear a mask inside the building to protect the most vulnerable in our community. Please sit in designated pews as directed by the ushers and move to the center of the row, so those who come in after you can more easily be seated. The left-hand section of pews as you enter the sanctuary has been designated for those who are free of scents and perfumes.

Please silence your cell phone when you enter the sanctuary.

If you would like to use one of our listening assistance devices, please see the sound technician in the back of the sanctuary.

***The DCC sanctuary is available for meditation and quiet prayer
during the week during normal business hours.
Please feel free to come by any time — enter through the office.***

INTERFAITH WORSHIP CELEBRATION

For items marked with an asterisk (), you are invited to rise in body, mind, or spirit.*

GATHERING MUSIC

Charlene Moore
City of Refuge UCC, Oakland

*CLERGY/RELIGIOUS LEADERS
PROCESSIONAL

One in Love, Aum

Mirabai & Steve Bangs
Unity Walnut Creek

WELCOME

Rev. Eric Sherlock
Senior Pastor
Danville Congregational Church UCC

A MOMENT OF SILENCE AND REMEMBRANCE

*for the victims of Buffalo, NY; Laguna Woods, CA; and Uvalde, TX shootings
and victims of the 20 mass shootings since May 24, 2022*

HYMN FOR THE HURTING

Amanda Gorman

Rev. Dr. Leslie Taylor
Senior Pastor
First Christian Church Concord

Everything hurts,
Our hearts shadowed and strange,
Minds made muddied and mute.
We carry tragedy, terrifying and true.
And yet none of it is new;
We knew it as home,
As horror,
As heritage.
Even our children
Cannot be children,
Cannot be.

Everything hurts.
It's a hard time to be alive,
And even harder to stay that way.
We're burdened to live out these days,
While at the same time,
blessed to outlive them.

This alarm is how we know
We must be altered —
That we must differ or die,
That we must triumph or try.
Thus while hate cannot be terminated,
It can be transformed
Into a love that lets us live.

May we not just grieve, but give:
May we not just ache, but act;
May our signed right to bear arms
Never blind our sight from shared harm;
May we choose our children over chaos.
May another innocent never be lost.

Maybe everything hurts,
Our hearts shadowed & strange.
But only when everything hurts
May everything change.

TWO-SPIRIT
LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Rev. Will McGarvey
East County Shared Ministry
Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Kathleen Krentz
Clayton Valley Presbyterian Church
PFLAG Clayton-Concord

One: We come today, representing all the majesty of creation:

**People: Diverse and beautiful, blessed and beloved,
all made in the image of the Creator of all things.**

One: We come today, called to this time and this place by an infinite God,
who hears our cries and responds with love and mercy.

**People: We come today, Transgender, Nonbinary, Gender-Diverse,
GenderQueer, Bisexual, Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Intersex,
Gay, Queer, Cisgender, Heterosexual, Ally.**

One: We come today, knowing you will listen and answer our needs.

People: We come today, to deliver our joined prayers of hope.

One: We come today, a people mourning still our losses, still recovering from
the ravages of the Covid-19 pandemic and the pandemics of
institutionalized racism and gun violence that have plagued our world
for too many centuries.

**People: We come today, knowing you care for us, that even when others
reject us, your arms are open to offer comfort. We come.**

– by Rev. Kimi Floyd Reisch, adapted

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Kathleen

One: Peace be with you.

People: And also with you

One: Please share signs of peace from where you are located
as we sing this song together.

There Is Only One of Us
words and music by Melissa Phillippe

*There is only one of us
In your eyes it's me I see
There is only one of us
You are my reflection
There is only one
You are my reflection
There is only one*

LITANY OF REPENTANCE
FOR WHEN WE MISS THE MARK

Pastor Leslie

One: God of love, we confess that we are in bondage to a view of the world that puts our compromise before your justice; that is unable to name the worth and wonder of all of your children; that places people in positions that threaten the very soul of who they are—the soul that you see as unique and glorious.

People: We confess that all too often, we continue to miss the mark as people of faith, unwilling to tell the truth of the ways in which even those who call upon your name do so for the sake of harm. We ask for your forgiveness when we've let silence be more powerful than using our voices for others. We pray for wholeness. We trust in the promise of your hope. Grant us, we pray, the courage to speak, the power to empower, the mercy to love. Amen

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

Pastor Leslie

One: God frees us and it is uncomfortable;
God frees us that it makes us responsible to witness and to act.
God frees us with a formidable forgiveness.

People: Thanks be to God!

– from *A Child Laughs, Prayers of Justice and Hope*, adapted

*OPENING SONG

For Everyone Born
by Shirley Erena Murray, 1998
New verses by Brain R. Mann, Rev. Will McGarvey

Charlene Moore &
WOW musicians

¹For everyone born, a place at the table,
for everyone born, clean water and bread;
a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,
for everyone born, a star overhead. [Refrain]

Refrain:

And God will delight when we are creators of justice
and joy, compassion and peace.
Yes God will delight when we are creators of justice—
Justice and joy.

²For Black and for white, a place at the table,
remembering the past, creating new growth.
A new law of love, transforming our culture,
for Black and for white, the right to be free. [Refrain]

(continued on next page)

³For firm and infirm, a place at the table,
For wheelchairs and canes,
a child's running feet,
For sighted and blind, all joining the chorus,
the hearing impaired, all feeling the beat. [Refrain]

⁴For gay and for straight, a place at the table,
transgender and queer in one family tree,
engaging each gift and blessing each covenant,
for a gay and for straight, a new way to be. [Refrain]

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Julián is a Mermaid
Jessica Love

Rev. Todd Atkins-Whitley
Associate Pastor, DCC

FIRST READING

Micah 6:6–8

Rev. D. Mark Wilson, PhD

With what shall I come before God and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before God with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?
Will God be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of
rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of
my body for the sin of my soul?" God has told you, O mortal, what is
good, and what does God require of you but to do justice and to love
kindness and to walk humbly with your God?

SECOND READING

Mark 12:28–31

Rev. Dr. LaTaunya Bynum
Regional Minister
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Northern California-Nevada

One of the scribes...asked [Jesus], "Which commandment is the first of all?"
Jesus answered, "The first is, '...love God with all your heart and with all
your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'
The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'
There is no other commandment greater than these."

THIRD READING

God is Queer As In...
M Barclay, enfleshed.com

Donald Lang
East County Shared Ministry
(PCUSA & UCC)

God is queer
as in
strange,
surprising,
titillating,
non-conforming to norms that
destroy;

as in
breaking open new possibilities
through flesh entangled,
and brave acts of collective courage;

as in
troubling certainties,
resisting assimilation,
and persisting
through struggle together;

as in
interdependence,
chosen family,
and reaching out to isolated kin;

as in
always becoming;
as in
less “this or that”
and more “multilayered,
multidimensional, and complex.

as in
intimately experienced,
and beyond definition;

as in
the love between strangers and
sheets,
the love that lasts for lifetimes,
the love that begets love;

as in
resists white supremacy,
and all its deadening lies,
rigid definitions,
and desire to control and confine;

as in
loyal to love, lovers, beloveds,
even when it’s all on the line;

as in
hurtful when spit from
the mouth of hate,
but sometimes still also a lighthouse,
a history of holy uprising,
and a coming home from within.

INTRODUCTION

Pastor Will

SERMON

Rev. Dr. Megan Rohrer
Bishop, Sierra Pacific Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

ANTHEM

Total Praise
Richard Smallwood

Charlene & Mark

PROTECT TRANS KIDS

Bonnie Violet
A Queer Chaplain

SPIRIT AWARD

San Ramon Valley Unified School District

Presentation

Rev. Rodney Lemery
Community Minister, Mt. Diablo
Unitarian Universalist Church

Response

Dr. John Malloy
SRVUSD Superintendent

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

One: We pray....God of many names,

People: hear our prayers!

– Prayer by M Barclay enfleshed.com.

GIVING OUR GIFTS TO BLESS OTHERS

To give by phone, text **PRIDE22** to **44321**. You can also place your gift of a check (payable to *Rainbow Community Center*) or cash in the offering plates on either side of the sanctuary or raise your hand and an usher will collect your gift. You can also give using the [RCC web site](http://rainbowcc.org/give) (rainbowcc.org/give).

Invitation to Give

Kiku Johnson
Executive Director
Rainbow Community Center

Offertory

Justified
Rev. David K. North

Mark & Charlene

Dedication

CLOSING SONG

In the Midst of New Dimensions
(See Worship Notes.)

Julian Rush

¹In the midst of new dimensions,
In the face of changing ways,
Who will lead the pilgrim people,
Wandering in their separate ways?

Refrain:

God of rainbow, fiery pillar,
Leading where the eagles soar,
We your people, ours the journey
now and ever, now and ever, now and evermore.

(continued on next page)

²We are gay and straight together,
Bi, Transgender, Lesbian too,
All along the path of justice,
Seeking freedom as we go. [Refrain]

³We are Black and we are Asian,
Indigenous, Hispanic, White,
We a rainbow coalition,
All of value in your sight. [Refrain]

⁴As we stand a world divided
By our own self-seeking schemes,
Grant that we, your global village,
Might envision wider dreams. [Refrain]

*LITANY OF SENDING

Lucinda Huffaker

San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church

One: God is calling us

**All: Out of comfort
Out of insecurity
Out of complacency
Out from under that which silences love and justice.**

One: Come out, people of God!

**All: Though we may be afraid
Though we will be at risk
Though the cross and the rainbow flag stand as a threat
God calls us to courage!**

One: Our God is a god of reconciliation and resurrection.

Of new life after devastation.

Of hope in the grip of evil.

And so we dare to proclaim, with faith and assurance, our truths:

**All: We believe in the power of love.
We believe in solidarity with the suffering.
We believe we are each valuable.
We believe that our togetherness is transformative.**

One: The world is longing for Holy unity that reveals,
voices that speak real words of hope.

Come out, people of God!

**All: Let us come out to work toward the liberation of
all people and the earth!**

– by M Barclay, enfleshed.com, adapted

*BENEDICTION

Sister Merry Peter
Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence

POSTLUDE

Charlene Moore

*Following our worship together,
please join us on the patio for a time of fellowship and refreshments*

WORSHIP NOTES

With deep gratitude for their gifts, we acknowledge tonight's WOW musicians: the Rev. Will McGarvey, vocals and lead guitar; Donald Lang, tenor; Mirabai Bangs, vocals; and Steve Bangs, guitar; Charlene Moore, accompanist and vocals; and Rev. D. Mark Wilson, PhD, vocals.



The Bay Area has been inspired and blessed by a God-given talent in **Charlene Moore**. Charlene's talent was discovered at the age of 2 years by her parents. She experienced playing for her first choir at the age of 4 years. Her father, the late Rev. Charlie Moore was the pastor of the Calvary Hill Baptist Church for 14 years. Her mother, the late Sister Darlene Moore was a soul stirring gospel singer from the old school, a great prayer warrior and missionary. Here in the Bay Area, Charlene and her mother were known as the "Mother & Daughter Team". The following are just some of Charlene's accomplishments.

The Weather Girls, Commercials/Voice-Overs: Dodge/New Sprint, Alamo, Mazda, Nissan Live Concerts-T.V./Back-Up Vocals: (Club-NYC) Don't Tell Mama Michael Bolton-Special Event/Charity Michael McDonald-Tour Bob Wier-Grateful-Dead Stacey Q "Sylvester" Dr. John - Charlie Daniel Band The Weather Girls (From London to Rome, Italy). Joan Rivers Tour & Eddie Murphy Arsenio Hall Show Apollo-Showtime Regis & Kathy Show Yokohama Japan (Dolphin Cafe') Unsung (Martha Wash) The Sugar Bar-Valerie Simpson Club-NYC) The Metropolitan Room (NYC) Oakland Main PRIDE Stage w/ Deborah Cox

Black AIDS Institute (2014-2015), The Faith Awards (2014-2015/ Both events produced by Mr. Kenneth R. Reynolds - Los Angeles Calif.) Martha Wash in Concert/Hotel Nikko-San Francisco - Tribute to "Sylvester" in Palm Springs (Martha Wash & Jeanie Tracy-2014). Angela Rene' (Purple DIVAS Designs) - 40+DIVAS/Models (Las Vegas-2014). Fashion Week LS 1426 - Linda Scott-Houston - Houston, Texas - 2014).

Charlene is a minister of music at City of Refuge UCC in Oakland, CA.



Rev. D. Mark Wilson, Ph.D is a Chaplain Resident at Kaiser Hospital, Walnut, Creek, California. He is a Continuing Lecturer in the Music Department of University of California at Berkeley, where he recently ended 15 wonderful years directing the UC Berkeley Gospel Chorus. He is the Director of Music at Easter Hill United Methodist Church, Richmond, California, and has been a Contra Costa County COVID Crises Counselor with the National Alliance of Mental Illness, a Lecturer in the Department of Sociology Department at St. Mary's College of Moraga, California and is the former Director of Music at St. Columba Catholic Church,

Oakland, California. He earned his undergraduate degree from Howard University, his Masters of Divinity Degree from Harvard Divinity School and Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Michigan. In addition to his academic work and scholarship, he has used musical performance to create diversity and global justice in Cuba, Nicaragua and Sri Lanka. He is an African American clergyperson ordained in the American Baptist Churches, USA, the former Senior Pastor of McGee Avenue Baptist Church (Berkeley), where he served for twelve years, and former Assistant Professor of Congregational Leadership at the Pacific School of Religion. Pastor Mark, as he is affectionately known to church members, is the Bay Area's first African American Baptist pastor to come out as a gay man in a Bay Area African American Baptist Church and to be welcomed and embraced by the church's membership. He is also an early leader of the Welcoming and Affirming Movement to affirm LGBTIQ people in the Baptist faith community. As a mentor to Queer youth in the Bay Area, he is a past Youth Program Manager at the San Francisco Bay Area's oldest LGBTIQ center, the Pacific Center for Human Growth, in Berkeley, California. He is a frequent baritone soloist with the Oakland based Cantare Con Vivo Chorale, conducted by David Morales, and a recent member of the San Francisco Golden Gate Men's Chorus, conducted by Joe Piazza.



The Rev. Dr. Megan Rohrer (they/their/them), is currently serving as the Bishop of the Sierra Pacific Synod. The first openly transgender pastor ordained in the Lutheran church, Pastor Megan is the first openly transgender bishop in a major Christian denomination. Ordained Extraordinarily in 2006, Pastor Megan is one of 18 pastors ordained during the time when the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) did not allow LGBT pastors to serve openly. In 2010 Pastor Megan was one of the first seven

pastors received into the ELCA after their policies changed. They received an honorable mention as an Unsung Hero of Compassion at a ceremony with His Holiness the Dali Lama, were presented a Medal of Tolerance by the King of Tallo in Indonesia, received an honorary doctorate from Palo Alto University and had their theology featured in the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation in Wittenberg, Germany.

As the Executive Director of Welcome, for twelve years, Pastor Megan has worked primarily with San Francisco's LGBT homeless community. In addition to feeding the hungry on Polk Street and in the Castro, Pastor Megan has created programs to provide groceries for HIV+ individuals, and advocates nationally for homeless LGBT youth and to help faith communities' welcome LGBT individuals. Pastor Megan's advocacy brought national attention to the issues faced by transgender women of color, when they raised the funds needed to get Meagan Taylor released from jail in Des Moines, IA.

Pastor Megan has served as the Community Chaplain Coordinator for the San Francisco Police Department, on the San Francisco Women's March and TransMarch Steering Committees, the San Francisco Human Rights Commission's LGBT Advisory committee, walked with the San Francisco Night Ministry and created a project that has given over 1,000 pairs of prescription glasses to the homeless in San Francisco for SF CARES. Pastor Megan was awarded the Connector Award by Project Homeless Connect..

Listed in the Trans100, Pastor Megan's exhibit on transgender mentoring from 1976-2009 in San Francisco was displayed at the GLBT Historical Society and won OutHistory's Since Stonewall Local History Competition. Megan has also won international awards for the Trans themed documentary Zanderology and was a finalist in transgender non-fiction for the Lambda Literary Award.

One of the many pastors arrested protesting Prop 8, Pastor Megan has officiated at countless weddings for LGBT individuals before and after the marriages were legally recognized. Pastor Megan lives near Golden Gate Park with their wife Laurel, two children, two cats and two hamsters.



Bonnie Violet is a trans femme genderqueer spiritual drag artist and digital chaplain. She is a prolific YouTuber, Twitcher & host of a queer chaplain video talk show & podcast (featuring series like Drag & Spirituality, TranSpirit & Faith Leaders). Bonnie co-hosts Splintered Grace with her conservative christian aunt and the CCC recovery podcast.

Bonnie Violet shares her experience, strength and hope about living with HIV, recovery from drugs and alcohol, and healing from sexual assault in classrooms, community centers, churches, and online. As a queer chaplain, she is present with people in death and dying to self by helping to lace your personal narrative with a spiritual thread to remind you of your resilience, strengthen faith in yourself, and create serenity in the now.

The **San Ramon Valley Unified School District (SRVUSD)** covers an 18 square mile area, encompassing the communities of Alamo, Blackhawk, Danville, Diablo, and San Ramon (including the new Dougherty Valley communities in east San Ramon) as well as a small portion of the cities of Walnut Creek and Pleasanton. The District is comprised of 36 schools serving more than 32,000 students in Transitional Kindergarten through Grade 12.



The **San Ramon Valley Unified School District** employs approximately 4,500 people, hiring 250-300 employees per year. With an annual operating budget of over \$337 million, SRVUSD receives more than \$17 million per year in parent/private donations, and approximately \$6.9 million per year from a local parcel tax.

District students are exposed to a rigorous, 21st century, standards-based curriculum with a strong focus on the essential skills including language arts, mathematics, social studies and science. Strong physical education, health, foreign language, technology, and visual and performing arts programs are also offered. SRVUSD has transitioned to the California State Standards, and is committed to ensuring students, parents and staff are fully prepared for this more meaningful, innovative and rich learning experience for all students. Students graduating from District high schools are required to have earned 240 designated credits. Opportunities include a rigorous academic program, outstanding technical and vocational curricula, and innovative elective courses. All students have opportunities to participate in a wide range of extracurricular activities.

SRVUSD is one of the top performing districts in California. Over 94% of our graduating seniors attend college or university, and District students are accepted into the University of California and the California State University systems at rates far exceeding state averages. Furthermore, the District has been recognized for its excellence through such honors as the coveted State Department of Education's Distinguished Schools Award (schools in the district have received this honor more than 50 times, more than any other district in northern California), and through recognition by the U.S. Department of Education as National Blue Ribbon Schools.

The District has a wide range of state and federally-mandated special education programs. The District's Inclusion Program is a model in the state. All district K-12 schools have resource specialist programs and site staff includes at least one resource teacher and a part-time psychologist, speech therapist, and health educator.

SRVUSD is proud of its highly trained, talented, and dedicated staff and an involved, committed, and highly educated parent community.



Dr. John Malloy came to the San Ramon Valley Unified School District after having served as the Director of Education (Superintendent) at the Toronto District School Board in Toronto, Canada, which is the largest School Board in Canada and the eighth largest School Board in North America. Dr. Malloy has an extensive background in education at all levels and is a fierce advocate for an equitable, accessible, quality public education.

John has a vision for learning that every student deserves a great education and that we have a responsibility to ensure that students feel connected and engaged. We must have high expectations and create spaces for teaching and learning that support students and staff in meeting those expectations. He believes that we must know our students by understanding their strengths, interests and lived experiences. To fully support their learning, as adults, we must recognize in ourselves what biases we might have that may affect student learning and counter those biases to ensure that the ways we are leading and teaching are relevant and engaging. When warranted, we must shift our attitudes and practice to meet their needs. Additionally, we must allocate our human and financial resources strategically to support student needs and ensure that all schools offer a wide range of programming that reflects the voices, choices, abilities, identities and experiences of all students.

By strengthening relationships and continuing to build partnerships among students, staff, families and communities, student needs are supported, and learning and well-being will improve. John believes that together we can build positive school and workplace cultures that support mental health and well-being, are free of bias and full of potential.

Prior to his work at the Toronto District School board, Dr. Malloy was the Assistant Deputy Minister of Education/Chief Student Achievement Officer at the Ontario Ministry of Education and was the Director of Education (Superintendent) at the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board in Ontario, Canada. During his career, he has been a principal, vice principal, English teacher and guidance counselor. He is the author of an extensive array of education related articles and papers, as well as a frequent presenter at educational conferences and symposiums.



Kiku Johnson (he/him) is an intersectional, queer, Chinese, trans man originally hailing from Michigan and has been living and thriving with his partner in Oakland, CA since 2004. Kiku is an educator, trainer, and consultant engaging his human centered design thinking, with a visual arts background focused on diversity, equity, and expansion. Kiku has 30+ years of experience with youth development and responsive community program design, outreach, implementation, impact, evaluation, and advocacy through a social justice lens. He is independently and collaboratively adept at creating culturally, trauma-informed/healing-centered, accessible, affirming approaches and content for a wide variety of intersectional communities including LGBTQI+, People of Color, youth, and adults working across sectors including juvenile justice, education, mental health, community-based, and faith-based organizations.

Kiku has traveled the country educating on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) Affirming Approach and Expansive Practices connected with the CDC funded handbook he authored that is open source. He is a Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy/Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, Supporting LGBTQ Youth Program Fellow. He loves being in community with all folk with a special affection for the cat community. Kiku loves teaching mediums for expression like stained glass construction and is fascinated with how things work and embodying MacGyver at every opportunity! He's writing a book about his life journey through trauma and as a man of trans experience. Most importantly, Kiku knows liberation is found every time he gets on the dance floor!



Sister Merry Peter found her vocation through the Radical Faeries in 1987, and served as a missionary in Toronto before moving to San Francisco in 1999. Her life-long activism focuses on HIV-AIDS, queer youth, civil rights and social justice. As a Masters of Divinity student, she co-founded the first LGBT Student Union at the University of Toronto and led a successful national campaign against conversion therapy in Canada. Her efforts include partnerships to provide street-level health services to sex workers, legal aid for LGBTQ refugees and resistance to police violence. She is a poet, writer, and former sex-worker. As an ordained minister, she joined the fight for equal marriage in San Francisco in 2004 and regularly performs wedding ceremonies. She lives on the

coast with her husband of over years. You can reach her directly via email

at merrypeter@thesisters.org and friend/follow her on Instagram and Facebook at Merry Peter. You can read more about her at thesisters.org/merry-peter.



The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence is a leading-edge Order of queer nuns. Since our first appearance in San Francisco on Easter Sunday, 1979, the Sisters have devoted themselves to community service, ministry, and outreach to those on the edges, and to promoting human rights, respect for diversity and spiritual enlightenment. The Sisters believe all people have a right to

express their unique joy and beauty and they use humor and irreverent wit to expose the forces of bigotry, complacency and guilt that chain the human spirit. Sisters are active across the US and Canada, on four continents, and over a dozen countries and they welcome your interest in becoming a member or starting a new mission in your community. For more information, visit us on the Web at www.thesisters.org or on Facebook at Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, Inc.



Shirley Erena Murray's "For Everyone Born" reflects many of the themes that appear in her hymns: justice, peace, equality, honoring of women, ecological concerns, and social responsibility. While this hymn can certainly be used for Communion, it can be employed on other occasions when the themes of justice, compassion, and reconciliation are a part of the service.

"For Everyone Born" debuted in *Global Praise 2: Songs for Worship and Witness* (New York, 2000). It appears in five stanzas with a refrain. The words in stanza one reflect the table on which we break bread. Everyone, regardless of their stature, deserves

"clean water and bread" and a "safe place" to live. It also alludes to the star that shone the night Christ was born. This could mean that all people, who are created in God's image, deserve a birth that is celebrated and wanted.

Stanza two reflects a table of equality. Too often, women have been deemed second-class citizens in the home, church, and society at large. Murray's words mean that someone should not be regulated to certain tasks or roles because of their gender or gender identity. The roles must be divided fairly with no single person possessing all of the power. It is through the "wisdom and grace" that only comes from God that there can be "a system that's fair" for all people.

A table of acceptance is the theme in stanza three. It is a place where no matter the age, people's voices will be heard. Young and old will have "a part in the song." This table reflects a place where the old and the young walk hand-in-hand and support each other no matter the circumstances. It is a place where everyone belongs.

A table of reconciliation is prevalent in the fourth stanza. However, it is a stanza that is not without controversy because it is a radical idea. This is the table where the "just and unjust" and the "abuser [and] abused" come together. A table where those who have hurt and those who hurt are sitting together is difficult to accept, but it is what we should and must strive for. It is a table where the anger and hurt can

be let out in a safe place and where mercy and grace can help begin the healing process that brings about "a new way to live."

The final stanza is a table of dignity. It is a place where people can safely "live without fear, and simply to be." This table is a space for people "to work, to speak out, to witness and worship." People can freely work, speak their minds, and worship in the ways they have been called to do so. It is a place where everyone has "the right to be free."

Murray's hymn not only reflects human concerns, but it demonstrates God's care and concern for humankind, hence the refrain, in which God delights in those who create "justice, joy, compassion, and peace."² God is concerned about humanity's well-being, is active in our lives, and uses people to make creation a better place for everyone and everything that dwells in it. (Source: UMC Discipleship Ministries)



Few hymns have assumed such an iconic status in the hearts of the African American worshipping community in such a brief time as Richard Smallwood's "Total Praise." Smallwood skillfully paraphrases several passages of scripture, amplifying their meaning with an inspiring musical setting. This essay summarizes the life of Richard Smallwood, the circumstances surrounding the song's origins, and an analysis of its text and music.

Richard Smallwood was born on November 30, 1948 to Mabel Ruth Locklear and Chester Lee Smallwood in Atlanta, Georgia. His family and congregation observed and nurtured his musical gifts throughout his childhood. During his formative years, Richard honed his skills while leading music at Whitestone Baptist Church where his father was the pastor. He established the Richard Smallwood Singers at age eleven, served as accompanist for his junior high and high school choirs, and provided accompaniment for his school music classes. At age fourteen, he assumed a salaried position as Hammond organist at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church.

Richard continued his musical education at Howard University (B.M., 1971) where he majored in piano and minored in voice. He credits the Howard University experience with forming him into the mature artist that congregations and audiences have come to respect and revere today. Richard debuted his first official composition, an arrangement of "The Lord's Prayer" (1971) at Howard University. He returned to Howard to obtain his master's degree in piano and ethnomusicology in 1975 and, more than two decades later, matriculated in the Howard Divinity School (1999). His years at Howard University helped him discover who he was and marked the beginning of who he was to become.

Richard became a member of Washington, D.C.'s Metropolitan Baptist Church on Sunday, October 25, 1987. Shortly after, he joined the music ministry staff at the church, where he faithfully served. In addition to the in-depth preaching of Dr. H. Beecher Hicks Jr., Metropolitan's worship culture appealed to Richard's broad range of musical styles. Dr. Braxton Shelley recalled Smallwood's comments, "I pride myself in terms of Metropolitan's musical divers[ity]. I love anthems; I love hymns; I love gospel . . . you should be able to do it all" (Abbington, 2014, p. 399). Richard Smallwood is now a world-renowned, multi-award-winning gospel composer, arranger, and pianist. For half a century, he has been fortifying and resourcing the sung faith of congregations.

"Total Praise" was born out of the anguish of caring for his ailing mother, terminally ill godbrother, and the emotional issues of his foster brother. He confessed in his autobiography, "I felt helpless as I watched my loved ones suffering. I wanted to write a 'pity party' song . . . I wanted to develop it musically into a song that asked for God's help. However, the more I worked on it, the more it kept going in the direction of a praise song" (Smallwood, 2019, p. 368).

The text is based in Psalm 121, a prayer of David, extolling God as Helper. This psalm is one of fifteen "psalms of ascent" sung as the Jewish people traveled upward from surrounding cities to Jerusalem. The melody of "Total Praise" magnifies the movement of the psalm in the ascending arc of its line. Smallwood aligns his lyrical point of view to that of this psalm. "Total Praise" debuted on Richard's Adoration—Live in

Atlanta album (1996). This recording opens with Mervyn Warren's classically flavored overture string arrangement, as Richard begins to play the two-bar quarter note figure and Vision sings, "Lord, I will lift" (Smallwood, 2019, p. 373).

The opening two lines of Smallwood's text comes from the perspective of the first-person singular, confessing the deity of God. The hills (where God is located) are where refuge, provision, and care resides (Psalm 121:1–2). Richard has mentioned in various workshops and seminars how intentional he was about structuring the ascending melodic line and accompanying harmonies of the opening two lines as a form of word painting. He also clarifies that the ascending motion that occurs on the lyric "hills" was also intentional—where the tenors are singing a sustained B \flat as the sopranos and altos are resolving to make the overall chord an e \flat minor chord. Line three of the stanza continues into lines one and two of the chorus, addressing God directly in the second person. These lyrics affirm the nature and character of God (Psalm 121:3–8), clarifying the confession of lines one and two of the stanza. The final line of the chorus returns to the first person, engaging with God in surrender, agreement, and gratitude. The use of first-person is a personal declaration and confession that becomes a congregational proclamation and profession. The composer employs parallel harmonies in the choral setting, allowing all parts to participate in the ascending line. Finally, the polyphonic and imitative texture of the closing "Amen" gives each voice part the opportunity to offer a melodically inverted, climatic confirmation to their confessions.

Destiny's Child recorded a portion of "Total Praise" on their Survivor (2001) album. Chrisette Michelle included the song on her mixtape in preparation for the release of the Let Freedom Reign (2010) album. Fantasia and Patti Labelle added "Total Praise" to their live performances. "Total Praise" has also served as a comfort and strength during devastating events in our world. The hymn was rendered at the funeral of six-year-old Ana Grace Márquez-Greene, who was murdered on December 14, 2012, at Sandy Hook Elementary in Connecticut. Gospel Recording Artist Gaye Arbuckle sang "Total Praise" in July 2016 for the Interfaith Memorial for officers who were killed in Dallas, Texas. "Total Praise" was also one of the songs that opened the funeral of Aretha Franklin (1942–2018). The song was sung at the beginning of the funeral for Smallwood's mother as they closed her casket.

Though this song was composed more than two decades ago, it remains relevant in the current climate of our world and the world to come. "Total Praise" provides words to pray when we are speechless and a posture of praise when we would otherwise feel hopeless. It channels the immanence and transcendence of God in our circumstance as we sing it in congregational worship. By the time we reach the "Amen," we are renewed by God's promises to us. (Source: UMC Discipleship Ministries)



Today, we sing four verses of Julian Rush's seven-verse Ours the Journey, a song (lyrics and tune) he wrote in the years immediately following his ouster from the church he was serving upon coming out as gay. The song, which can be viewed as a prayer, was first presented at the 1985 Rocky Mountain Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church at which the first Japanese-American United Methodist bishop was commissioned. This text celebrates diversity with the labels of gender, race, age, and sexual orientation named in the various stanzas; in some cases, we have adapted them slightly (substituting Indigenous for Indian) and have adapted the fifth verse to be more

inclusive of various LGBTQ+ identities. The song is rarely presented in its full seven-verse form (only five verses are included in the UCC hymnal). We concur with the Discipleship Ministries of the United Methodist Church who wrote in 2018, "In the Midst of New Dimensions is just as relevant today as it was at its creation, now thirty-three years ago. The first stanza begins 'In the midst of new dimensions, in the face of changing ways', which certainly describes the present world. The prayers of many Christians include the sentiments of Rush's text, and God still guides all of God's people." For a deeper look at this hymn, read this article from the Hymn Society in the United States and Canada. You can read more about Rev. Julian in this biography published by the LGBTQ Religious Archives Network.

WOW celebrates all of these open and inclusive congregations and organizations!

- Center for LGBTQ and Gender Studies in Ministry and Religion – cgs.org
- Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Northern California – www.ccncn.org
- Coalition of Welcoming Congregations – www.cwcbay.org
- Keshet: For LGBTQ Equality in Jewish Life – keshetonline.org
- Jewish Family & Community Services East Bay – www.jfcs-eastbay.org
- Lavendar Seniors of the East Bay – www.lavendarseniors.org
- Northern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ – www.nncucc.org
- PFLAG Clayton/Concord pflag.org/chapter/pflag-clayton-concord
- PFLAG Danville/San Ramon Valley pflag.org/chapter/pflag-danvillesan-ramon-valley
- Rainbow Community Center – rainbowcc.org
- Arlington Community UCC – www.ac-ucc.org
- Asbury United Methodist, Livermore – www.asburylive.org
- Beth Chaim Congregation – www.bethchaim.com
- Brentwood Community United Methodist – brentwoodumc.org
- Clayton Valley Presbyterian Church – cvpresby.org
- Community Congregational Church, Benicia (UCC) – www.cccucc.org
- Community of Christ, Walnut Creek – www.cofchristwc.org
- Concord United Methodist Church – concordumc.org
- Covenant of the Goddess, Pagan – www.cog.org
- Danville Congregational Church (UCC) – danvillechurch.org
- East County Shared Ministry (Community PCUSA-UCC) – EastCountySharedMinistry.org
- Eden United Church of Christ – www.edenucc.com
- Epworth United Methodist Church – www.epworthberkeley.org
- The Evangelical Network – www.t-e-n.org
- First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) – www.concordfcc.net
- First Congregational Church of Oakland – www.firstoakland.org
- Freedom in Christ Church, SF – www.christiangayok.com
- Grace Episcopal Church Martinez – gracechurchmtz.org
- Grace Presbyterian Church, Walnut Creek – www.gracewc.org
- Hillcrest Congregational Church (UCC) – www.hillcrestucc.org
- Holy Cross Episcopal Church, Castro Valley – holycrosscv.org
- Kehilla Community Synagogue – www.kehillasynagogue.org
- Lafayette Christian Church (DOC) – www.lafayettechristianchurch.org
- Lynnewood United Methodist Church, Pleasanton – www.lynnewood.org
- Martinez First Congregational (UCC) – www.fccmtz.org
- Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church – mduuc.org
- Orinda Community Church UCC – www.orindachurch.org
- Peace Lutheran, Danville – peacejourney.org
- San Lorenzo Community Church (UCC) – www.slzchurch.org
- San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church – srvumc.org
- Shell Ridge Community Church (ABC) – www.shellridge.org
- St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) – www.standrews-pcusa.org
- St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church – www.stbartslivermore.com
- St. Clare's Episcopal Church – www.stclarespleasanton.org
- St. Mark Lutheran Church, Pleasant Hill – www.sm-lc.net
- St. Timothy's Episcopal Church – www.sainttimothysdanville.org
- Temple Isaiah, Lafayette – www.temple-isaiah.org
- The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection – www.resurrectionph.org
- The Little Brown Church of Sunol – www.littlebrownchurch.com
- Tri Valley Unity Church – www.trivalleyunity.com
- Unitarian Universalist Church of Livermore – www.uucliv.net
- United Church of Hayward (UCC) – www.hayward.org
- Unity Center of Walnut Creek – www.unitycenter.net
- Walnut Creek United Methodist Church – www.walnutcreekumc.org

WOW Spirit Award History

- #1 2002 SRV School Gay-Straight Alliances
Presented to student representatives for their leadership in confronting homophobia in the District.
 - #2 2003 Rob Kessler, Superintendent of Schools, SRVUSD
 - #3 2004 Kathy Tussy, SRV High School Guidance Counselor
 - #4 2005 Founders of Interfaith San Ramon Valley—aka the “Sanctuary Committee” consisting of Rabbi Dan Goldblatt, Rev. Alan Kelchner, Rev. Steve Strain, and Rev. Steve Harms
 - #5 2006 Barbara and Sam Beeler, Founders of Danville/SRV PFLAG Chapter
 - #6 2007 Barbara and Scott Reed, Founders of the WOW service
 - #7 2008 Joyce and Paul Brown, long time PFLAG chapter members/leaders
 - #8 2009 Julie Lienert (Contra Costa Safe Schools Coalition)
 - #9 2010 Rev. Roland Stringfellow, Pacific School of Religion
 - #10 2011 Rev. Jane Spahr, Presbyterian Minister noted for her support of gay marriage
 - #11 2012 Mary Griffith, Mother of Bobby Griffith (The Bobby Griffith Story)
 - #12 2013 John Lewis and Stuart Gaffney (Gay Marriage activists)
- No WOW was held in 2014.*
- #13 2015 Stacy Ward Kelly, GSA Advisor at Livermore Charter High School
 - #14 2016 Gary Leveque, GSA and LGBTQ Coordinator/Organizer, SRVUSD
 - #15 2017 Ben Barr, Executive Director, Rainbow Community Center
 - #16 2018-19 Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church, including Rev. Leslie Takahashi and their team who served immigrants at the border.
 - #17 2020 Parents of Transgender and Gender-Expansive children.
Courage Award to Trans and Gender-Expansive teens and children.
 - #18 2022 San Ramon Valley Unified School District, Dr. John Malloy, Superintendent

Holy One of Blessing, eternally we co-create ourselves in your love.
All companionship orientations;
All gender identities and expressions;
All ways of having family.

We celebrate LGBTQ+ peoples everywhere
Knowing that many are still not safe to come out;
 To be free;
 To live life abundantly.
Heal all who are ill in body, mind, heart or spirit.
Bind up all wounds and provide adequate care.
Extinguish any stigma people are enduring.

We celebrate because everyone should be celebrated.
We are your body on earth.
May our love and hope be sent on the wings of this prayer
To all who need refreshing, affirmation, and love's embrace.

May it be so. Amen.

– by Rev. Mak Kneebone

Day Of Silence



April 22, 2022

