



St. John's Episcopal Church

MUSIC AND MEDITATION NOVEMBER 5, 2020 6:00 PM

Welcome

The Reverend David C. Killeen

Reading

How good it is to center down! To sit quietly and see one's self pass by! The streets of our minds seethe with endless traffic; our spirits resound with clashing, with noisy silences, while something deep within hungers and thirsts for the still moment and the resting lull. With full intensity we seek, ere the quiet passes, a fresh sense of order in our living; a direction, a strong sure purpose that will structure our confusion and bring meaning in our chaos. We look at ourselves in this waiting moment—the kinds of people we are. The questions persist: what are we doing with our lives?—what are the motives that order our days? What is the end of our doings? Where are we trying to go? Where do we put the emphasis and where are our values focused? For what end do we make sacrifices? Where is my treasure and what do I love most in life? What do I hate most in life and to what am I true? Over and over the questions beat upon the waiting moment. As we listen, floating up through all of the jangling echoes of our turbulence, there is a sound of another kind—a deeper note which only the stillness of the heart makes clear. It moves directly to the core of our being. Our questions are answered, our spirits refreshed, and we move back into the traffic of our daily round with the peace of the Eternal in our step. How good it is to center down!

—Howard Thurman, *Meditations of the Heart*

Silent Meditation

Music

Steal away
Hooper Stevens, baritone

arr. Hall Johnson

Reading

Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart. Here is the citadel of all my desiring, where my hopes are born and all the deep resolutions of my spirit take wings. In this center, my fears are nourished and all my hopes are nurtured. Here my loves are cherished and all the deep hungers of my spirit are honored without quivering and without shock. In my heart above all else, let Thy love and integrity envelope me until my love is perfected and the last vestige of my desiring is no longer in conflict with Thy spirit. Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart.

—Howard Thurman, *Meditations of the Heart*

Silent Meditation

Music

Adoration

Florence Price

Reading

I surrender myself to God without any conditions or reservations. I shall not bargain with Him. I shall not make my surrender piecemeal but I shall lay bare the very center of me, that all of my very being shall be charged with the creative energy of God. Little by little, or vast area by vast area, my life must be transmuted

in the life of God. As this happens, I come into the meaning of true freedom and the burdens that I seemed unable to bear are floated in the current of the life and love of God. The central element in communion with God is the act of self-surrender.

—Howard Thurman, *Meditations of the Heart*

Silent Meditation

Music

Christ, mighty savior

David Hurd

Reading

Music is pleasing not only because of the sound but because of the silence that is in it: without the alternation of sound and silence, there would be no rhythm. If we strive to be happy by filling the silence of life with sound, productive by turning all life's leisure into work, and real by turning all being into doing, we will only succeed in producing a hell on earth. If we have no silence, God is not heard in our music.

—Thomas Merton, *No Man is an Island*

Reading

God is with me. Always there is the persistent need for some deep inner assurance, some whisper in my heart, some stirring of the spirit within me—that renews, re-creates and steadies. Then whatever betides of light and shadow, I can look out on life with quiet eyes.

—Howard Thurman, *Meditations of the Heart*

Blessing

Dismissal

Leader

Go in peace to love and serve God.

People

Thanks be to God.

Howard Washington Thurman (1899-1981)

Howard Thurman played a leading role in many social justice movements and organizations of the twentieth century. He was one of the principal architects of the modern, nonviolent civil rights movement and a key mentor to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Thurman grew up in Daytona, Florida and was raised by his grandmother, a former slave. As a child, Thurman complied with his grandmother's request that he read the Bible aloud to her, and he developed an interest in the text at a very early age. As a young child, Thurman also learned not only of the trials of slavery, but also of the slaves' deep religious faith, which profoundly shaped his later vision of the transformative potential of African American Christianity. Thurman attended the Florida Baptist Academy in Jacksonville from 1915 to 1919, the year he matriculated at Morehouse College. In 1923 he graduated from Morehouse; he had purportedly read every book in the college's library. Nearing the end of his undergraduate education in economics at Morehouse, he spent the summer of 1922 in residence at Columbia University, where he attended classes with white students for the first time. After receiving a bachelor of divinity degree from Rochester Theological Seminary in 1926, he served as pastor of the Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Oberlin, Ohio. In the spring of 1929, Thurman studied mysticism at Haverford College under Rufus Jones, who was a Quaker. Mysticism came to figure prominently in Thurman's theology. Indeed, Thurman evolved into a mystic who grounded all of his work in the idea that "life is alive" with creative intelligence.

In 1929, Thurman returned to the South to serve as Professor of Religion and Director of Religious Life at Morehouse and Spelman colleges. During his tenure at Morehouse and Spelman, Thurman completed a series

of sermons on Negro spirituals that would become the basis of the Ingersoll lectures that he delivered at Harvard Divinity School in 1947. He published these lectures as two books, *Deep River* (1945) and *The Negro Spiritual Speaks of Life and Death* (1947). In 1932, Thurman moved to Washington, D.C. to become Professor of Religion at Howard University, where he was appointed the first Dean of Rankin Chapel in 1936. Also during that year, he became the first person to lead a delegation of African Americans to India to meet with Mahatma Gandhi.

The Gandhian ideas that Thurman developed received a larger audience through the publication of his most famous work, *Jesus and the Disinherited* (1949), which deeply influenced leaders of the civil rights struggle. In this work, Thurman offered the vision of spiritual discipline, as against resentment, that later informed the moral basis of the black freedom movement in the South.

In 1953, at the invitation of Boston University President Harold Case, Thurman became the Dean of Marsh Chapel at Boston University. Thurman was the first African American to hold such a position at a majority-white university.

—Adapted from Boston University’s School of Theology website

Francis Hall Johnson (1888 – 1970) was an American composer and arranger of African-American spiritual music. He is one of a group—including Harry T. Burleigh, R. Nathaniel Dett, and Eva Jessye—who had great success performing African-American spirituals. He received an extensive education, attending the private, all-black Knox Institute, and earned a degree from Allen University in Columbia, South Carolina. He also attended Atlanta University, the Juilliard School, Hahn School of Music, and the University of Pennsylvania.[4] Johnson began his professional career as a violinist, but in time he became interested in choral music, and formed the Hall Johnson Negro choir, which performed widely and particularly in film soundtracks. In 1951, the Hall Johnson Choir was selected by the United States Department of State to represent the U. S. at the International Festival of Fine Arts held in Berlin.

Johnson wrote of the spiritual:

“True enough, this music was transmitted to us through humble channels, but its source is that of all great art everywhere—the unquenchable, divinely human longing for a perfect realization of life. It traverses every shade of emotion without spilling over in any direction. Its most tragic utterances are without pessimism, and its lightest, brightest moments have nothing to do with frivolity. In its darkest expressions there is always a hope, and in its gayest measures a constant reminder. Born out of the heart-cries of a captive people who still did not forget how to laugh, this music covers an amazing range of mood. Nevertheless, it is always serious music and should be performed seriously, in the spirit of its original conception.”

Florence Beatrice Price (née **Smith**; 1887 –1953) was an African-American classical composer, pianist, organist and music teacher. Price is noted as the first African-American woman to be recognized as a symphonic composer, and the first to have a composition played by a major orchestra. By the time she was 14, Florence had graduated as valedictorian of her class. After high school, she enrolled in the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, majoring in piano and organ. While there, Smith wrote her first string trio and symphony, and graduated in 1906 with honors, with both an artist diploma in organ and a teaching certificate. Price lived at various times in Arkansas, Atlanta, and eventually in Chicago, where she befriended her student Margaret Bonds, also a black pianist and composer. This friendship connected Price with writer Langston Hughes and contralto Marian Anderson, both prominent figures in the art world who aided in Price's future success as a composer. Although her training was steeped in European tradition, Price's music consists of mostly the American idiom and reveals her Southern roots. She wrote with a vernacular style, using sounds and ideas that fit the reality of urban society. Being deeply religious, she frequently used the music of the African-American church as material for her arrangements. At the urging of her mentor George Whitefield Chadwick, Price began to incorporate elements of African-American spirituals, emphasizing the rhythm and syncopation of the spirituals rather than just the text. Her melodies were blues-inspired and mixed with more traditional, European Romantic techniques. The weaving of tradition and

modernism reflected the way of life for African Americans in large cities at the time. Following her death, much of her work was overshadowed as new musical styles emerged that fit the changing tastes of modern society. Some of her work was lost, but as more African-American and female composers have gained attention for their works, so has Price. In 2009, a substantial collection of her works and papers were found in an abandoned dilapidated house on the outskirts of St. Anne, Illinois. These consisted of dozens of her scores, including her two violin concertos and her fourth symphony. As Alex Ross stated in *The New Yorker* in February 2018, "not only did Price fail to enter the canon; a large quantity of her music came perilously close to obliteration. That run-down house in St. Anne is a potent symbol of how a country can forget its cultural history."

David Hurd (b. 1950) is a composer, choral director, educator, and one of the world's most visible and successful African American classical organists. Dr. Hurd was Professor of Sacred Music and Director of Chapel Music at General Theological Seminary in New York for 28 years. He was also the Music Director at the Church of the Holy Apostles in Chelsea, until May 2013. He is presently the Director of Music at the Church of Saint Mary the Virgin in New York. Hurd attended the High School of Music & Art, the Juilliard School, and Oberlin College. He holds honorary doctorates from Berkeley Divinity School at Yale, Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, and Church Divinity School of the Pacific, given in recognition of his contributions to sacred music. In 1977 he received first prizes in both Organ Performance and in Organ Improvisation from the International Congress of Organists, being the only person to ever win both prizes in the same year. With over 100 choral and organ works in print, his compositions have appeared in numerous recordings in both the United States and England. Hurd is regularly sought out by congregations and organizations seeking to commission new anthems and organ works. Hurd's sacred compositions can be found in many hymnals, including the Episcopal *Hymnal 1982*.