



Chalice Circle Packet

June 2020

What Does It Mean to Live Faithfully with the Power of Blessing?

CONTENTS

Reflection

Spiritual Practices

Questions to Ponder

Resources

Unity Church-Unitarian, St. Paul, Minnesota unityunitarian.org

BLESSING

Dear Chalice Circle Friends,

Given the rapidly changing and especially demanding challenges of our times, I have not assembled a typical packet on the monthly theme of Blessing. Instead, I am including two reflections on Blessing, one written in response to the pandemic before George Floyd's death. The other from a sermon about the power of blessing, written after almost two weeks of uprising in response to George Floyd's death. They are followed by a single spiritual practice, a few brief resources and a playlist that was already developed to accompany the first reflection before George Floyd was killed. Use them as you like to support and guide your chalice circle conversations this month, or your own reflections in this time when we need both reflection and conversation, both pause and inner work and engagement in the outer work that might inspire.

Stay steady and strong, connected and open,

Karen Hering
Associate Minister

BLESSING IN A PANDEMIC TIME

What does it mean to bless and be blessed in a pandemic replete with loss that has or will come to us all? It is not, as some might suggest, a matter of sweetening the undeniably sour taste of these days, making lemonade when life gives us lemons.

Blessing is much more powerful than that. It is less about what we make from what has been given or taken from us, than it is about noticing the wholeness that is always ours beneath and beyond whatever comes our way. Blessing names and evokes that wholeness, clears a view by which we might glimpse it, opens a relationship by which we might know it.

Of the many challenges we face in this pandemic, one of the more existentially difficult experiences is the sense of isolation underscored by social distancing and wearing masks. In any time, when illness, trauma or death enter our lives, the comforts of human touch and nearness are often what we depend on to make it through. Or when those we love are suffering and words fall short, that same touch and nearness can feel like all we have to give our hurting dear ones. What is left to offer now, when touch and proximity are not allowed? What balm still permitted can heal the hollowing distances within us when facing our own fears and anxieties alone, without the trusted companionship we typically rely on to soothe and encourage us?

Thankfully, blessing remains, powerful and permissible, an activity as old as human history and in this pandemic time still effective, essential and capable of being shared without transmitting the virus. It might be words, spoken or written, either your own or borrowed from others. It might be a candle given or lit. It could be a sign wishing wellbeing, held up to a window. Or hands held in the shape of heart in a screen-time meeting. The practice of blessing and being blessed can tether us across the distances we now must maintain. It offers comfort and awakens healing, with or without touch. Blessing, as John O'Donohue put it, "converts all distance into spiritual space," and in that spiritual space, we can rediscover and reclaim our wholeness, both inside us and between us.

Think of the moon's tidal pull, invisibly yet resolutely tugging across a quarter million miles of space to move the oceans' waters here on earth. Think of a word or phrase that once similarly moved your heart, letting you know you had been seen and loved for who you really are. Or think of a gesture or ritual that acknowledged who you wanted to become – and were already becoming. Think of a time when your eyes met those of another, spanning the distance between any two separate lives, drawing your heart into relationship across difference, large or small. A blessing – whether word or gesture, ritual or act of kindness, literal or symbolic – brushes off the dust of the day so we can see the shine of wholeness connecting us across any distance, physical or otherwise.

Blessings, given and received, are not only connective across space but also across time. Their invocation of wholeness and healing is an open door between our present desires and intentions and the future where those longings can become real. Think of the biblical creation story, when God's naming of light and nighttime, sky and land and sea called each of these into being. So too, what we name in our blessings summons forth a future more inclined toward that christening.

In this time of necessary physical distancing, can we let the practice of blessing draw us nearer to our own sacred source and to one another? Might our willingness to bless and be blessed in the chaos of these days begin to call forth new and more just ways of being together? It seems worth a try.

*May the distance now stretched
between us
draw us nearer in heart and spirit.*

*May the longing awakened by separation
open our hearts to a larger love
holding us close through fear and loss.*

*May the kindness stirred in troubled times
move in heart and deed
long after the troubles subside.*

*May the world that emerges then
be shaped by the tug of true relationship
that survives all distance and time.*

Karen Hering, from the June 2020 *CommUNITY* newsletter

BLESSING IN A TIME OF UPRISING

From the sermon, “A Circle of Light”

by Karen Hering, delivered at Unity Church-Unitarian, June 7, 2020

Last week, in a Minneapolis, I joined several hundred colleagues of many faiths and theologies in a silent march organized by black clergy from the Twin Cities. We walked in solemn silence, whites following the black leaders, east down 38th Street to Chicago Avenue. There, we passed through the intersection to the place just steps away where George Floyd was murdered almost two weeks ago today.

You’ve likely now seen, in person or in photos, this intersection – and its newly drawn circle mandala, transformed by sidewalk chalk and flowers, by art and by grief, by all night vigils and a steady stream of pilgrims paying tribute on foot, on bikes and on bended knee.

Which is what we did that day, too. Dropped to our knees together on what was so clearly sacred ground, hundreds of us black and white of many faiths, knees surrendered to the summer scorched pavement, heads bowed, tears running into our face masks, as the black clergy led us in reciting the Lord’s Prayer right there. Never have I heard those words as profoundly and tearfully as I did that day on my knees in the very site where another knee, bent in an act of terror, took George Floyd’s life.

Today, as we at Unity Church turn our focus to the monthly theme of Blessing, I am reminded that the Hebrew and Arabic words for blessing can be traced to the word for knee. Meaning, as I understand it, that to bless a person or a place, an occasion or a space, is to offer a gift in words or deed on bended knee. Humbly, and in relationship. Right there in the noisy, busy intersections, where our faith meets the heat of our world, and where the traffic merges sometimes dangerously, the traffic of grief and anger, loss and renewal, life and death, hope and despair. All of this in motion, coming and going all mixed up together, creating commotion, here in this time of terrifying contradictions: heartbreaking losses and staggering possibilities for justice both rising from the terrible events of this time. If there are blessings to be named now, and I believe there are many, surely it is a time of mixed blessings, as Kara noted earlier.

Such is the nature of many significant thresholds: those dynamic times of change in our lives (personally and collectively) that mark a passage from what is no longer to what is not yet. Thresholds are doorways in time, places in between, where we are asked to let go and leave something behind, often without knowing what will replace it or when.

A threshold is a place of much trembling and great uncertainty. No wonder it is also a place begging for the gift and power of blessing.

But just what is blessing? And what does it do? Who is empowered to do it?

There is a difference, maybe subtle but true, between prayer and blessing. Prayer, we sometimes say, is a quality of listening. A posture of attention opened to the present moment – and to the sacredness nested within every moment. Blessing, you might say, grows from prayer’s posture – and it leans forward. When a blessing is offered on the threshold, it opens our heart’s attention to that space in between, and then it inclines us, maybe even calls or nudges us, across to the other side, into a new reality as yet wholly unseen and unknown. This is why blessing is an act of faith.

The poet John O’Donohue wrote that “A blessing is a circle of light drawn around a person to protect, heal, and strengthen.” He said, “To be in the world is to be distant from the homeland of wholeness. We are confined by limitation and difficulty. When we bless, we are enabled somehow to go beyond our present frontiers and reach into the source. A blessing awakens future wholeness.”)

When a blessing draws a circle of light around us, it illuminates the ground beneath our feet, always the only place to begin a journey into the unknown, whether it is a journey of a thousand miles or a thousand demands for justice deferred throughout centuries of oppression. A blessing takes the past into account and draws the circle wider to include a future of something new and different. Evoking wholeness, it steadies us. Naming a new reality, it inspires and calls us. It opens a wide intersection where contradictions can meet with the necessary tension and discomfort that accompanies growth; but sometimes, with enough mutual attention and effort, those contradictions can meet and pass without collision.

The threshold times we are in right now have been rife with collisions. Clashes, like flint on stone, igniting fires in our cities throughout the night as well as sparking fires in hearts and minds that burn with anger all day long. We have seen the destruction fire brings. Buildings reduced to rubble and twisted rebar, streetlamps and street side trees scorched into mere shadows. But let us not forget that fire also brings light. And each time we light our chalices as we Unitarian Universalists do when we gather, we are blessing the time and space we share by evoking the light of truth and the warmth of love that rise from communities where we are in covenant to walk with one another.

I wonder, can our chalice-lighting practice be of use in blessing the uncertain future awaiting us now? In a world ablaze with hatred, can we tend a different kind of fire – with flames of love and true connection – making a circle of light that gathers us and helps us move forward?

I have written before about my deep fear of fire. It began when I was 7 and fell, hands first, into the hot coals of a campfire, burning both hands badly. The healing took all summer. My fear of fire lasted much longer, keeping me from lighting a match until well into my teenage years.

Still, I was drawn to fire’s heat and shimmer, so I became a fire tender. I learned to make my fires by saving and recovering the smallest embers of fires abandoned by others as ashes. Every

summer when our family went camping, I was often the first to rise on the cold northern mornings and I would wish for the warmth of a fire. Unable to light a match for fear of bringing my fingers so close to the flame, I would use a long stick instead, gently poking through the ashes in the firepit until I found a single ember still alive from the previous night's fire. Then, I would feed it carefully, first with pine needles and small twigs and my own measured breath. Then with larger sticks and branches. Eventually a small log. Most mornings, by the time my family rose, I had a small campfire burning safely within the circle of stones and releasing its warmth and light beyond.

In the past two weeks, perhaps you have felt a variation of this dilemma – wanting to be part of kindling warmth and light but also holding back in fear, not only of the fires burning in the streets but also of the virus spreading with our breath. How do we live out our faith and values when these contradictions can create such confusion that we don't know what to do or where to turn?

Blessing the confusion, the chaos, the contradictions with our own spoken commitment to lean toward justice is a good place to begin. If you want to discover the mixed blessings of this time, look for the embers of hope still alive in the ashes and offer them your breath, the breath of commitment, measured but strong. As you do, you will create a small but growing circle of light and warmth for yourself and others.

Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can. There is work enough for all of us to find our part, large or small. We have no shortage of tasks. There is work to be done in the streets as well as work to be done in our hearts and minds, and in our homes and neighborhoods. There is something for us all, friends. It is not helpful to compare one task against another as being more or less important. The most important thing is that we all take responsibility for doing something. That we not let the pain and destruction of this time pass without each sharing in some way the work of healing and repair that will take all of us.

Blessing gets its power from the way our breath and breathing connects us to one another and to all living beings. A blessing gets its power from relationship. Right relationship. Equitable relationship.

“A blessing,” wrote Rachel Naomi Remen, “is a moment of meeting, a certain kind of relationship in which both people involved remember and acknowledge their true nature and worth, and strengthen what is whole in one another.” When we bless, she said, we “touch the unborn goodness in them and wish it well.”

Have you been blessing the people you meet each day like this?

In Audre Lorde's “Litany for Survival” that we read together this morning, she names the true worth of those who have been devalued and oppressed. And she writes this poem for them,

calling out to all those who were never meant to survive in systems that deny their humanity and very existence. She names the fear in us all, inscribed there to keep those oppressive systems in place. She sees us and names us, there

*“in doorways coming and going
in the hours between dawns
looking inward and outward
at once before and after*

*seeking a now that can breed
futures
like bread in our children’s mouths”*

With this poem, she is blessing all of us on the threshold, breeding hope with her words and calling upon us to do the same with ours.

Audre Lorde knew plenty herself about contradictions and mixed blessings. When she was named New York’s poet laureate in 1991, a position she held until she died of cancer in 1992, she said this:

“What does it mean that a black, lesbian, feminist, warrior, poet, mother is named the state poet of New York? It means that we live in a world full of the most intense contradictions and we must find ways to use the best we have – ourselves, our work – to bridge those contradictions, to learn the lessons that those contradictions teach. And that is the work of the poet within each one of us, to envision what has not yet been. And to work with every fiber of who we are to make the ... pursuit [and reality] of those visions irresistible.”

If this is the work of poetry, I would add, it is also the work of blessings. And it is a power within each one of us to bless the contradictions of our times. Which is to say, to look with open eyes and honest acknowledgement at the injustices built into our nation and to call into being a vision for justice we have never known or seen. To draw a circle of light that big, that bright, that warm.

In the rapid movement of change occurring in our cities and our lives today, may we not let our fears silence us or shut us down. Let us learn to run with it. As poet Ed Bok Lee describes the act of running – alternating between “moments of disequilibrium” and “a burst of faith.” “You can cover more ground that way than walking,” says the poet’s mother. You can move through “a history longer than anyone understands.” You can feel your way to faith, as you listen to the singing. You can discover the only truly useful hope, beneath and beyond ideology, “deeply buried blue.”

So emboldened by our faith, let us find the hope deeply buried blue. May we create a circle of light that beckons us and others across these threshold times, into a future unknown but alive with the promise of true justice, of new understanding and of relationship.

May it be so. And Amen.

Spiritual Practices



BLESSING IN A TIME OF UNREST

The following is a blessing for the shared work that lies ahead for all of us, in the uprising following George Floyd's death, seeking to finally dismantle the systemic racism embedded in our nation and our cities. Consider the aspirational nature of a blessing like this – naming our intentions in a way that can continually call us back when we stray from our desire to use this moment for truly transformational change, personally and societally.

May our grief keep our hearts open, to one another and to ourselves, to the truth of our past and present and the possibilities of our future.

May our rage neither divide us nor distract us from the true tasks at hand.

May our fears, anxieties and confusion not hold us back from work that is ours to do – in our hearts, in our streets and in our relationships and our systems.

May our hope not be false and our despair not let us retreat or stop feeling.

May the trembling discomfort of this moment be known for what it is – a fearful and powerful invitation to let go of the world and life we have known and to become our whole and best and beautiful selves, each of us guided and graced by a Love that holds us all.

Write your own personal blessing, using any of the above words or underlying intentions that resonate with your personal situation and aspirations. You can adapt the words above, add to them, or set them aside and write your own blessing from scratch. How do you wish to bless the unrest of this time by naming your own intention to help bring healing and awaken wholeness, in your own life and, possibly, beyond it?

After writing your own blessing for this time of unrest, post it somewhere visible. Read it once or twice a day. What effect does it have – on your thoughts, your feelings, your actions?

Questions to Ponder

Read through the questions below and notice which one(s) resonate with you. One or more of the questions might seem particularly compelling – or some might stir resistance in you. Either of these reactions might make the question fruitful to consider. Choose just one and take time to consider it, over several days if possible. Write it down on a piece of paper you carry in your pocket. Or take a picture of it with your phone. Or record it in your journal – and spend some time, each day if you can, reflecting on it in writing or otherwise, noticing where it leads you and what you learn from it and your response to it.

1. What do you understand a blessing to be? What words and actions in today's events and in the events of your life now seem to be "drawing a circle of light" "to protect, heal, and strengthen."
2. What is "awakening future wholeness" in the world or in your life today? Would you call it a blessing?
3. If a blessing bridges the space between us, how might the act of blessing help bridge the social distancing required in our pandemic times?
4. Rachel Naomi Remen wrote that "A blessing is a moment of meeting, a certain kind of relationship in which both people involved remember and acknowledge their true nature and worth, and strengthen what is whole in one another. By making a place for wholeness within our relationships, we offer others the opportunity to be whole without shame and become a place of refuge from everything in them and around them that is not genuine. We enable people to remember who they are." In this meaning of the word blessing, how are you blessing others and yourself in addressing systemic racism today?
5. Recall a time when someone has blessed you with words or actions? What did they do and how did it make you feel? What difference did it make for you?
6. **What's your question?** Your question may not be listed above. As always, if the above questions don't include what life is asking from you, spend the month listening to your days to hear it. Or maybe the question or call you need to hear is waiting in one of the quotes listed below. Consider looking there!

Resources

Recommended Resources for Personal Exploration & Reflection

The following resources are not required reading. They will not be analyzed in our circles. Instead they are here to companion you on your journey this month, get your thinking started and open you to new ways of thinking about what it means to be part of a people of resilience.

Word Definitions & Roots

Blessing

Based on the Random House Dictionary, © Random House, Inc. 2009.

Bless –*verb (used with object)*, blessed or blest, bless·ing.

1. To consecrate or sanctify by a religious rite; make or pronounce holy (**which is to uncover, reveal or awaken ourselves to the holiness already there**), or to request the bestowal of divine favor on: *Bless this house.*
2. To bestow good of any kind upon: *a nation blessed with peace.*
3. To extol as holy; glorify: *Bless the name of the Lord.*
4. To protect or guard from evil (usually used interjectionally): *Bless you! Bless your innocent little heart!*

Word Origin:

before 950; ME *blessen*, OE *blētsian*, *blēdsian* to consecrate, orig. with blood, earlier **blōdisōian* (*blōd* BLOOD + *-isō-* derivational suffix + *-ian* v. suffix

Wise Words

From *To Bless the Space Between Us*, John O'Donohue

“What is a blessing? A blessing is a circle of light drawn around a person to protect, heal, and strengthen. Blessing awakens future wholeness. . . . When a blessing is invoked, a window opens in eternal time.”

“Human hope is based on the instinct that at the deepest level of reality some intimate kindness

holds sway. This is the heart of blessing. To believe in blessing is to believe that our being here, our very presence in the world, is itself the first gift, the primal blessing.”

“There is a reality in blessing. . . . It doesn't enhance sacredness, but it acknowledges it, and there is power in that.” Marilyn Robinson, *Gilead*.

“A blessing is not something that one person gives another. A blessing is a moment of meeting, a certain kind of relationship in which both people involved remember and acknowledge their true nature and worth, and strengthen what is whole in one another. By making a place for wholeness within our relationships, we offer others the opportunity to be whole without shame and become a place of refuge from everything in them and around them that is not genuine. We enable people to remember who they are.” Rachel Naomi Remen, *My Grandfather's Blessings*

Poetry

Saint Francis and the Sow

The bud
stands for all things,
even for those things that don't flower,
for everything flowers, from within, of self-
blessing;
though sometimes it is necessary
to reteach a thing its loveliness,
to put a hand on its brow
of the flower
and retell it in words and in touch
it is lovely

until it flowers again from within, of self-blessing;
as St. Francis
put his hand on the creased forehead
of the sow, and told her in words and in touch
blessing of earth on the sow, and the sow
began remembering all down her thick length,
from the earthen snout all the way
through the fodder and slops all the way
through the fodder and slops to the spiritual curl of
the tail,
from the hard spininess spiked out from the spine
down through the great broken heart
to the sheer blue milken dreaminess spurting and
shuddering
from the fourteen teats into the fourteen mouths
sucking and blowing beneath them;
the long, perfect loveliness of sow.

*Galway Kinnell, 'Saint Francis and the Sow',
Houghton Mifflin, 1993, © Galway Kinnell
1968, 1980, 1985, 1993*

May I, may you, may we
not die unlived lives.
May none of us live in fear
of falling or catching fire.
May we choose to inhabit our days,
to allow our living to open us,
to make us less afraid,
more accessible,
to loosen our hearts
until they become wings,
torches, promises.
May each of us choose to risk our significance;
to live so that which comes to us as seed
goes to the next as blossom
and that which comes to us as blossom,
goes on as fruit.

*Dawna Markova, I Will not Die an Unlived Life:
Reclaiming Purpose and Passion (Boston,
Massachusetts: Red Wheel/Weiser, Llc, 2000).*

On the Pulse of Morning, an excerpt from the 1993 Inaugural poem by Maya Angelou

Lift up your faces, you have a piercing need
For this bright morning dawning for you.

History, despite its wrenching pain,
Cannot be unlived, but if faced
With courage, need not be lived again.

Lift up your eyes upon
This day breaking for you.

Give birth again
To the dream.

Women, children, men,
Take it into the palms of your hands.

Mold it into the shape of your most
Private need. Sculpt it into
The image of your most public self.
Lift up your hearts
Each new hour holds new chances
For new beginnings.

Do not be wedded forever
To fear, yoked eternally
To brutishness.

The horizon leans forward,
Offering you space to place new steps of change.
Here, on the pulse of this fine day
You may have the courage
To look up and out and upon me, the
Rock, the River, the Tree, your country.

No less to Midas than the mendicant.

No less to you now than the mastodon then.

Here on the pulse of this new day
You may have the grace to look up and out
And into your sister's eyes, and into
Your brother's face, your country
And say simply

Very simply
With hope
Good morning.

Praise Song for the Day, by Elizabeth Alexander, a poem for Barack Obama's Presidential Inauguration

Each day we go about our business,
walking past each other, catching each other's
eyes or not, about to speak or speaking.

All about us is noise. All about us is
noise and bramble, thorn and din, each
one of our ancestors on our tongues.

Someone is stitching up a hem, darning
a hole in a uniform, patching a tire,
repairing the things in need of repair.

Someone is trying to make music somewhere,
with a pair of wooden spoons on an oil drum,
with cello, boom box, harmonica, voice.

A woman and her son wait for the bus.
A farmer considers the changing sky.
A teacher says, Take out your pencils. Begin.

We encounter each other in words, words
spiny or smooth, whispered or declaimed,
words to consider, reconsider.

We cross dirt roads and highways that mark
the will of some one and then others, who said
I need to see what's on the other side.

I know there's something better down the road.
We need to find a place where we are safe.
We walk into that which we cannot yet see.

Say it plain: that many have died for this day.
Sing the names of the dead who brought us here,
who laid the train tracks, raised the bridges,

picked the cotton and the lettuce, built
brick by brick the glittering edifices

they would then keep clean and work inside of.

Praise song for struggle, praise song for the day.
Praise song for every hand-lettered sign,
the figuring-it-out at kitchen tables.

Some live by love thy neighbor as thyself,
others by first do no harm or take no more
than you need. What if the mightiest word is love?

Love beyond marital, filial, national,
love that casts a widening pool of light,
love with no need to pre-empt grievance.

In today's sharp sparkle, this winter air,
any thing can be made, any sentence begun.
On the brink, on the brim, on the cusp,

praise song for walking forward in that light.

Music

For a playlist inspired by the opening reflection on
this month's theme, visit this [Spotify link](https://open.spotify.com/playlist/11jAg1U5o1UyAlFvgVOqNM?si=bEk42GbLSXClqAjf7xYYwQ). (Note:
you may have to register for a free Spotify account
to listen to more than 30 seconds of each song.)
<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/11jAg1U5o1UyAlFvgVOqNM?si=bEk42GbLSXClqAjf7xYYwQ>

For detailed notes about these recording artists,
see the end of this packet.

Videos & Podcasts

The Cross and the Lynching Tree,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6985UG0Z3k>

A sermon movie, by Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, III, serving
as a requiem for Ahmaud Arbery - "A young man
just shy of his 26th birthday stepped out into the
sun and ran for the final time upon this earth . . ."
Moss calls on his listeners to understand the power
of blessing and of faith in changing hearts and
challenging and uprooting the oppression of
systemic racism.

NOTES ON PERFORMERS FEATURED IN THE SPOTIFY [MUSIC PLAYLIST](#)

Beyoncé Giselle Knowles-Carter ([/bi:ˈjɒnsɛr/ bee-YON-say](#); born September 4, 1981) is an American singer, songwriter, record producer, dancer and actress. Born and raised in [Houston](#), Texas, Beyoncé performed in various singing and dancing competitions as a child. She rose to fame in the late 1990s as the lead singer of [Destiny's Child](#), one of the [best-selling girl groups of all time](#).

John Winston Ono Lennon [MBE](#) (born **John Winston Lennon**, 9 October 1940 – 8 December 1980) was an English singer, songwriter and [peace activist](#) who gained worldwide fame as the founder, co-lead vocalist, and rhythm guitarist of [the Beatles](#). His [songwriting partnership](#) with [Paul McCartney](#) remains the most successful in musical history. In 1969, he started the [Plastic Ono Band](#) with his second wife, [Yoko Ono](#). After the [Beatles disbanded](#) in 1970, Lennon continued as a solo artist and as Ono's collaborator.

I Can't Get Next to You, The Temptations

The Temptations are an American vocal group who released a series of successful singles and albums with [Motown Records](#) during the 1960s and 1970s. The group's work with producer [Norman Whitfield](#), beginning with the Top 10 hit [single "Cloud Nine"](#) in October 1968, pioneered [psychedelic soul](#), and was significant in the evolution of [R&B](#) and [soul](#) music. The band members are known for their choreography, distinct harmonies, and dress style. Having sold tens of millions of albums, the Temptations are among the most successful groups in [popular music](#).

Message in a Bottle, The Police

The Police were an English [rock](#) band formed in [London](#) in 1977. For most of their history the line-up consisted of primary songwriter [Sting](#) (lead vocals, bass guitar), [Andy Summers](#) (guitar), and [Stewart Copeland](#) (drums, percussion). The Police became globally popular in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Emerging in the British [new wave](#) scene, they played a style of rock influenced by [punk](#), [reggae](#), and [jazz](#). Considered one of the leaders of the [Second British Invasion](#) of the U.S., in 1983 [Rolling Stone](#) labelled them "the first British New Wave act to break through in America on a grand scale, and possibly the biggest band in the world." The Police disbanded in

1986, but reunited in early 2007 for a one-off [world tour](#) that ended in August 2008.

The Flame, Cheap Trick

Cheap Trick is an American [rock](#) band from [Rockford, Illinois](#), formed in 1973. The band's classic lineup consisted of frontman [Robin Zander](#), guitarist [Rick Nielsen](#), bassist [Tom Petersson](#), and drummer [Bun E. Carlos](#).

Stars-4-Ever, Robyn

Robin Miriam Carlsson (born 12 June 1979), known as **Robyn** (Swedish pronunciation: [\[ˈrɔ̂bːɣn\]](#)), is a Swedish singer, songwriter, record producer and DJ. She arrived on the music scene with her 1995 debut album, [Robyn Is Here](#), which produced two US [Billboard Hot 100](#) top-10 singles: "[Do You Know \(What It Takes\)](#)" and "[Show Me Love](#)". Her second and third albums, [My Truth](#) (1999) and [Don't Stop the Music](#) (2002), were released in Sweden.

The Tide Is High, Blondie

Blondie is an American [rock](#) band co-founded by singer [Debbie Harry](#), and guitarists [Chris Stein](#) and [Ivan Kral](#). The band were pioneers in the American [punk](#) and then the [new wave](#) scene of the early 1970s New York. Its first two albums contained strong elements of these genres, and although highly successful in the United Kingdom and Australia, Blondie was regarded as an underground band in the United States until the release of [Parallel Lines](#) in 1978. Over the next three years, the band achieved several hit singles including "[Heart of Glass](#)", "[Call Me](#)", "[Rapture](#)" and "[The Tide Is High](#)". The band became noted for its eclectic mix of musical styles incorporating elements of [disco](#), [pop](#), [reggae](#), and early [rap](#) music.

Ezio Pinza (born **Ezio Fortunato Pinza**; May 18, 1892 – May 9, 1957) was an [Italian opera](#) singer. Pinza possessed a rich, smooth and sonorous voice, with a flexibility unusual for a [bass](#). He spent 22 seasons at [New York's Metropolitan Opera](#), appearing in more than 750 performances of 50 operas. At the San Francisco Opera, Pinza sang 26 roles during 20 seasons from 1927 to 1948. Pinza also sang to great acclaim at [La Scala, Milan](#) and at the [Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London](#). After retiring from the Met in 1948, Pinza enjoyed a fresh career on [Broadway](#) in musical theatre, most notably in [South Pacific](#), in which he created the role of Emile de Becque.

Can You See Me?, Jimi Hendrix

James Marshall "Jimi" Hendrix (born **Johnny Allen Hendrix**; November 27, 1942 – September 18, 1970) was an American rock guitarist, singer, and songwriter. Although his mainstream career lasted only four years, he is widely regarded as one of the most influential guitarists in history and one of the most celebrated musicians of the 20th century. The [Rock and Roll Hall of Fame](#) describes him as "the greatest instrumentalist in the history of rock music".

I Saw the Light, Hank Williams

Hiram "Hank" Williams (September 17, 1923 – January 1, 1953) was an American singer-songwriter and musician. Regarded as one of the most significant and influential American singers and songwriters of the 20th century, Williams recorded 35 singles (five released posthumously) that reached the Top 10 of the *Billboard* Country & Western Best Sellers chart, including 11 that ranked number one (three posthumously).

Blessed, Simon and Garfunkel

Simon & Garfunkel were an American [folk-rock](#) duo consisting of singer-songwriter [Paul Simon](#) and singer [Art Garfunkel](#). One of the best-selling music groups of the 1960s, their biggest hits—including "[The Sound of Silence](#)" (1965), "[Mrs. Robinson](#)" (1968), "[The Boxer](#)" (1969), and "[Bridge over Troubled Water](#)" (1970)—reached number one on singles charts worldwide. Bless the Children of the World, Randy Newman

Randall Stuart Newman (born November 28, 1943) is an American singer-songwriter, arranger, and composer known for his [Southern](#)-affected singing style, early [Americana](#)-influenced songs (often with mordant or satirical lyrics), and various [film scores](#). His best-known songs as a recording artist are "[Short People](#)" (1977), "[I Love L.A.](#)" (1983), and "[You've Got a Friend in Me](#)" (1995), while other artists have enjoyed more success with [cover versions](#) of his "[Mama Told Me Not to Come](#)" (1966) and "[I Think It's Going to Rain Today](#)" (1968).