



Chalice Circle Packet

December 2020

Waiting



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WAITING

As the world waits for a vaccine. As our nation waits for a transfer of power. As growing multitudes wait (impatiently, unwillingly and with protest and demands) for racial justice, gender equity, environmental healing and much more. As we all now wait to visit loved ones, to gather in community, to sing in our sanctuary again. We enter December and this Advent season with more than the usual amount of waiting.

Patience is growing thin. Have you noticed? As daylight grows shorter and the winter chill sets in, we wonder, how long can we wait for relief? How do we distinguish between the injustice of waiting that for African Americans has “almost always meant never,” in Martin Luther King, Jr.’s words, and the waiting that theologian Paul Tillich insisted “is not despair,” but “the acceptance of our not having, in the power of that which we already have”?

What is this “power of that which we already have” nested in “our not having”?

The word “wait” traces its origins to Old Germanic roots meaning *to be watchful*, and *to observe carefully*, related to the origins of the word “wake.” Sometimes, in the middle of night, I lie awake wondering what is it we are watching for in this year of extended waiting? And would it be any easier to wait if I knew?

In the stories of this season, the waiting is mostly for unknown outcomes. The early northern peoples, fearing the disappearance of the sun at winter solstice, built their fires high because they did not know if longer daylight would return. The Maccabees rededicating the desecrated temple, found just one day’s oil in the jar and lit the lamp anyway not knowing how it could possibly last the eight-day wait for more oil to arrive. The Israelites waiting for a king, did not know a powerful new leader would be conceived out of wedlock and born homeless, sharing shelter with the animals.

If we are watchful today, if we slow down enough to observe carefully what is changing, not only around us but within us, might we begin to glimpse the “power of that which we already have”? The power of a new world order already in the making. The power of imagination igniting and illuminating new understandings of community and deep connection standing up to fear and greed. The power of love reaching out across the distances of our times – not just six-foot “social distancing” but especially spanning the *social distancing* of “othering” so contagiously spreading through our world.

The Christmas story reminds us that new ways of being are often born in unexpected times and places, of surprising parentage and with persistent light rising from the shadows of dire scarcity and despair. To wait faithfully for change like that is to wake up, alerted to the signs of something new already unfolding. To shed our expectations of how and when and where it will

appear and to prepare ourselves by being watchful, like shepherds and kings, making great effort to find it, and to welcome and honor it on bended knee when we do.

In May Sarton's poem, "Beyond the Question," she describes the faithful waiting of a bird's dedicated watchful tending of its nest:

*But one must first become small,
Nothing but a presence,
Attentive as a nesting bird,
Proffering no slightest wish
Toward anything
that might happen or be given,
Only the warm, faithful waiting,
contained in one's smallness.*

How might this year's season of waiting, begun long before December and likely to stretch well beyond it, call each of us to bring the warmth of our presence and attention to our nested hopes for wellness and peace, for justice and love? Can we endure the unknowns of this time long enough to give birth to a powerful new way of being?

"Our time is a time of waiting; waiting is its special destiny," Tillich said. "And every time is a time of waiting, waiting for the breaking in of eternity."

In every candle that we light against December's darkness, in every song we sing or hear, in every loving word of sorrow or of cheer, in every wakeful night of wonder or of fear, may our warm and faithful waiting open our hearts to a new beginning already present, stirring among us and within us in this watchful time.

Karen Hering
Associate Minister

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Spiritual Practices

Option A

Things to Do While Waiting

We often wait most patiently when we can keep ourselves occupied while waiting. And how we occupy ourselves when waiting can make a big difference, not only in how the time passes but in how we respond when our waiting is over. We can use our waiting time, often unwittingly, in ways that keep us more firmly attached to the past, to the ego or to our old ideas of how the world should be. Or we can use it to cultivate compassion and relationship, to grow our souls, to deepen our understanding. (If you like, [listen to this daily recorded message](#) about how we use our time waiting.)

This is a spiritual practice of naming different things to do while waiting. First, choose something you are currently waiting for, ideally something you do not know when or whether it will happen. Then, read the poem, “Things to Do in the Belly of the Whale,” by Dan Albergotti, in the poems section of the packet. Notice how the poet includes practical ideas alongside fantastical ones, as if replicating the way the human mind often scans all possibilities before choosing which to pursue.

Let your own mind brainstorm things you have been doing or might do to pass the time while waiting for this thing you’ve named. Include the fantastical and the quotidian, the literal and the metaphorical. Then for one or two weeks practice doing one or two of these things every day as you continue your waiting. Notice the effect each has on you, perhaps journaling or simply reflecting at the end of each evening. At the end of a week or two, write your own poem of “Things to Do While Waiting for....” It can include the serious with the silly, but should emphasize those things that open your heart and mind in ways you might desire, creating a state of being that how you wish to be when your waiting is over.

Come to the circle prepared to share your waiting poem and what you’ve learned from this practice.

Option B

Yin Sensing

When we are living at a fast pace and engaging the world assertively, we might find ourselves trying to grasp experiences and sensations before they come our way of their own accord. By contrast, some artists describe a different approach in their creative work, making themselves as receptive as possible and waiting for words or images to come to them. Others point out this is one of the fruits of mindfulness practice, to patiently wait attentively for whatever comes.

Buddhist teacher Sylvia Boorstein, in her book, *Don't Just Do Something, Sit There*, describes the practice of receptive sensing this way: "Don't scan for sounds; wait for them. You might think of the difference between radar that goes out *looking* for something and a satellite dish with a wide range of pickup capacity that just sits in the backyard, waiting. Be a satellite dish. Stay turned on, but just wait."

Each day set aside a brief time to practice what a friend of mine calls "yin sensing" – letting the sights, sounds and other sensations come to you instead of sharpening your senses in high alert mode as we do in danger or when navigating difficult tasks and times. Notice how this posture of receiving feels, in your body and emotionally. Notice what comes to you, and how it feels to receive it.

Come to your circle prepared to share what you've noticed.

Option C:

Watchful Waiting

One meaning of the word “waiting” is to be attentive and watchful. To be prepared for what is coming.

This spiritual practice, akin to the first practice naming “Things to Do While Waiting,” is about noticing how our minds respond automatically to waiting – and what habits can disrupt the openness that can make waiting spiritually transformative. In his book, *How Long Till My Soul Gets It Right? 100 Doorways on the Journey to Happiness*, Robert Alter describes a day he was waiting for his wife in Harvard Square and took note of ten things his mind did that made him feel worse, not better.

Read this [brief piece](#) that shares the ten things Alter’s mind did while he waited. Then find a place where you might wait a while, watching. You don’t need to be waiting for a particular event or person. You can simply be outside where you will encounter others; or maybe inside, looking out a window or even watching something unfold in your home online. Or you could be waiting in line for a COVID test, or a grocery store checkout, or anything else. What does your mind do with this waiting time? Name its activities, as Alter did, and how they make you feel, in body, mind and spirit.

Take some time to reflect on your mental habits of waiting. Are they habits you wish to have? If so, how do they enrich your waiting experience? If not, how might you change them? Come to the circle prepared to share your learnings.

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 that paper 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. Do you generally wait patiently or impatiently? Why or why not?
2. What did you learn about waiting in your family of origin? Was it rewarded or avoided? How did your family bide time when waiting was required?
3. What are currently your favorite ways to pass time while waiting? Do they distract you from your surroundings or tune you in to them? How do they affect your attitudes about and experience of waiting?
4. How does your social context affect your understandings of waiting?
5. What makes waiting hopeful or marked by despair? Is it possible to turn despairing waiting to hopeful waiting? If so, how?
6. What does the phrase “holy impatience” mean to you? Is it something you have or experience?
7. What makes waiting worthwhile? When is it a waste of time? Is this determined by external circumstances or internal ones (meaning how you approach the waiting)?
8. Does the speed at which you are living affect your willingness or ability to wait? How does that affect your understandings of waiting?
9. What has been the hardest thing you have waited for – or are waiting for still? What makes it hard?
10. Is waiting a virtue? Is it the same as faith? Why or why not?
11. **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 develop a spiritual practice of waiting.

Word Definitions & Roots

Waiting

- stay where one is or delay action until (someone) arrives or is ready.
- remain in readiness for some purpose.
- be left until a later time before being dealt with.

Word Origin

Middle English: from Old Northern French *waitier*, of Germanic origin; related to [wake](#)¹. Early senses included 'lie in wait (for)', 'observe carefully', and 'be watchful.'

Wise Words

"Those who wait in hope are already being grasped by its power as they wait." Eleazar Fernandez

"For years now I have heard the word "Wait!" It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This "Wait" has almost always meant "Never." We must come to see, with one of our distinguished jurists, that "justice too long delayed is justice denied." ~ Martin Luther King, Jr., *Letter from Birmingham Jail*

"One of the most painful lessons is that the work of peace and justice, like the work of the Seed within, is one of patient waiting. Patience is an active condition of the spirit. It can march; it can demonstrate; it can live in jails. It can survive the long haul of transformation." ~ Douglas Gwyn

"This life, therefore, is not godliness but the process of becoming godly, not health but getting well, not being but becoming, not rest but exercise. We are not now what we shall be, but we are on

the way. The process is not yet finished, but it is actively going on. This is not the goal but it is the right road. At present, everything does not gleam and sparkle, but everything is being cleansed." ~ Martin Luther

"Waiting is not despair. It is the acceptance of our not having, in the power of that which we already have. Our time is a time of waiting; waiting is its special destiny. And every time is a time of waiting, waiting for the breaking in of eternity. . . . Time itself is waiting, waiting not for another time, but for that which is eternal." ~ Paul Tillich, from *Shaking the Foundations*

"We must be willing to get rid of the life we've planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us." ~ Joseph Campbell

"For light to come. For the one you love to come. For the word of life to be spoken. Faith is a way of waiting - never quite knowing, never quite hearing or seeing, because in the darkness we are all but a little lost. There is doubt hard on the heels of every belief, fear hard on the heels of every hope, and many holy things lie in ruins because the world has ruined them and we have ruined them. But faith waits even so, delivered at least from that final despair which gives up waiting altogether because it sees nothing left worth waiting for. Faith waits-for the opening of a door, the sound of footsteps in the hall, that beloved voice delayed, delayed so long that there are times when you all but give up hope of ever hearing it. And when at moments you think you do hear it (if only faintly, from far away) the question is: Can it possibly be, impossibly be, that one voice of all voices? ~ Frederick Buechner

"[Liminal space] is the sacred space where the old world is able to fall apart, and a bigger world is revealed. ... The threshold is God's waiting room. Here we are taught openness and patience as we come to expect an appointment with the divine Doctor." Richard Rohr

"It is waiting that gives weight to time."~Eric Hoffer

Something is waiting for us
to make ground for it.
Something that lingers near us,
something that loves,
something that waits
for the right ground to be made
so it can make its full presence known.
— Clarissa Pinkola Estes

Poetry

"Beyond the Question" by May Sarton

The phoebe sits on her nest
Hour after hour,
Day after day,
Waiting for life to burst out
From under her warmth.
Can I weave a nest of silence,
weave it of listening,
listening, listening,
Layer upon layer?

But one must first become small,
Nothing but a presence,
Attentive as a nesting bird,
Proffering no slightest wish
Toward anything
that might happen or be given,
Only the warm, faithful waiting,
contained in one's smallness.
Beyond the question,
the silence.
Before the answer,
the silence.

from "I Am Waiting"

By Lawrence Ferlinghetti (Stanza 1)

I am waiting for my case to come up
and I am waiting
for a rebirth of wonder
and I am waiting for someone
to really discover America
and wail
and I am waiting
for the discovery
of a new symbolic western frontier
and I am waiting
for the American Eagle
to really spread its wings
and straighten up and fly right
and I am waiting
for the Age of Anxiety
to drop dead
and I am waiting
for the war to be fought
which will make the world safe
for anarchy
and I am waiting
for the final withering away
of all governments
and I am perpetually awaiting
a rebirth of wonder

"You who want" by Hadewijch II

You who want
knowledge,
seek the Oneness
within

There you
will find
the clear mirror
already waiting

"Things to Do in the Belly of the Whale"

by Dan Albergotti

Measure the walls. Count the ribs. Notch the long days.
Look up for blue sky through the spout. Make small fires
with the broken hulls of fishing boats. Practice smoke signals.
Call old friends, and listen for echoes of distant voices.
Organize your calendar. Dream of the beach. Look each way
for the dim glow of light. Work on your reports. Review

each of your life's ten million choices. Endure moments of self-loathing. Find the evidence of those before you. Destroy it. Try to be very quiet, and listen for the sound of gears and moving water. Listen for the sound of your heart. Be thankful that you are here, swallowed with all hope, where you can rest and wait. Be nostalgic. Think of all the things you did and could have done. Remember treading water in the center of the still night sea, your toes pointing again and again down, down into the black depths.

“Still Waiting” by Harryette Mullen

for Alison Saar

Please approach with care these figures in black.
Regard with care the weight they bear,
the scars that mark their hearts.
Do you think you can handle these bodies of graphite & coal dust?
This color might rub off. A drop of this red liquid
could stain your skin.
This black powder could blow you sky high.
No ordinary pigments blacken our blues.
Would you mop the floor with this bucket of blood?
Would you rinse your soiled laundry in this basin of tears?
Would you suckle hot milk from this cracked vessel?
Would you be baptized in this fountain of funky sweat?
Please approach with care
these bodies still waiting to be touched.
We invite you to come closer.
We permit you to touch & be touched.
We hope you will engage with care.

“We Are Waiting,” by Leslie Takahashi

This is the season of anticipation,
Of expecting, of hoping, of wanting.
This is the time of expecting the arrival of
something--or someone.
We are waiting.

This is the time of living in darkness, in the hues of
unknowing.
Of being quiet, of reflecting on a year almost past.
Waiting for a new beginning, for a closing or an end.
This is the time for digesting the lessons of days
gone past, anticipating the future for which
We are waiting.

Waiting for a world which can know justice
Waiting for a lasting peace.
Waiting for the bridge to span the divides which
separate us.
Waiting for a promise or a hope.
For all of this
We are waiting.

Music

[“Waiting: Take 1”](https://open.spotify.com/playlist/6MxGtxkcRjH20dft4QVCCX?si=kRWN6UqnQMyThtUkR5Ey6w) is a Spotify playlist of songs inspired by the opening reflection on this month’s theme and created by a Unity member. (You may have to register for a free Spotify account to listen to more than 30 seconds of each song.) Notes on the playlist appear at the end of the packet.
<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/6MxGtxkcRjH20dft4QVCCX?si=kRWN6UqnQMyThtUkR5Ey6w> .

Videos & Podcasts

The Conversational Nature of Reality, an interview by Krista Tippet with David Whyte, *On Being*.

<https://onbeing.org/programs/david-whyte-the-conversational-nature-of-reality/>

David Whyte is a poet and philosopher who believes in the power of a “beautiful question.” He says “one of the elemental dynamics of self-compassion is to understand our deep reluctance to be left to ourselves.”

[“How the Progress Bar Keeps You Sane,”](https://www.ted.com/talks/daniel_engber_how_the_progress_bar_keeps_you_sane)

https://www.ted.com/talks/daniel_engber_how_the_progress_bar_keeps_you_sane

[“Black Children Are Waiting to Breathe,” by](https://whyy.org/articles/my-8-year-old-son-knows-racism-is-wrong-he-deserves-a-world-without-it/)

Aminata Sy <https://whyy.org/articles/my-8-year-old-son-knows-racism-is-wrong-he-deserves-a-world-without-it/>

Brief excerpts from “Waiting for Godot,” the play by Samuel Beckett, produced by the Court Theatre in Chicago with an all-Black cast, mentioned in the

article below (America really doesn't want to wait).
[Video clip 1](#) and [video clip 2](#).

[***Faster: The Acceleration of Just About Everything***](#)
by James Gleick, Vintage Books, 2000.

[***Bread and Jam for Frances***](#)

children's book by Russell Hoban and Lillian Hoban (Illustrator)

Movies

[***Groundhog Day***](#), 1993 feature film about A weatherman (Bill Murray) inexplicably living the same day over and over again.

[***Waiting***](#), a "quirky" Australian feature film directed by Jackie McKimmie that "captures the essence of impending motherhood, exploring the trials, tribulations and social expectations of a small-knit community in rural Queensland."

[***The Red Balloon***](#), 1957 film written and directed by Albert Lamorisse. A red balloon with a mind of its own follows a little boy around the streets of Paris.

[***The Snowy Day***](#), In this Caldecott Award-winning book, a small boy named Peter experiences the joy of a snowy day. First published in 1962, this now-classic book broke the color barrier in mainstream children's publishing. (from ezra-jack-keats.org) Produced as an [animated film](#) in 2016.

Playlist Notes

The Waiting -- Tom Petty Thomas Earl Petty (October 20, 1950 – October 2, 2017) was an American singer-songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, record producer, and actor. He was the lead vocalist and guitarist of Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, formed in 1976. He previously led the band Mudcrutch, and was also a member of the late 1980s supergroup the Traveling Wilburys.

A Change Is Gonna Come -- Sam Cooke Samuel Cook (January 22, 1931 – December 11, 1964),

Articles and Online Sources

[***"America really doesn't want to wait," by Christopher Borrelli***](#)

<https://www.startribune.com/america-really-doesn-t-want-to-wait/572952922/>

[***"A Story, Waiting to Happen," By Josh Haner and James Estrin, New York Times, Jul. 29, 2009***](#)

The story of photojournalist Kate Olinsky photographing Central American immigrants' journeys into the U.S., and learning as she did the story of their waiting.

<https://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/07/29/showcase-29/>

[***Thomas Potter & John Murray***](#) – The story of 18th century New Englander Thomas Potter waiting for someone to preach a message of universal salvation.
<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/john-murray-conversion>

[***"Liminal Space," by Richard Rohr,***](#)

<https://cac.org/liminal-space-2016-07-07/>

[***A Seed Knows How to Wait, by Hope Jahren***](#)

A reflection on the waiting inherent in natural growth.

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/reading/seed-knows-how-wait>

[***A Holy Impatience, by Robin Tanner,***](#)

<https://www.uua.org/braverwiser/holy-impatience>

Books

[***Seven Spiritual Gifts of Waiting***](#), by Holly W. Whitcomb, Augsburg Books, 2005.

known professionally as Sam Cooke, was an American singer, songwriter, and entrepreneur. He was also influential as a composer and producer, and is commonly known as the King of Soul for his distinctive vocals and significance in popular music.

Cooke was born in Mississippi and moved to Chicago with his family at an early age. He began singing as a child and joined the Soul Stirrers before going solo and scoring a string of hit songs including "You Send Me", "A Change Is Gonna Come", "Cupid", "Wonderful World", "Chain Gang", "Twistin' the Night Away", and "Bring It On Home to Me". In 1964, Cooke was shot and killed by the manager of a motel in Los Angeles. After an inquest and investigation, the courts ruled Cooke's death to be a justifiable homicide; his family has since questioned the circumstances of his death.

Someday We'll Be Together -- Diana Ross and the Supremes: The Supremes were an American female singing group and a premier act of Motown Records during the 1960s. Founded as The Primettes in Detroit, Michigan, in 1959, the Supremes were the most commercially successful of Motown's acts and are, to date, America's most successful vocal group with 12 number one singles on the Billboard Hot 100. Most of these hits were written and produced by Motown's main songwriting and production team, Holland–Dozier–Holland. At their peak in the mid-1960s, the Supremes rivaled the Beatles in worldwide popularity, and it is said that their success made it possible for future African American R&B and soul musicians to find mainstream success.

Florence Ballard, Mary Wilson, Diana Ross, and Betty McGlown, the original group, are all from the Brewster-Douglass public housing project in Detroit. They formed the Primettes as the sister act to the Primes (with Paul Williams and Eddie Kendricks, who went on to form the Temptations). Barbara Martin replaced McGlown in 1960, and the group signed with Motown the following year as The Supremes. Martin left the act in early 1962, and Ross, Ballard, and Wilson carried on as a trio.

(I Got Everything I Need) Almost – Downchild The Downchild Blues Band is a Canadian blues band, described by one reviewer as "the premier blues band in Canada". The band is still commonly known as the Downchild Blues Band, though the actual band name was shortened to "Downchild" in the early 1980s. The Blues Brothers band was heavily influenced by Downchild Blues Band.

Ain't Going to Let No One Turn Me Around -- Sweet Honey in the Rock Sweet Honey in the Rock is an all-woman, African-American a cappella ensemble. They are an American three-time Grammy Award–nominated troupe who express their history as black women through song, dance, and sign language. Originally a four-person ensemble,

Power and Control -- MARINA and the Diamonds Marina Lambrini Diamandis (/ˌdiːəˈmændɪs/; Greek: Μαρίνα-Λαμπρινή Διαμάντη; born 10 October 1985), known mononymously as Marina (stylized in all caps) and previously by the stage name Marina and the Diamonds, is a Welsh and Greek singer, songwriter, and record producer.

Someone to Watch Over Me -- Chet Baker Chesney Henry "Chet" Baker Jr. (December 23, 1929 – May 13, 1988) was an American jazz trumpeter and vocalist. He is known for major innovations within the cool jazz subgenre leading him to be nicknamed the "prince of cool". Baker earned much attention and critical praise through the 1950s, particularly for albums featuring his vocals (Chet Baker Sings, It Could Happen to You). Jazz historian Dave Gelly described the promise of Baker's early career as "James Dean, Sinatra, and Bix, rolled into one." His well-publicized drug habit also drove his notoriety and fame. Baker was in and out of jail frequently before enjoying a career resurgence in the late 1970s and 1980s.

Fire We Make -- Alicia Keys with Maxwell Alicia Augello Cook (born January 25, 1981), known professionally as Alicia Keys, is an American singer-songwriter. A classically-trained pianist, Keys began composing songs by age 12 and was signed at 15

years old by Columbia Records. After disputes with the label, she signed with Arista Records, and later released her debut album, *Songs in A Minor*, with J Records in 2001. The album was critically and commercially successful, producing her first Billboard Hot 100 number-one single "Fallin'" and selling over 16 million copies worldwide. The album earned Keys five Grammy Awards in 2002. Her second album, *The Diary of Alicia Keys* (2003), was also a critical and commercial success, spawning successful singles "You Don't Know My Name", "If I Ain't Got You", and "Diary", and selling eight million copies worldwide. The album garnered her an additional four Grammy Awards. Her duet "My Boo" with Usher became her second number-one single in 2004. Keys released her first live album, *Unplugged* (2005), and became the first woman to have an MTV Unplugged album debut at number one.

There Is a Light Never Goes Out -- The Smiths The Smiths were an English rock band formed in Manchester in 1982. Consisting of vocalist Morrissey, guitarist Johnny Marr, bassist Andy Rourke, and drummer Mike Joyce, critics consider the band one of the most important to emerge from the British independent music scene of the 1980s. Internal tensions led to their break up in 1987 and subsequent offers to reunite have been refused. In 2012, all four Smiths' studio albums (and a compilation) appeared on Rolling Stone's list of the "500 Greatest Albums of All Time", while "William, It Was Really Nothing" and "How Soon Is Now?" were included in the "500 Greatest Songs of All Time" list.

Flint (For the Unemployed and Underpaid) -- Sufjan Stevens Sufjan Stevens (/ˈsuːfjɑːn/ SOOF-yahn; born July 1, 1975) is an American singer, songwriter, and multi-instrumentalist. He has released eight solo studio albums and multiple collaborative albums with other artists. Stevens has received Academy Award and Grammy Award nominations.

Power of Love (Love Power) -- Luther Vandross Luther Ronzoni Vandross Jr. (April 20, 1951 – July 1,

2005) was an American singer, songwriter, and record producer. Throughout his career, Vandross was an in-demand background vocalist for several different artists including Todd Rundgren, Judy Collins, Chaka Khan, Bette Midler, Diana Ross, David Bowie, Ben E. King, and Donna Summer. He later became a lead singer of the group Change, which released its gold-certified debut album, *The Glow of Love*, in 1980 on Warner/RFC Records. After Vandross left the group, he was signed to Epic Records as a solo artist and released his debut solo album, *Never Too Much*, in 1981.

Wake Up -- Arcade Fire Arcade Fire is a Canadian indie rock band, consisting of husband and wife Win Butler and Régine Chassagne, along with Win's younger brother William Butler, Richard Reed Parry, Tim Kingsbury and Jeremy Gara. The band's current touring line-up also includes former core member Sarah Neufeld, percussionist Tiwill Duprate and saxophonist Stuart Bogie.

Starting Over -- Chris Stapleton Christopher Alvin Stapleton (born April 15, 1978) is an American singer-songwriter, guitarist, and record producer. He was born in Lexington, Kentucky, and grew up in Staffordsville, Kentucky, until moving to Nashville, Tennessee, in 2001 to pursue a career in music writing songs. Subsequently, Stapleton signed a contract with Sea Gayle Music to write and publish his music.

Oh baby -- LCD Soundsystem LCD Soundsystem is an American rock band from Brooklyn, New York, formed in 2002 by James Murphy, co-founder of DFA Records. The band comprises Murphy (vocals, various instruments), Nancy Whang (synthesizer, keyboards, vocals), Pat Mahoney (drums), Rayna Russom (synthesizer), Tyler Pope (bass, guitar, synthesizer), Al Doyle (guitar, synthesizer, percussion), Matt Thornley (guitar, synthesizer, percussion), and Korey Richey (synthesizer, piano, percussion). They are currently signed to both DFA and Columbia Records.

Song of the Birds -- Pablo Casals (performed by Sol Gabetta) Pau Casals i Defilló (Catalan: [ˈpaw kəˈzals

i ðæfi'ʌo]; 29 December 1876 – 22 October 1973), usually known in English by his Spanish name Pablo Casals, was a Catalan cellist, composer, and conductor. He is generally regarded as the pre-eminent cellist of the first half of the 20th century and one of the greatest cellists of all time. He made many recordings throughout his career of solo, chamber, and orchestral music, including some as conductor, but he is perhaps best remembered for the recordings of the Bach Cello Suites he made from 1936 to 1939. He was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1963 by President John F. Kennedy (though the ceremony was presided over by Lyndon B. Johnson).

Sol Gabetta (born 18 April 1981) is an Argentine cellist. The daughter of Andrés Gabetta and Irène Timacheff-Gabetta, she has French and Russian ancestry. Her brother Andrés is also a musician, a baroque violinist.

(Something Inside) So Strong -- Labi Siffre

Claudius Afolabi Siffre (born 25 June 1945) is a British singer, songwriter, musician and poet. Siffre released six albums between 1970 and 1975, and four between 1988 and 1998. His best known compositions include "It Must Be Love" (which was famously covered by the band Madness), "Crying Laughing Loving Lying", and "(Something Inside) So Strong". His music has been sampled extensively by hip-hop artists, including Eminem, Jay-Z, and Kanye West. Siffre has published essays, the stage and TV play *Deathwrite* and three volumes of poetry: *Nigger*, *Blood on the Page* and *Monument*.

Promise of Eternity -- The Magnetic Fields

The Magnetic Fields (named after the André Breton/Philippe Soupault novel *Les Champs Magnétiques*) are an American band founded and led by Stepin Merritt. Merritt is the group's

primary songwriter, producer, and vocalist, as well as frequent multi-instrumentalist. The Magnetic Fields is essentially a vehicle for Merritt's songwriting, as are various side-projects including The 6ths, Future Bible Heroes, and The Gothic Archies. Merritt's recognizable lyrics are often about love and with atypical or neutral gender roles, and are by turns ironic, tongue-in-cheek, bitter, and humorous.

Lay Down (Candles in the Rain) -- Melanie with the Edwin Hawkins Singers

Melanie Anne Safka-Schekeryk (born February 3, 1947) is an American singer-songwriter, usually professionally known as Melanie or as Melanie Safka. She remains best known for the 1971-72 global hit "Brand New Key", her cover of "Ruby Tuesday", her composition "What Have They Done to My Song Ma", and her 1970 international breakthrough hit "Lay Down (Candles in the Rain)", inspired by her experience of performing at the 1969 Woodstock music festival.

Edwin Reuben Hawkins (August 19, 1943 – January 15, 2018) was an American gospel musician, pianist, choir master, composer, and arranger. He was one of the originators of the urban contemporary gospel sound. He (as leader of the Edwin Hawkins Singers) was probably best known for his arrangement of "Oh Happy Day" (1968–69), which was included on the "Songs of the Century" list. The Edwin Hawkins Singers made a second foray into the charts exactly one year later, backing folk singer Melanie on "Lay Down (Candles in the Rain)".

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