

Unitarian Universalists of Gettysburg  
July 7, 2013 Service led by member Susan Swope, with the choir

## What Would UU Do?

Songs and Stories Exploring the Civilian Experience of the Battle of Gettysburg

*PRELUDE: Johnny Has Gone for a Soldier/  
Johnny Comes Marching Home*

### Chalice lighting

### Welcome and announcements

### A time for all children

*Hymn #414*

*As you leave this friendly place,  
love give light to every face.  
May the kindness which you learn  
light your hearts 'til you return.*

### Introduction

*The Vacant Chair, by G.F. Root  
Lead vocals: Mary Svikhart & Linda Miller*

### African Americans in Gettysburg before June 1863



Mag Palm

*\*Hymn #116 I'm on My Way*

### What did UUs do?

### The weeks before the battle

*The Battle Cry of Freedom, by G.F. Root*

### July 1

*Tenting on the Old Campground, by M.F.H. Smith  
Lead vocal: Florence Tarbox*

### July 2

*Just Before the Battle, Mother, by G.F. Root  
Lead vocal: Bruce Boenau*

### July 3

*Weeping Sad and Lonely, by Henry Tucker  
Lead vocal: Mary Svikhart*

### July 4

*Better Times Are Coming, by Stephen Foster  
Lead vocal: Linda Noble*



Confederate prisoners at Gettysburg

### Noble deeds

*Was My Brother in the Battle? by Stephen Foster  
Lead vocal: Linda Miller, duet by Florence Tarbox*

### Ignoble deeds

### The months and years after the battle

### The African American community after the battle

*\*Hymn #162 Gonna Lay Down My Sword and Shield*

### What Would UU Do?

*OFFERTORY*

*Hard Times Come Again No More, Stephen Foster  
Lead vocal: Joanne Nicholson*

### Joys and concerns

### Welcome visitors

*Would You Harbor Me? by Ysaye Maria Barnwell*

Piano: Florence Tarbox; Guitar: Joanne Nicholson & Linda Noble; Violin: Joanne Nicholson

\*Please stand in body or spirit

## The idea for this service

Serving on the worship committee, I noticed that sometimes when we invite a guest minister from elsewhere their first inclination is to do a sermon on the battle of Gettysburg. My reaction was something like “Oh, please. We are a contemporary community with contemporary issues. The battle happened here on a few days a long time ago, but it’s not what we are about.”

But last winter, as I listened to some Civil War music and thought about the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, I realized that while I grew up with the basic outlines of the battle, aside from a few amusing anecdotes about my great grandfather no one talked about what it was like to live here back then. And for those people, my ancestors, it must have been a life-changing experience. I decided it would be interesting to combine those songs and stories, and wondered what we could learn from them.

## Resources

A fun way to begin learning about Gettysburg civilians is to take a walking tour with a licensed town guide:

<http://www.gettysburgpa.org/guidedtourtour.htm>.

It may also be possible to book a tour with Gettysburg’s Black Heritage Tours: 1-800-447-8788

## Books

African Americans and the Gettysburg Campaign, by James M. Paradis

The Civil War Songbook, selected and with an introduction by Richard Crawford

The Colors of Courage, by Margaret S. Creighton (immigrants, women, and African Americans in Gettysburg)

Days of “Uncertainty and Dread,” by Gerald R. Bennett

Firestorm at Gettysburg, by Jim Slade & John Alexander

Music in the Civil War, by Stephen Currie

A Strange and Blighted Land, by Gregory A. Coco (aftermath of the battle)

The Battle of Gettysburg as Seen by Two Teens: the Stories of Tillie Pierce and Daniel Skelly

Underground Railroad in Pennsylvania, by William J. Switala

A Vast Sea of Misery, by Gregory A. Coco (guide to the field hospitals)

## First person accounts (all PDFs available by online search)

[Battle of Gettysburg, A Citizen’s Eyewitness Account](#), by Catherine Mary White Foster

[Gettysburg: A Boy’s Experience of the Battle](#), by Albertus McCreary

[The Diary of a Lady of Gettysburg](#), Pennsylvania from June 15 to July 15, 1863, by Sarah M. Broadhead

[Recollections of the Rebel Invasion & One Woman’s Experience During the Battle of Gettysburg](#), by Fannie J. Buehler

## Articles (underlined text can be found by online search)

[The Children of Gettysburg](#), by Elizabeth Daniels

[Elizabeth Thorn: Forgotten Heroine of the Battlefield](#), by Joanne Lewis

Gettysburg 150, a commemorative magazine produced by The Gettysburg Foundation and the staff of The Gettysburg Times (first-hand accounts and new interpretations), available for purchase from The Gettysburg Times

[The Effect of the Confederate Invasion of Pennsylvania on Gettysburg’s African American Community](#),

by Peter C. Vermilyea

[Time Traveling: The Power of Civil War Music](#), by Meredith Bean McMath

“We Never Expected a Battle”: The Civilians at Gettysburg, 1863, by Robert L. Bloom (PDF available via online search)

## Music CDs (my favorites)

The Civil War, original soundtrack recording to Ken Burns film

Civil War Classics, Jay Ungar & Molly Mason live at Gettysburg College

Hard Times Come Again No More, by the Washington Revels <http://www.revelsdc.org/hardtimes/>

Songs of the Civil War, compilation album released 1991, includes Better Times Are Coming sung by Kate & Anna McGarrigle with Rufus Wainwright, Aura Lea, The Vacant Chair, spirituals and more, now available on iTunes

## Websites

[The Library of Congress Civil War Sheet Music Collection](#)

## General

Readings the town guides recommend to prepare for the licensing test:

[dhttp://www.gettysburgpa.org/images/Exam%20Packet%202013.pdf](http://www.gettysburgpa.org/images/Exam%20Packet%202013.pdf)

If you would like a copy of this document in Microsoft Word, with hyperlinks to the underlined resources, email your request to at [susan.swope@gmail.com](mailto:susan.swope@gmail.com), with subject line Gburg 150 UUG.

## **What Would UU Do?**

A lay-led service of songs and stories  
exploring the civilian experience of the battle of Gettysburg

Unitarian Universalists of Gettysburg

### **STORY: A Time for All Children**

There are a lot of visitors in town these days. Do you know why?

This little town is famous. Do you know why?

A long time ago, 150 years ago, something important happened here.

Do you know what happened?

Yes.

There was a big battle here. This country had a war, the north against the south, and one day the two armies ended up here.

Do you know what a great grandfather is? Do you have a daddy? Do you know that your daddy has a daddy? That is your grandfather. And your grandfather had a daddy, and that is your great grandfather. My great grandfather Samuel McCurdy Swope grew up in Gettysburg. I never knew him, but I grew up with some of his stories.

150 years ago, he was only 12 years old.

There was a lot of excitement in this town because both armies were nearby and nobody knew what was going to happen. Some townsfolk were worried that there might be a battle and that people would be hurt. Others had heard all this before and were tired of all this talk. They didn't believe anything would happen.

But one day, some Rebels came riding through town on their horses, shooting off their guns. That was scary and exciting. Then they went away.

A few days later, "our" army, the Union army, came riding through town and everyone was happy to see them. Sam Swope, the 12 year old boy, and one of his buddies, were very excited and went out to the edge of town to see these cavalry soldiers. They made friends with some of them, and offered to water their horses for them and the soldiers thanked them. But the boys were naughty. They took those horses on a joy ride and didn't come back for hours. When they got back to the soldiers' camp, the army was gone—all except two officers whose horses were missing and who were very angry. The soldiers were in trouble and the boys were too.

This morning, the grownups are going to talk about what happened in Gettysburg when both armies came to town. We'll learn what it was like to live in the middle of a scary fight.

And we'll talk about hard choices people had to make in this terrible time. We'll talk about how some people were very good—and some not so good.

We'll hear more of the songs that people were singing back then. And you're going to go downstairs and do fun and interesting things. But first, we'll sing you a song to wish you well.

Hymn #\_\_ *As You Leave this Friendly Place*

### **TALK: Background, before June 1863**

By June of 1863, the Civil War had been raging for more than two years--but always in the south. It wasn't far away, though. Some of the bloodiest battles, and some that were lost badly by the north, were in the Shenandoah valley.

Nestled in a beautiful, bountiful countryside, Gettysburg in the 1860s was not a provincial town. With a population of 2200, in recent decades it had seen the founding of a college and a seminary. The town was prosperous, and its biggest industry was carriage making (including the Conestoga wagons used by pioneers moving west).

The town was beginning to modernize. The railroad had arrived a few years before, there was a telegraph office, homes were lit by gaslight, and there were three newspapers.

But all the housework was done by hand, and daily transportation was on foot or by horseback. Women had always worked hard, but with 400 of the men away at war, the women did everything. They raised the food, baked the bread, made, washed, and mended the clothes. And in addition to their regular dawn to dusk labors, those who supported the war effort raised money, knitted socks, and scraped lint to make bandages.

So close to the Mason-Dixon line, Gettysburg's economy had many connections with the South.

As they do today, Adams Countians held many different political perspectives. There were quite a few southern sympathizers (known pejoratively as copperheads), many others who supported the war as an effort to preserve the union but were indifferent on the issue of slavery, and among those in favor of abolition opinions ranged from gradual abolitionists who would like to see blacks leave the country and resettle in Liberia, to a few radical abolitionists in favor of immediate emancipation.

In 1850, Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act, which made it illegal to harbor runaway slaves, even in free states.

Radical abolitionists in Adams County included blacks and whites active in the Underground Railroad.

Music was essential. There was no TV. And there was no radio and no recordings: people made their own music. Every army regiment had a band that played in camp every night and that marched them off to battle. And on

the home front, you could go to Fahnestock's general store on Saturday to browse that week's new sheet music, and take some home to play and sing on your porch and in your parlor. The music was born of the sentiments of the time and the sentiments of the time were born of the music, like this piece published for Thanksgiving Day in the first year of the war:

### **MUSIC: The Vacant Chair**

#### **TALK: African Americans in Gettysburg until June 1863 (Mag Palm)**

In this town of 2200, over 200 were black. Most made their living as day laborers, the women as domestics. Some were free-born, some freed, some escaped slaves.

Then, as now, that community was centered in the southwest part of town.

In 1863, Abraham Brien owned a prosperous little farm just south of town, with a little white wood-sided house. You can still see that house today, because it sits on the battlefield right at the Steinwehr Avenue entrance to the park, very near the focal point of Pickett's charge.

Reverend Alexander Dobbin, who built the Dobbin House in 1774, brought slaves with him. Slavery was gradually abolished in Pennsylvania and it wasn't until after 1847 that there were no slaves in the state.

While Gettysburg's blacks weren't slaves, they were far from equal with the white citizens of the town. Free African American men in Pennsylvania had originally been permitted to vote, but in 1838 a law prohibited that.

Even the Republican newspaper (and the Republicans were the liberals back then, the party of Lincoln) regularly published crude racist jokes.

Some churches banned blacks. Even those that admitted them, such as the Methodists and Presbyterians, relegated them to the "African pews." In 1838 Gettysburg's blacks created their own church and never looked back. The African Methodist Episcopal church became the soul of the community, a source of pride, and the monitor of moral conduct.

The legislature established free public schools in the 1830s and this included (separate and unequal) schools for the colored children of Gettysburg. At about the same time, Daniel Payne was the first black student at the seminary, and he conducted Sunday school classes.

In the first years of the war, blacks couldn't serve in the Union army. Eager to join and serve, at the start of the war several years earlier, Randolph Johnston had begun raising and drilling a colored company of soldiers in town. Early in 1863, when Massachusetts had begun organizing Colored regiments, he offered his company to the Governor of Massachusetts, but Pennsylvania wouldn't let them go (and wasn't yet ready to admit them itself).

Gettysburg's African Americans were always alert for slave-catchers and bounty hunters, for it didn't much matter whether you were an escaped slave or free. There was a reverse underground railroad that stole blacks away from border towns and sold them into slavery.

I have given you a picture of my favorite character, Mag Palm. She was a big strong woman and in 1858 she was young. She served as a conductor on the Underground Railroad. She earned her living as a domestic and one day her employers conspired with bounty hunters. They kept her doing laundry into the night, and as she headed home she was kidnapped. But she fought so hard against those kidnappers that she bit off one of their thumbs and escaped.

Mag Palm was so proud of this that years later, when her hair was gray, she paid a professional photographer to take her portrait with her hands in the bound position from which she had escaped.

For the white community, the war was about many things, especially the Union. While slavery was an issue, for most whites it was not THE issue. But for the black community, the war was always about slavery. More importantly, it was about freedom.

And in that church that was the heart of their community, they were singing spirituals, like the one all of us will sing now.

**MUSIC: Hymn #116 I'm on My Way**

### **TALK: What Did UUs Do?**

What did UU's do?

We were not a denomination (we still aren't), not even an association. It would be another century before the Unitarians and Universalists combined to form the Unitarian-Universalist Association.

There was no Unitarian or Universalist church in Adams County. The Quakers were the Adams County denomination most opposed to slavery.

Across the country, the opinions of Unitarians varied, ranging from pro-slavery to radical abolitionists.

The "secret six" was a group of wealthy men in Boston who clandestinely financed John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry, intended to spark a slave insurrection. Two of the secret six were Unitarian ministers.

Unitarian Julia Ward Howe wrote the words to The Battle Hymn of the Republic, which became the anthem of the Union Army. Years after the Civil War she regretted her role in supporting wholesale slaughter, and called for a Mothers' Day of Peace.

And Clara Barton, the "angel of the battlefield" who later founded the American Red Cross, was a Universalist.



## **TALK: the weeks before the battle, up to and ending with June 30**

Meanwhile, back here....

In early June the first Rebel forces had come up the Cumberland Valley into Greencastle, and then Chambersburg. Claiming them as “contraband,” they rounded up all the blacks they could find and marched them south to slavery.

On June 26 Jubal Early’s Confederate cavalry came galloping into town from the west, yelling and shooting off their guns. They camped overnight, and the regimental bands played Dixie in the town diamond (which we now call the square).

The next day they rode off toward York, but not before tearing up the railroad and pulling down the telegraph lines, cutting the town off from the outside world.

White people worried whether they should stay or go; some stayed, some left. Desperately dragging their meager possessions, many black folk fled, knowing that if the Confederates caught them they’d be sent South to slavery.

The Confederate invasion that had been rumored for two years was now reality. In the evening townsfolk would go to their rooftops and see hundreds of Rebel campfires in the mountains.

Do you remember 9/11? Do you remember not knowing what would happen next, worrying that our world might be torn apart, the future so terribly uncertain? In late June of 1863, the people of Gettysburg faced a terribly uncertain future.

And then on Tuesday, June 30, Union cavalry rode in from the south, leading thousands of foot soldiers. They marched up Washington Street and the people poured out to welcome them, handing them bread and pie and buttermilk and water, waving flags and singing.

Along with many others, five girls sang their hearts out, singing every patriotic tune they could think of, singing the chorus to The Battle Cry of Freedom over and over because they couldn’t remember the rest of the words. In battle reunions decades later, the now gray-haired Singing Girls came out to sing again and brought tears to the eye of many a veteran.

## ***MUSIC Battle Cry of Freedom (Rally Round the Flag Boys)***

### **TALK: July 1**

The people who lived on the south side of town went on with their daily chores early the next morning. But those who lived on the north and

west sides went up on their rooftops and out to the edge of town to watch the battle.

Not-yet-ten-year old Sadie Bushman was crossing an open field toward her grandparents' house when "There came a screech and a shell brushed my skirt as it went by.... I was grasped by the arm and a man said... 'that was a close call. Come with me and hurry.'

"That man was Dr. Benjamin F. Lyford, a surgeon in the Union army.

"He led me to a place in a little valley where he had established an army corps hospital and then he put me to work. Wounded and dead men were then being carried to the place by the score. I was ready to faint at the sight....

"As I reached the hospital tent, a man with a leg shattered almost to a pulp was carried in. 'Give him a drink of water while I cut off his leg,' was the command I got. How I accomplished it, I do not know, but I stood there and assisted the surgeon all through the operation."

Casualties began staggering into town, and homes and churches became hospitals.

Twelve year old Mary Montfort went with her mother to a warehouse to help care for the wounded, and found her own father/soldier with a gaping shell hole in his side. "Father looked at me and said 'Mary Elizabeth' and then he closed his eyes."

Old Lady Thompson lived on the Chambersburg Pike. She never deserted her house. Her house and lot were filled with wounded and dying the first day. She remained to care for them, and had a daughter living at the foot of the hill, who baked up a barrel of flour into bread, which she carried up the hill to the wounded, and refused to cease doing so during the three days... until her clothes were perforated with bullets and yet she would not be dissuaded, said "In God is my trust."

"All her clothes and bedding were used in dressing the wounded and her carpet in wrapping the dead for burial."

The battle filled the gardens and streets of the town as the Confederates drove the Union back through town. Union officers began ordering the people to their cellars, warning "The Confederates will shell the town!"

Dead men and horses fell everywhere, the wounded filled every available shelter, and the Confederates were gathering Union prisoners. And "contraband" prisoners. The blacks who hadn't already fled were rounded up to be marched to slavery. But a woman known as Old Liz escaped in the confusion, and spent the next two days hiding in the belfry of Christ Lutheran Church.

By the end of the day, the Rebels occupied all but the far south of town, Cemetery Hill. They set up barricades in Middle Street. They bedded down on the sidewalks, in the yards, and in homes that had been abandoned.



Sharpshooters took up positions in attics and upper floors, the Yankees at the south end of town and the Rebels right in the middle. They fired at one another, and at anything that moved, for the next two days.

Every church had become a hospital. This included Christ Lutheran, St. James, the Presbyterian Church, St. Francis Xavier, and our friends and landlord across the street, then known as the German or Dutch Reformed Church. Doors were pulled off their hinges and laid across the back of pews to serve as operating tables, and legs and arms began to pile up outside the windows while the moans, shrieks, and weeping of the wounded filled the air.

Red “flags” were hung outside to designate the hospitals. They were staffed by army medical staff—and the women and teens of Gettysburg. The women tended the wounded, and braved sniper fire to go home and make supper, and then take it back to the hospitals.

Some of the citizens sheltered Union soldiers. Some fed dinner to the Rebels and enjoyed lively political discussions with charming southern officers. One family even treated Confederate officers to a dinner that was cooked by the black help they were harboring, hidden behind the closed kitchen door.

Evergreen Cemetery had opened only a few years before. Its custodian was a German immigrant, who lived in the gatehouse with his wife, children, and elderly parents. He had joined the army and his five-month-pregnant wife Elizabeth Thorn was in charge. With the union army encamped in the cemetery, General Oliver Otis Howard and his staff set up headquarters in her home. She overheard an officer say that they were killing their own troops because they didn’t know the lay of the land and badly needed a guide. She braved the shelling and shooting and took him to the top of a hill to point out all the roads and landmarks. And at midnight she made dinner for the general and his staff. The next morning the general ordered her to leave for her own safety.

People hunkered down in the bank vault, and in their cellars, and tried to sleep. Some sneaked upstairs to sleep in their own beds.

It was dark: for fear of fire the gas company had turned off the gas.

The people had experienced a day of horror and terror. And everyone feared what would happen next.

## **MUSIC: Tenting Tonight**

### **TALK: July 2**

The next morning, curious citizens came out of hiding. Confederate officers warned them to go back to their cellars—because “the Union will shell the town!”

The women who were nursing the wounded were into their second day of what would be weeks of heartbreaking labors day and night.

For everyone else, there was a terrible tedium.

Aside from sniper fire, the battle seemed to have moved south of town. There was no way of knowing what was going on until the Rebels came back “home” in the evening. They were disciplined about not revealing the specifics of the battle, but they were in good spirits and some bragged “we whupped your boys pretty good.”

The Globe Hotel on York Street, just off the square, did a banner business feeding Rebel officers. They had tripled their prices and the officers somehow had good Yankee dollars to spend.

In the evening people out of the line of sharpshooters’ fire visited in the streets, and once again Dixie was played in the diamond.

Among the soldiers camped on the battlefield were Gettysburg men and boys. There was no way to get a message to or from them. Their families could only pray that they were, and would remain, safe.

## **MUSIC: Just Before the Battle, Mother**

### **TALK: July 3**

Friday morning, July 3 dawned much the same as the day before. Women fed their “guests” breakfast and saw them off to “work.”

The air was putrid, fetid, and sickening.

Sharpshooters continued to try to pick one another off, and a stray bullet killed Jenny Wade in her kitchen at the south end of town as she baked bread. She was the only civilian who died during the three days’ battle.

At one o’clock, tremendous cannonfire was heard from the southwest and everyone rushed to their cellars. In a moment it was answered. For two hours the two armies artilleries pounded one another in a noise so fierce “as to force the sense of hearing... to grope amid the thundering chaos and to leave the mind dazed.”

Some people thought of those who were dying with each explosion. Others made a game of it, identifying each volley “Our side.... Their side.... Our side ....”

That evening, dejected Rebels came back to town with little to say. In the dark hours after midnight, townsfolk who were awake could hear whispers, shuffles, and muffled hoofbeats. The Confederates had begun their retreat, heading toward Hagerstown (on what we call the Fairfield road).

## **MUSIC: Weeping Sad and Lonely**

### **TALK: July 4**

It escaped no one’s notice that the next morning was Independence Day, Saturday, July 4. As the Rebels formed up their 17-mile-long wagon train of misery, they stationed pickets on Seminary Hill to cover their retreat. The Union marched into town up Washington Street again, and those Rebel sharpshooters tried to pick them off as they crossed the streets running east/west. Young Julia Jacobs stationed herself on her porch at the northwest corner of West Middle and Washington Streets and began warning the Union soldiers “Look out! Pickets below!” Then the Confederate sharpshooters tried to pick *her* off, but she just retreated into her doorway and continued her mission. She kept at it until the Union set up a barricade across Middle Street to return the Rebel fire.

There was mass confusion as Union prisoners were released or escaped, and Rebels who had missed the retreat were rounded up as prisoners. Those Rebel prisoners signed paroles and were given leave to roam the town on their promise they wouldn’t escape. I’ve shared with you a classic photo of the sorts of men who could be seen on the streets of Gettysburg throughout the battle and in the month that followed.

And outside Christ Lutheran Church, Old Liz appeared from her belfry hideout, joyfully shouting “I’se alive!”

## **MUSIC: Better Times Are Coming**

### **TALK: Noble deeds**

The armies left 22,000 wounded behind for this little town of 2200 to cope with. For the first few days, the only people available to care for them were the medical staff who had been left behind (but the majority of them had been sent on with the armies)--and the townsfolk and farm folk.

Outside of town on the battlefield, for days some wounded lay in the open among the dead, in the broiling sun and the pouring rain.

Sarah Broadhead wrote in her diary, "I am becoming more used to sights of misery. We do not know until tried what we are capable of."

Every barn filled with wounded, every church and school, and the courthouse.

Some of the wounded in homes remained there for weeks before being transferred to the larger buildings and eventually to a great hospital camp set up east of town. Some stayed in homes for months. People began bragging to one another, comparing the virtues of "our boys" who they were caring for.

Some hospitals, notably at the College and Seminary, housed mostly Confederates, and others had mostly Union prisoners, but in most they were mixed in together. Conditions were abominable. At the seminary, women found the wounded lying in inches of water in the basement and carried them up four flights of stairs.

The operations went on for weeks. The evening of July fourth, a general toured a field hospital and wrote "There stood the surgeons, their sleeves rolled up...their bare arms as well as their linen aprons smeared with blood...around them pools of blood and amputated arms or legs in heaps...a surgeon, having been long at work...put down his knife, exclaiming that his hand had grown unsteady, and that this was too much for human endurance, hysterical tears running down his face."

Little Sadie Bushman ran away from home every day to help her surgeon, and got a whipping for it every night. She turned ten during the five months she nursed the wounded.

Lydia Hamilton Smith, an African American, borrowed a horse and wagon and began canvassing the county for supplies to aid those poor boys in the hospitals, no matter whether Rebel or Yank.

The town band and the town choir were recruited to entertain at the hospitals.

Most of the wounded were grateful and polite, but up in the seminary chapel a girl named Lizzie was feeding soup to a Rebel soldier who had lost both arms. He sneered " 'We wouldn't let our ladies do this at home. This is what one of our niggers would do.' Well, Lizzie set down that bowl of soup and with the words 'Get one of your niggers to do it for you now', she walked out of the room."

Families began arriving in town, seeking their loved ones.

Nellie Aughinbaugh reported "I will never forget a young girl... who came searching for her sweetheart. She had made the rounds so often and at so many battlefields without success, she was bone tired when she got to Gettysburg. All the others were a disappointment, but she decided to remain here and help other girls with the nursing.... One day the surgeons called on

me to assist with an operation. It was a lung wound and they're the worst kind. I was holding a basin of water for the surgeon when everything began to get black before my eyes.... The surgeon saw the basin wavering and [sent me out of the room].... This girl happened to be passing by and I thrust the pan at her as I sank into a chair. 'Go in and help the surgeon. I'm sick and I can't.'

"She went in--and the patient turned out to be her sweetheart that she'd been looking for so long. He lived but a few days longer."

## **MUSIC: Was My Brother in the Battle?**

### **TALK: Ignoble deeds**

The first tourists arrived the day after the battle, if not before. While the townsfolk had been cut off from the news, newspapers published reports of the great battle taking place at Gettysburg, and people began to stream in. Some came to be witness to the great event, some out of curiosity--and others to rob the dead and dying.

What they found on the battlefield were thousands of dead men and horses, and thousands of wounded--moaning, groaning, screaming, and crying for water.

They also found... souvenirs. People began to collect what they called relics: soldiers' equipment, unexploded shells, photographs, letters, and diaries.

Townsfolk who had left returned to find their homes pretty much intact, or ransacked. One man found all his clothing gone, and in its place a pile of dirty gray rags. Some blamed their neighbors who had stayed for not protecting their possessions.

Elizabeth Thorn returned to the cemetery gatehouse to find all her mattresses and linens soaked with blood. She and her ailing father in law dug the graves and buried 91 bodies. Her statue stands today by the gatehouse as a memorial honoring all of the women who served in various capacities before, during, and following the Battle.

Relic collecting became a hobby and lucrative pastime for some. Minnie balls littered the streets and boys could earn 13 cents a pound for them because lead was so scarce.

And it wasn't just the boys. A few weeks after the battle, Annie Clutz "picked up a hand, dried to parchment so that it looked as though covered with a kid glove. There was nothing repulsive about the relic, and we all remarked on the smallness of the fingers. We guessed that it must have belonged to a very young soldier."

## **TALK: The months and years after the battle**

There were millions of flies, feasting on the dead—and the wounded.

Crops were trampled or eaten, livestock killed or taken, wells dried up or poisoned when bodies were thrown into them for easy disposal.

People went about with handkerchiefs, penny royal and peppermint. It was said that the townsfolk became accustomed to the foul air, but that some visitors died from it.

Only one citizen died during the battle, but others succumbed later. Five year old Willie Bigham died of blood poisoning contracted from the wounded men on his family's farm.

More than one schoolboy was killed when he (or in one case a visiting tourist), banged on an unexploded shell, trying to extract the bullets.

In 1864 some boys were playing with a gun they had found and “the contents of one of their discharges entered the head of a little colored girl, inflicting a mortal wound.”

The little nurse Sadie Bushman grew up to be a nurse. During the next 30 years, she often thought of Dr. Lyford, and he spent those years wishing he could find her.

In the 1890s, someone found a scrap of paper in a used book, the notes of a soldier wounded at Gettysburg remembering the “little angel Sadie Bushman” who nursed him back to life, wishing he could find her and thank her.

The man who found that note was inspired to seek Sadie out. He found her living in Oakland, California with a married name, and her story was published in a San Francisco newspaper.

Dr. Lyford lived in San Francisco. He read that paper, and the two were re-united. He gave her a small cottage to live in on his estate.

Sadie Bushman tried to volunteer to serve in the Philippines during the Spanish American war, but was told she was too old.

## **TALK: The African American community after the battle**

Gettysburg's African American community was decimated by the battle, and never fully recovered. Some people disappeared and were never heard from again. Others, already poor, returned to find homes and farms in ruin. One of these was Abraham Brien, owner of the farm with the little white house near Pickett's charge.

Randolph Johnston, who had raised and drilled a colored company that was rejected by Pennsylvania's governor, was finally allowed to serve in early 1865, when he was assigned to gang labor and guard duty over 25,000 Confederate prisoners at Point Lookout, Maryland.

The four thousand plus dead had been hastily buried where they lay in the weeks after the battle, often covered only with inches of dirt and sometimes with their heads or feet unburied. Later that summer thanks to efforts of Adams County citizens, plans were made to disinter and rebury them in a national cemetery.

A white man got the contract for this work, and subcontracted most of it to Basil Biggs, a respected member of the black community who practiced as a veterinarian. That cemetery contains not just the dead from this battle, but every war since, starting with the Spanish-American War. But precious few of those buried there are black.

A group called the Sons of Good Will created the Lincoln Cemetery in 1867 to ensure "the proper burial of Gettysburg's African American citizens and Civil War veterans." The Lincoln Cemetery holds more than 30 members of the United States Colored Troops (U.S.C.T.). It is the final resting place of most local U.S.C.T. veterans.

In the years that followed the battle, that event that had been such a terrible experience in the lives of so many soldiers drew them back to Gettysburg to seek out the site where their friends had died. And as the decades passed, anniversaries of the battle became occasions for re-union, for re-telling the story, and for reconciliation between white men.

African Americans, for whom the battle represented a turning point in their history ("a new birth of freedom" in Lincoln's words), came to town as tourists in the early years but felt less and less welcome as time went by. In the 1920s the Ku Klux Klan came to town, and tens of thousands including many locals gathered on the battlefield and marched through the Third Ward in their white sheets. Many of us remember just a few years ago that our church hung out a banner reading "Hate Free Zone" when the Klan rallied on the battlefield again.

And through the years, in the AME church on Washington Street that was always the heart of the community, Gettysburg's African Americans continued to find inspiration in spirituals like the one we are going to sing together now.

## **MUSIC: Hymn #162 Gonna Lay Down My Sword and Shield**

### **TALK: What Would UU Do?**

These are interesting stories. But do they hold lessons for us?

What would a UU do? What would you do?

What would I do if a ragged Rebel came to my door and demanded bread? If a frightened fugitive slave asked for shelter (and I knew I could lose



my own home for harboring her)? If 20 wounded soldiers occupied every bed, couch, and floor space in my house? If my county were ravaged by war and I could choose between helping the wounded or getting my own life back to normal?

What are the great issues of our time? What do we do about them? Do we have an opinion on the “right” side, but fail to speak up? Do we speak up, but take no action? If we take action, what is the right action to take?

This year, I have volunteered to help reinvigorate our faith and community committee to explore what I might do to better live our seven UU principles, particularly those that encourage us to contribute to a better world. We'll explore the social justice issues important to each of us, what we're doing about them, and what the congregation might do. We will start this discussion at the forum before church next week. I hope you will join us.

I have no answers for you, only questions.

[END] And my great grandfather, Sam Swope? No reports of noble deeds have come down to us, but another tale of mischief.

He had turned thirteen by November, when a great ceremony was held to dedicate the Soldiers' National Cemetery. It was an unusually balmy day, and he and his brother set up a lemonade stand outside the cemetery. His brother accused Sam of stealing a dime from the till and kicked him out. He wandered into the cemetery, in time to hear President Lincoln deliver the few appropriate remarks later known as the Gettysburg Address.

But he grew up to be a respected leader of the community, a lawyer and a judge. You'll find his name on the back of the big bronze book that is the High Water Mark monument.

## **OFFERTORY MUSIC: Hard Times Come Again No More**

## **Joys and Concerns and Welcome Visitors**

## **CLOSING MUSIC: Would You Harbor Me?**