



First Unitarian Church, 90 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01608 USA
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Production Underwriters

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 Justine Beaudoin
 Jane Beckwith

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 Mrs. Howard M. Booth in memory
 of Pene B. Rockwell

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 Mr. Henry Dewey

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 Janet F. Guerrin

Glen and Marsha Hersey
 Dorothy C. Hurlburt
 Judy Jensen

Jing River Acupuncture
 C. Elizabeth Judd

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 Richard and Jane Kruse
 Peter and Catherine Levine

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 Ted Messier and Mary Frandsen

Diane and John Mirick
 Mahroo Morgan
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Mary Rose Paradis and Max Hess
 Donald R. Rawding
 Paul and Marjorie Ropp

Joan Russo
 Rev. Thomas & Susan Schade

Marie T. Shamgochian
 Albert Southwick
 Linc and Robin Spaulding

David and Susan Woodbury
 in memory of Peter A. Glazier
 James and Helen Wright



feel the spirit



SOPRANO

Christine Astley
Debra Benschneider*
Joonu Coste
Jean Gough*
XueMei Jiang
Kristine Johnson
Marie Teresa Shamgochian
Nancy Smith
Alesia Tringale*
Ellen O'Neall Waite
Linda Chatalian Wyatt

TENOR

Rosamond Bennett
Brad Benschneider
Dick Kruse
Richard Monroe*
Lauren Ota
Paul Ropp
Susan Schade
Chris Tower
Stanley Wilson

ALTO

Jane Beckwith
Helen Campbell
Catherine Galbreath
Marcia Leonard
Kathleen Rooney
Marjorie Ropp
Susan Stafford
J. Ellen Thompson
Katherine Tower-Ludwig

BASS

Jerry Bellows
James Demetry
Gordon Gurney
Glen Hersey
Steve Knox
David Spanagel
Scott Taylor*

* Soloist

Will Sherwood, AAGO, ChM,
Director of Music & Organist,
Producer, audio editing, piano,
organ, synthesizer, graphic design

Jerry Bellows, recorder
Noel Cary, clarinet
Bob Gordon, percussion
Marty Gilman, woodwinds
Rick Cain (acoustic bass for *Gospel Mass*)

Bob Gordon, audio editing,
recording engineer
David Nase, photographer
J. Ellen Thompson, house manager
Marie T. Shamgochian, librarian

Music is a vital part of the life and worship of First Unitarian Church. The choir performs repertoire from a wide range of literature: from Gregorian Chant and Anglican traditions to Earth-centric compositions and music from other cultures. *Feel the Spirit* presents sacred music from another musical tradition: choral music inspired by the spirituals, jubilees, and gospel music from the African American experience.

Sacred music from the European classical tradition arose out of the musical settings of the Mass, the awesome and mysterious ritual that is the structure of worship, especially in Roman Catholic and Episcopal settings. The words are either the words of the Mass or settings of biblical texts. And the music is glorious and grand, composed to be performed in rich cathedrals. The music conveys God's majesty and grandeur and the glory of humanity's salvation through Christ. Only a few centuries ago, Christianity was the religion of the most powerful people and nations on the Earth, and it gave a divine sanction to European power. The Universe was a hierarchy, with Kings and Emperors at the top, and God the greatest and most powerful Ruler of all.

One of the most remarkable events in the history of the world's religions is the conversion of the African slaves to Christianity. Why would the least powerful people on Earth adopt the religion of those who were enslaving and oppressing them? It is surprising that they did, and even more amazing, the converting slaves turned that Christianity upside down. In a religion that glorified power and sanctioned the status quo, they unearthed the strands of liberation and revolution. The image of Christ as the King of Kings became that of one who would judge the mighty of the earth with justice for the poor. And along the way, they gave birth to a new kind of Christian music, one that emerged and evolved from the grass roots, and spoke of the individual soul's desperate need for the mercy and comfort of God. In *Feel the Spirit*, we hear the fruits of musical invention and innovation of this genre, as the choir brings us music of great beauty and profound emotional depth, widening the range of emotions that are expressed in worship and meditation, and in our own deep spiritual connection with humankind and the universe.