

Notes from the Music Department -

We Walk in Love

Words by Deanna Witkowski and Lemuel Colon

Music by Deanna Witkowski

We walk in love, united in purpose.
We join our hands and lift up one voice.
We speak the truth with strength and compassion
Resounding with hope, with courage and joy.

We cry for peace and rights for all people.
We welcome friends from far and near.
We fight for those whose voices are silenced,
Resisting in faith until all are free.

We dream a world of justice and kindness.
We build a bridge creating new paths.
We march with joy as all walk together.
Embracing each one, we boldly stand.

Witkowski writes: "After establishing the melody, I started writing nouns.... love, purpose, voice, compassion, truth, bridge, justice, kindness. From "**Lift Every Voice and Sing**" I added hope, faith, and the important verbs....dream, stand, fight, cry, walk, join, speak." "**We Walk in Love**" was accepted as one of the selections in the Justice Choir Songbook, a resource that I turn to often as a source of music for our choir and congregation. If you would like to sing along, [the music is provided here](#).

"**Lift Every Voice and Sing**" has been the official anthem of the NAACP for decades. It appeared in 1900, at a time when Black Americans faced the threat of lynchings and the realities of segregation and discrimination. This month South Carolina's Rep. James Clyburn plans to introduce a proposal to upgrade "**Lift Every Voice and Sing**" to equal standing with the national anthem. His aim is to bring the country together and heal with a song "everybody can identify with." He said the change would tell Black people, "you aren't singing a separate national anthem, you are singing the country's national hymn. (This season, the NFL played both "**Lift Every Voice and Sing**" and "**The Star-Spangled Banner**" before the Week 1 games.)

We finish our service today with Scott Joplin's "**The Strenuous Life**." Ragtime was extremely popular as an American musical form from its beginnings in the 1890's through its peak in 1915. With its lighthearted gaiety, ragtime encouraged people to forget about problems and simply have fun. Is it jazz? Not really. Ragtime is usually played on a single instrument, probably the piano. Improvisation is the integral feature of jazz pieces like today's "Billie's Song" from "Portraits in Jazz." Scott Joplin said "The 'Joplin Ragtime' is destroyed by careless or imperfect rendering, and very often good players lose the effect entirely by playing too fast. The rags are harmonized with the supposition that each note will be played as it is written to complete the sense intended." Definitely, not jazz!