

CHRISTMAS SERVICE/CONCERT
December 16, 2018, 11:00 am

WELCOME & OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONNECTION

Joanne Orenstein, Worship Associate

OPENING WORDS "Focus" by Robert Bowman

Rev. Dr. John Morehouse

CONGREGATIONAL CAROL "O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

ALL 1. O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

WOMEN 2. O come, thou Day-spring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

MEN 3. O come, thou Wisdom from on high, who orderest all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And teach us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

ALL 4. O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease;
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

COVENANT *Love is the Spirit of this church and service its law. This is our great covenant: to dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, and to help one another.*

Journey of Light introduction

Rev. Dr. Edward Thompson

1. We Mark the Movement
2. Season of Longing, Chris Bearuline, soloist
3. Why Sing in Winter?
4. Comfort the People
5. Stars

SINGLE CANDLE

Rev. Morehouse

SPOKEN REFLECTION ("Reflection" by A. Powell Davies) & SHARED SILENCE

OFFERING

(Journey of Light continues)

6. The Watch
7. Lullaby
- 8 Song to the Sun, Michael Costantino, soloist
9. Angel Messages
10. Shepherd's Music
11. The Holly and the Ivy/Blessing
12. Let Music Tune the Weary Heart

Best wishes of the season to everyone!

SPECIAL PROJECTS CHOIR

Sopranos: Sharon Bittenbender, Lyn Hamilton, Debbie Handler, Susanna Hill, Jalna Jaeger, Shanonda Nelson, Berta Russell, Karyn Samuelson, Jane Sherman,

Altos: Melanie Allen, Lynda Bluestein, Beth Cliff, Wendy Levy, Catherine Onyemelukwe, Cathy Paine, Anita Pfluger, Peg Ulrich

Tenors: Chris Beaurline, David Callon, Doug Davidoff, Doug Flam, John Hansen, Gian Morresi, Julyen Norman

Basses: Don Bancroft, Paul Bluestein, Mike Costantino, Chuck Harrington, Tom Hearne, John McWeeney, Bart Stuck, Brian Tippy

Harp: Wendy Kerner; **Organ:** Beth Palmer;

Violin: Colleen Filush; **Tin Whistle:** John Romeri

Uilleann Pipes: Jerry O'Sullivan; **Bodhran:** Anna Colliton

PROGRAM NOTES for *Journey of Light*

Journey of Light is a work about the times when we face the truth of our being as we journey through life. There are several levels at which this occurs. On a more physical level, it is about the earth-centered nature of the season: the darkness, the return of the sunlight, the solstice. Then there is the symbolic. Just as the earth journeys around the sun, so we, too, travel around the central pillars of our belief structures. Just as we, in the northern hemisphere undergo days of greater darkness, so too do we pass through the 'dark' times. We long for a time of more civility, more collegiality, and more kindness. On another level it is about the inner light. While eye sees it not, we sense and feel it present in the forms of attitude, thought, and deed. In other words, 'to hold light' has to do with the positive and uplifting energy that we generate and share. Throughout the work I have used symbols and figures that one encounters on the journey such as birth, stars, angels, wisdom figures and sound (music). This work celebrates those who shared their wisdom, love, care and understanding with us. Although these figures and symbols can be found in the Nativity story, they transcend religion and place because they can be found all over the world and across the ages. A final 'thread' in the tapestry of our journey is the importance of community. We do not journey alone. Those connections have a direct effect on our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual well-being.

We Mark the Movement is about the turning of the seasons and our tendency to remember celebrate the annual cycles. We mark our life by these yearly 'rituals' that we celebrate. We also celebrate our journey toward the One (a poetical term that refers to the creative source of the universe). In other words we look at a much longer time line.

As the sun recedes at this season we tend to become more reflective. As the great pioneer psychologist Carl Jung observed, no matter what our age, gender, culture, race, creed, economic status, we all have a shadow side. **Season of Longing** explores how we, as a society, also have a shadow side. At this time we are experiencing what that is all about. At one point the altos and tenors sing: "yet the heart is hopeful for the new day to dawn. Can you hear it call?" One can hear the intense passion of that longing in the violin part and the angst in the harmonies of the harp part.

Why Sing in Winter? asks the question: why should we bother singing when everything around us is dark, cold, chaotic, stressful and arguably, insane? In the second part of the piece the mood changes completely and we hear some answers. We sing to feel like we belong; to remind ourselves that we are not alone; to remind ourselves that darkness will not last; that good remains throughout it all. We then hear the Irish Gaelic: Go bhfeicimid an solas i ngach uile chroi innui, fad is ataimid ag du lar aghaidh chuig, la nios gile. [As we journey onward toward a time when things are brighter and more fair, may we experience light in each and every heart this day!]

Just as the transformed Scrooge did wonderful things for his world, **Comfort the People** affirms that we can help our world if we show compassion. The reference from the book of Isaiah (Every mountain shall be made low and every valley shall be exalted) underlines this concept. The choral chant above the rhythmic ostinato slowly drives home this point.

Stars is a piece for solo harp. The unusual harmonies take us to a place beyond our planet. From that other space we can view our own differently.

According to the Biblical narrative, the angels told the shepherds to wake from their sleeping and hurry to Bethlehem (Bethlehem being a place where some greater spiritual truth is revealed). **The Watch** is a fast movement based on the Lydian mode and is an unusual time signature because it holds a mood of anticipation and excitement. It reminds us that one needs to stay awake so that the wolf does not steal the sheep!

Lullaby is a simple song of a mother singing to her child. In part it says "wrapped in flesh and form, here in time and space, remember heaven's peace, remember heaven's light."

By contrast, **Song to the Sun** presents a burst of grateful energy because the sun pours light and warmth to all peoples beyond any border, class, or culture.

In **Angel Messages** we hear first: “do not fear!” And furthermore, “measure things not in miles, days, hours, or tears but in every thought that is born in the heart and that is born of good will.”

Shepherd’s Music is a piece that features the uilleann pipes (sometimes called Irish pipes or soft pipes). In Gaelic, the word ‘uilleann’ means elbow. A small set of bellows is placed under the elbows and the player pumps the bellows with the elbows in order to provide air for the pipes to sound. The name ‘uilleann’ reflects how the instrument functions. This piece is written in the tempo and form of a jig.

People have been gathering plants of an evergreen nature at this season since time immemorial. **The Holly and the Ivy** entreats us to gather plant and vine as a kind of holiday ‘ritual’ or symbolic gesture. They remind us that there is a part of us that never dies, an enduring part of Life. We then hear the second Irish Gaelic phrase: Go mbeannai foinse na cruinne, grasta an sholais orainn. [May the Source of All bless us with the grace of light!]

Let Music Tune the Weary Heart is a wish that we may each have our soul filled and our spirit fed with these joyful sounds as we each continue the journey.

May you experience a holiday season of light and joy and love, remembering that Christmas time can occur at any moment! As tiny Tim exclaimed: God bless us everyone!

Poinsettias

Donated to the congregation by Marion Wertheim

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONNECTION

Holiday Appeal: Please consider making an end-of-year contribution to our congregation, and visit the Year Round Stewards in the lobby after the service. Look for Rev. John’s letter explaining this giving opportunity.

The Board & COM present the Strategic Plan: Please stop by the COM table in the foyer to share your opinions on TUCW’s infrastructure needs and wishes. Which is more important to you-- repairing our roof or replacing the exterior walls? Upgrading the heating system or adding air conditioning? Reducing operating costs or concentrating on energy consumption? Your opinions are important. Let us hear from you!

TUCWomen’s Quotable Women Brown Bag Lunch: TODAY after the service in the Meeting House. Shanonda Nelson will use poetry to lead a conversation about resilience and adaptability. Join the conversation and be inspired by the compassion and wisdom of the women of our community.

Leadership Development Team (LDT) presents *Harvest the Power*: Rev. John will run 12 Sunday sessions from 12:30-2pm starting in January. Contact ldt@uuwestport.org with questions or to apply.

Year-Round Stewardship Committee needs your help: If you understand that the financial health of our church is important and seek an opportunity to contribute to our congregation, you can be a “Visiting Steward”! Contact us at stewardship@uuwestport.org. Mark your calendars for a fun and interactive training session on Saturday, March 2nd.

Save a life: Write 4 Rights today with Amnesty International in the East Wing. Your note combined with thousands of others save lives. Help free people imprisoned for exercising democratic rights, freedom of speech, gender identity.

CHRISTMAS EVE SCHEDULE: Traditional Pageant @ 4PM and Candlelight Service @ 9PM.