Decorah ❖ Unitarian ❖ Universalist ❖ Fellowship

Sunday, December 26, 2021 Gathering virtually since 2020! decorahuu.org
Otter Dreaming, Fellowship Coordinator 387-6050 or otterdreaming@gmail.com

Welcome and Announcements

Today's service relates to our monthly theme: Hope

Chalice Lighting ...The Rev. Dr. Dan Lambert, adapted

We gather together on this second day of Christmas as fellow sojourners looking for light, for hope, for peace, and for love.

We gather as people from many backgrounds, many faiths, many cultures, and many spiritual paths.

But as we light this chalice, we gather as one body looking to the Nativity for its message to all of humanity.

Its message is that there is light, there is hope, there is peace, there is love.

Opening Song ***When the Song of the Angels*** ...words by Howard Thurman
music by Elizabeth Alexander
performed by Concordia University St. Paul Christus Chorus

When the song of the angels is stilled,
The work of Christmas begins.
When the star in the heavens is gone,
The work of Christmas begins.

To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers,
To make music in the heart.

When the star in the heavens is gone,
When the song of the angels is stilled,
The work of Christmas begins.

When the kings and the princes are home,
The work of Christmas begins.
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,
The work of Christmas begins.

Land Acknowledgement In countries such as New Zealand, Australia, and Canada, and among tribal nations in the U.S., it is commonplace, even policy, to open events and gatherings by acknowledging the traditional indigenous inhabitants of that land. Acknowledgment is a critical public intervention, a necessary step toward honoring Native communities and enacting the much larger project of decolonization and reconciliation. We acknowledge that northeast Iowa was home to

- the Ioway (whose traditional name is Baxoje)
- the Sac and Fox (the Fox's traditional name is Meskwaki)
- the Dakota
- and the Ho-Chunk

peoples whose relationship to this land continues today. We acknowledge our sad history of broken treaties and the forced migration of indigenous peoples. We are grateful for the way this land supports and sustains our lives and thus also express our appreciation for the stewardship of this land by its prior inhabitants: indigenous, migrant, and immigrant. May the values of reciprocity and truth-telling still so vital to indigenous culture inspire us as we seek a path of peace and justice in our lives together. I invite you to take a moment for reflection upon the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that have shaped our presence here today and to adopt an attitude of reverence and gratitude for the ongoing resilience of this place and the people who have called it home.

Joys and Sorrows Please raise your Zoom hand to share any personal joy or concern with the Fellowship.

Silence Meditation/Response **Your joy is my joy; your sorrow, my sorrow. Together we live our days, together we love this place. In beloved community, we are not alone.** ...Ellen Rockne

Offering/Offertory **For all that is our life, we sing our thanks and praise; for all life is a gift that we are called to use to build the common good, and make our own days glad.** ...Bruce Findlow/Patrick Rickey

The Scottish Shepherd

The Rev. Brian G. Eslinger
adapted by Karen L. Esterl

The play includes 2 congregational songs:

Angels We Have Heard on High ...traditional French carol, English paraphrase by James Chadwick
performed by Brian O'Donovan, Fionnuala O'Donovan, Christy O'Leary, and Karine Polwart

Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains.

CHORUS: **Gloria in excelsis deo** (2x)

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heavenly song? CHORUS

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing.
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King. CHORUS

Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains. CHORUS

Joy to the World! ...words by Isaac Watts, arranged and accompanied by Adam Podd
performed by Alyssa Venora and Jared Graveley

Joy to the world! The Lord is come
Let earth receive her King
Let every heart prepare Him room
And heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns
Let all their songs employ
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love
And wonders, wonders of His love.

Extinguishing the Chalice ...Kevin Jagoe

When the candle dims,
The wax almost spent
The light turns amber like a sunset
Still it provides light
Still it provides heat
Still it can kindle new flame
And pass its glow on
And contribute to new illumination

When sunsets turn to new days
When seasons transform all
When the candle dims, all is not lost.

Hope continues, uncertain and true,
like candlelight, ready to spark again.
All is not lost.--

Closing Song ***While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks*** ...words attributed to Nahum Tate
performed by Groovy Pike

While shepherds watched their flocks by night all seated on the ground
An angel of the Lord came down, and glory shone around

> **"Fear not", said he for mighty dread had seized their troubled mind**
> **"Glad tidings of great joy I bring to you and all mankind"** (alt. words: "to you and humankind")

"To you, in David's town, this day is born of David's line
A Saviour, who is Christ the Lord; and this shall be the sign

> **"The heavenly babe you there shall find to human view displayed**
> **All simply wrapped in swaddling clothes and in a manger laid"**

Thus spoke the angel, suddenly appeared a shining throng
Of angels praising God, who thus addressed their joyful song

> **"All glory be to God on high, and to the earth be peace**
> **To those on whom his favor rests, goodwill shall never cease"**

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Announcements

Thank you to our service leader, Karen Esterl, and to all who participated in *The Scottish Shepherd* today. ❖ After our gathering, please treat yourself to a little something, and we'll be in touch again soon.

Share-the-Plate - Our plate recipient for November-December is the **U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants in Des Moines**. *USCRI Des Moines* "welcomed their first Afghan family from Kabul in August. With support, we can prepare to welcome more families as they arrive in Central Iowa, providing them with the housing, education, and employment opportunities necessary to rebuild lives and restore hope." (At this time, there are no plans to resettle Afghans outside of the 100-mile service radius.) To donate to the plate recipient, see Decorah UU Giving, below. Or, if sending a check, please note "Share the Plate" in the memo line. Donations may be mailed to Decorah UU, PO Box 382, Decorah, IA 52101.

Upcoming Sundays
January 2 - No service.
January 9 - ***Fire Communion***. At the end of each calendar year, many UU congregations observe a tradition called the fire communion, sometimes known as a "burning bowl" ceremony. People write down on scraps of paper phrases that represent the year behind them and bring forth the paper to burn it. Join us in this meaningful ceremony during our first in-person service at the Lingonberry since 2020 as we reflect on the year behind us and anticipate the year ahead. The service will also be live-streamed via Zoom.
January 16 - No service.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee - Carolyn invites others to join her in the creation of a *Decorah UU Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee*. If you are interested, please email carolyn@corbingroup.biz.

Decorah UU Gatherings in Person - The Decorah UU Board has approved resuming in-person services beginning in January. Details are yet to be determined (like whether we'll start with every other week), and safety protocols & recommendations will be developed as we get closer to January. The plan is to continue offering a remote option via Zoom.

Decorah UU Board of Trustees - Board members for 2021-2022 are Julie Ohde (Chair) Beth Wahlberg (Treasurer), Maggie Hayden, Lynn Pleggenkuhle and Lyra McKnight. The next meeting of the Board is **Thursday, February 11**, 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. If you wish to attend, please let Otter know so that we can send you the Zoom link.

Share-the-Plate Recipients - If you'd like to suggest a 501(c)(3) organization as a possible recipient for Share-the-Plate, please send your idea to any Board member or to Otter.

Decorah UU Service Archive - Did you miss a service we conducted by Zoom? Or did you attend but would like to watch it again? You can! Go to **Decorah UU**. There are two links to our new YouTube channel: a small YouTube icon in the upper right and a button in the middle that says "Watch past services on YouTube." Once on the YouTube channel page, you can choose the service you want to watch. We will try to post the link within one week of each service. Tip: If you want to see the bulletin or other information about the service, you can click on the SERVICE ARCHIVE button on the homepage. From there you can click on a service and then the "read more" link.

Decorah UU Support - As we continue to find our way through this challenging time, please remember: **if you need help**, let Otter know via phone 563-387-6050 or email otterdreaming@gmail.com. We'll all need support of one kind or another during this time. Please don't hesitate to ask.

Decorah UU Giving - We deeply appreciate the gracious gifts of our members and friends, whether given on a weekly, monthly, or annual basis. We understand that present circumstances and uncertainty may affect your ability to make a financial commitment to Decorah UU. Know that we value your "gracious gifts" to our fellowship, in whatever form they may be. **Decorah UU has set up online payment primarily for donations you might otherwise make in person at fellowship.** Go to our **Decorah UU** homepage and click on the "Give Online" button, which will take you to the Giving page. There, you'll find the "Donate" button which will send your payment through PayPal. You do NOT need a PayPal account. You'll be asked to choose whether your donation is for **Share-the-Plate** or for **Decorah UU**. You can only choose one, so if you want to donate to both, you will have to repeat the process. You can use a debit or credit card. Below the "Donate" button on the Giving page, you may also consider two options for recurring donations. Donations can also be mailed to PO Box 382, Decorah, IA 52101.

Member Emergency Fund - Unforeseen troubles come our way from time to time. If you or someone you know in the fellowship could use some help, please let Otter know. We may be able to provide support or short term monetary assistance. Confidentiality will be respected.

Decorah UU online - For more information, please visit our website **Decorah UU** or go to our **facebook** page.

Decorah Community Food Pantry - Thanks to our generous donors, the Pantry was able to give over 100 Thanksgiving dinners to our clients. Now in this season of preparation for the Christmas holidays, we are asking again for donations to help with Christmas Day dinners. We have a limited number of donated hams or turkeys. When they run out, we'd like to give gift certificates to any of the local grocery stores. If you purchase one or two $10 gift certificates, we'll give these to our clients to help purchase Christmas meat. We have side dishes for clients when they pick up gift cards. In addition, we'll offer our clients a package of personal items, many of which have been donated. We still need boxes of tissue which can be dropped off at 110 Railroad Street. Gift cards or donations can be mailed to PO Box 26 or donations through our website **decorahpantry.org**. We are always grateful for the generosity of the faith communities that help support us.

Mail Cheer - Green Iowa Americorps has made a program for people who feel isolated during the pandemic. To give or receive these friendly letters, call ***Green Iowa Americorp***s at 563-293-5075, or visit the ***Decorah & Winneshiek County Mutual Aid Network***.