

Kearsarge Unitarian Universalist Fellowship



**Andover, New Hampshire
Sunday, December 20, 2020**

December 20, 2020

Today's Message: "Searching For the Light"

Guest Speaker: Martha Woodward

Gathering Music – "Now Tell Us, Gentle Mary" César Franck

Welcome and Announcements

Greet your Neighbors

Prelude – "Light-Moderation-Equilibrium" Charles Koechlin

Lighting the Chalice – All Recite

Opening Words – Invocation of Allah

Opening Hymn – #237 "*The First Nowell*"

Affirmation of Fellowship: – All Recite

Candles of Joys and Concerns

Words of Reflection – Psalm 139:7-12

Silent Reflection

Offertory Music – "Gigue" Boismortier

Offering – Please send check to: KUUF P.O. Box 1578,
New London, NH 03527

Offertory Response (to "Old Hundredth")

Hymn – #246 "*Oh Little Town of Bethlehem*"

Message – **Searching for The Light**

Closing Hymn – Watchmen, Tell Us of the Night

Extinguishing the Chalice – All Recite

Postlude – "Italian Pipers" Gounod

Closing Words – Hindu Mantra – Brhadaranyaka Upanisad I.3.28



OPENING WORDS

Invocation to Allah

O Allah, Place light in my heart, and on my tongue light, and in my ears light and in my sight light, and about me light, and below me light, and to my right light, and to my left light, and before me light and behind me light. Place in my soul light. Magnify for me light, and amplify for me light. Make for me light, and make me light. O

Allah, grant me light, and place light in my nerves, and in my body light and in my blood light and in my hair light and in my skin light.

Opening Hymn

Join in and sing from the comfort of your home

237 The First Nowell



♩ = 108

1. The first No - well the an - gel did say was to
2. They look - ed up and saw a star, shin - ing
3. And by the light of that same star, three

cer - tain poor shep - herds, in fields as they lay, in
in the east be - yond them far, and
ma - gi came from coun - try far; to

fields where they lay keep - ing their sheep, on a
to the earth it gave great light, and
seek a king was their in - tent, and to

cold win - ter's night that was so deep.
so it con - tin - ued both day and night. No - well, No -
fol - low the star wher - ev - er it went.

Words: English carol

Music: William Sandys's *Christmas Carols Ancient and Modern*, 1833,
harmony by John Stainer, 1840–1901

THE FIRST NOWELL
Irregular with refrain

Affirmation of Fellowship:

May we be reminded here of our highest aspirations and inspired to bring our gifts of love and service to the altar of humanity. May we know once again that we are not isolated beings but connected in mystery and in miracle, to the universe, to this community and to each other.

Candles of Joys and Concerns



Words for Reflection

Psalms 139: 7-12

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

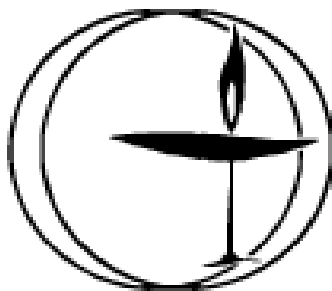
If I rise on the wings of dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,"

even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is a light to you.

Silent Reflection





Offering to KUUF

Mail Check to:

KUUF

P.O. Box 1578,

New London, NH 03257

Offertory Response

(to "Old Hundredth")

Please sing along from the comfort of your home

From all that dwell below the skies
Let faith and hope and love arise
Let beauty, truth and good be sung
Through every land, by every tongue.

246 O Little Town of Bethlehem

♩ = 116

1. O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how
2. For Christ is born of Ma - ry, and
3. How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the

still we see thee lie! A - bove thy deep and
gath - ered all a - bove, while mor - tals sleep, the
won - der is made known, when God im - parts to

dream - less sleep the si - lent stars go
an - gels keep their watch of won - dering
hu - man hearts the gift that is our

by, yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the
love. O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro -
own. No ear may hear that com - ing, but

ev - er - last - ing light, the hopes and fears of
- claim the ho - ly birth. Let prais - es ring: from
in this world - ly din, when souls are tru - ly

all the years are met in thee to - night.
God they bring good - will to all on earth.
hum - ble, then the dear babe rests with - in.

Today's Message

“Searching For the Light”

Presented by Martha Woodward

MY CANDLES

HASSIDIC
Arranged by ROBERT SCHULTZ

Slowly

p In the win - dow where you can send your glow from

1
2

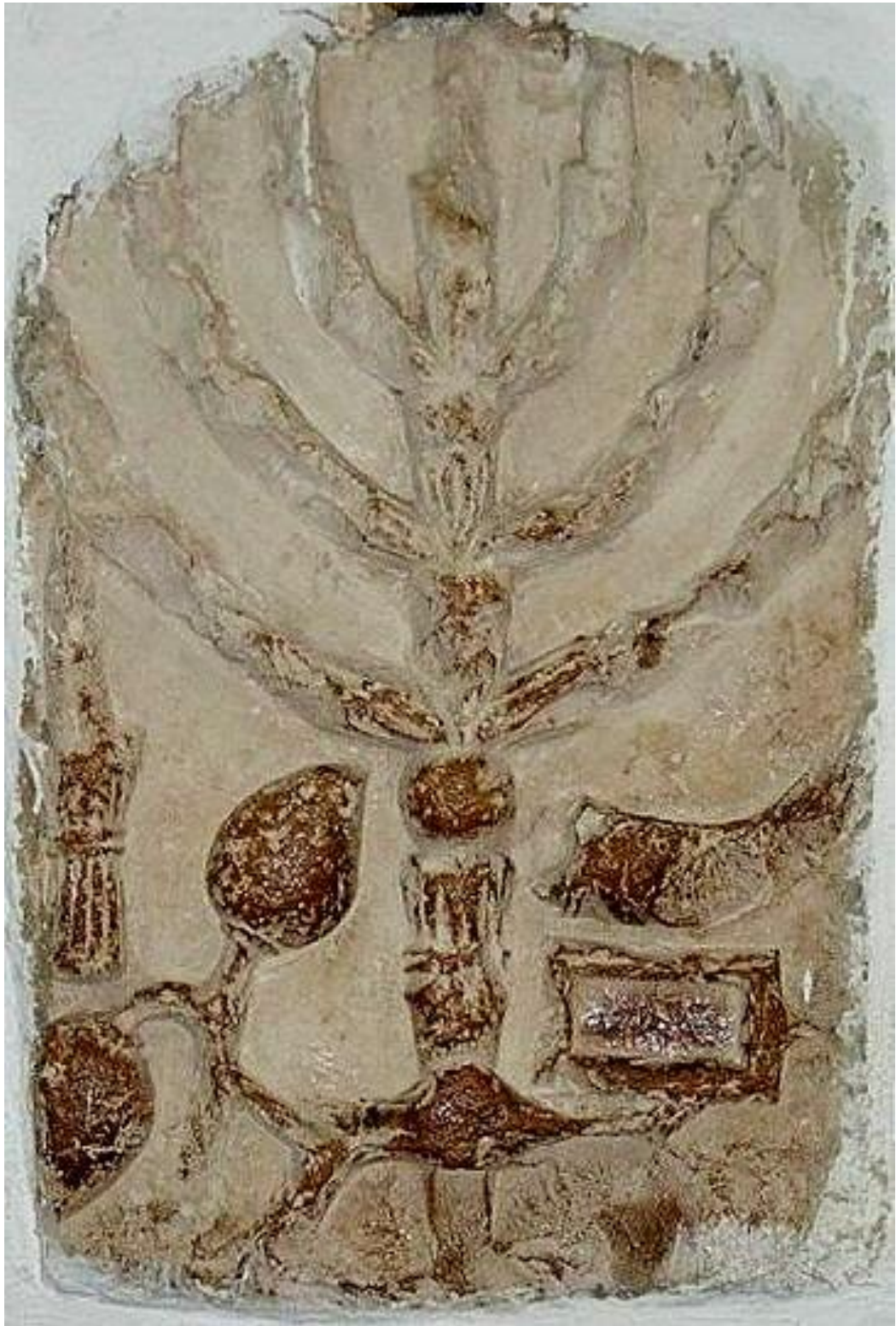
my me - no - rah on new - ly fall - en snow, I will set you, *one

lit - tle can - dle, on this the *first night of Cha - nu - kah.

2
5

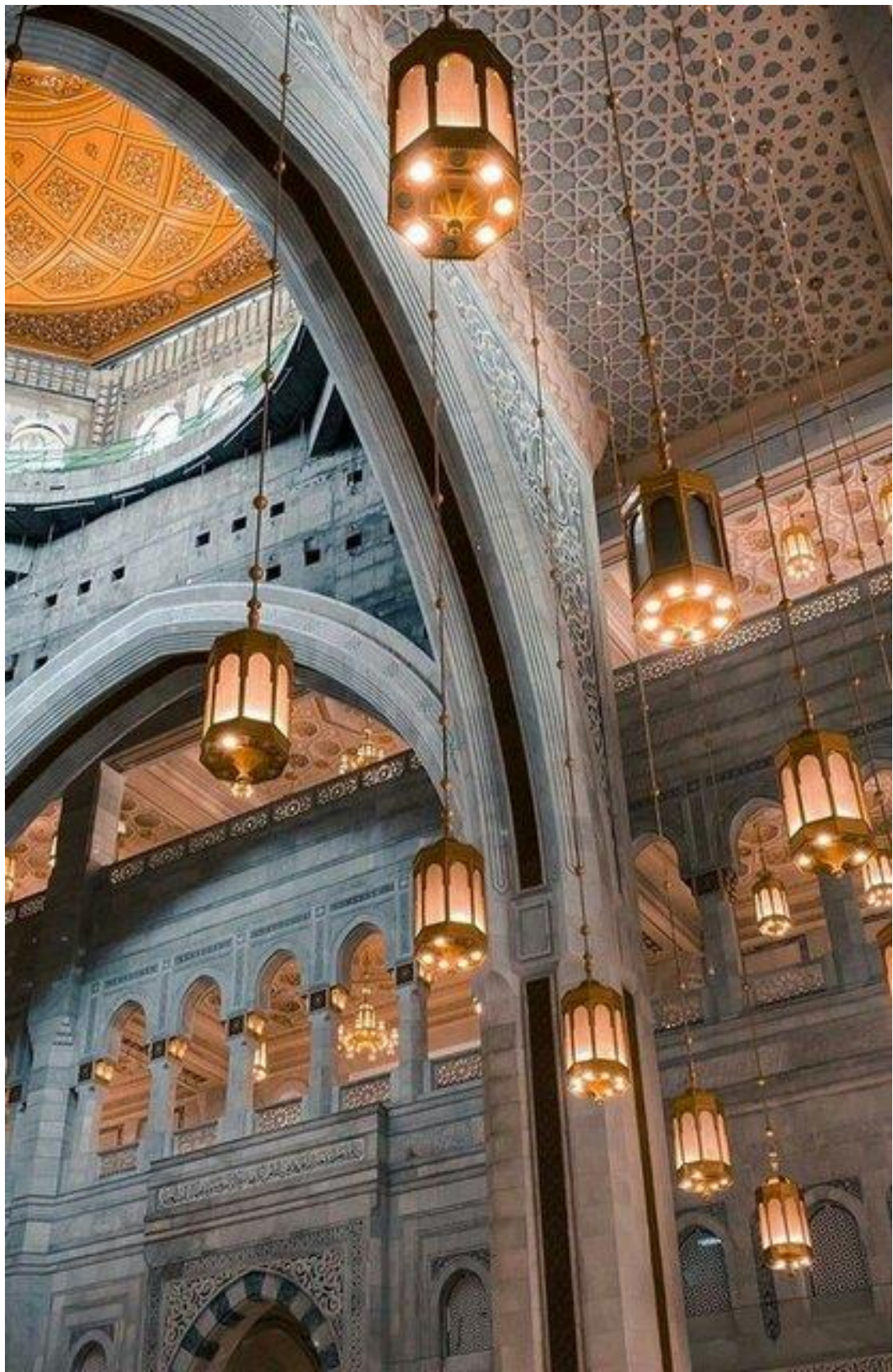
- KUUF service Dec 20 , 2020 message Martha Woodward
- We usually have a music service with songs that have a theme about Christmas. We can't do that this year, but I hope this might interest you, the concept of Light which got in the Christmas story as angels, stars, gifts from the Divine.
- I experienced an ultimate Feast of Lights in India a few years ago and haven't been quite the same since! I don't promise spiritual illumination, but maybe some history will be interesting.
- Today we are aware of light and dark. The sun rises and sets nearly at the horizon and we are about to experience the longest night of the year. We bring in the pots, light some candles, feel the power of Nature. But, we can calm our fears with some knowledge from science.
- Here's a prize tee shirt, too small for me now, from the MIT Hillel.. It says "And God said...let there be light" and the symbols are Maxwell's equation telling us light is a form of electro magnetic radiation. Philosophers from Euclid to Descartes tried for this definition. Now, thanks to quantum mechanics, we can say that the light *we can see* is of *both* particles and waves.
- I am not sure that helps me understand the awe I feel at the mystery of creation.
- Light, a constant in nature, has been at the center of the ancient religions which gave us the imagery of Christmas, like the Everlasting Light and magical star we just sang about.
- In ancient Persian traditions there is Zoroaster. He was regarded by the Greeks as the prophet of the Maji, a powerful class of astronomer-magicians. Guesses for his date range from 1700 to 1000 BC. His life story involves boyhood training to be a priest, travels and eventual revelation of a Shining Being. Zoroastrianism became a very widespread religion which had one Universal Force with two spirits: one of order, one of destruction and a hierarchy of gods and angels.
- From this religion, Judaism is believed to have adopted many concepts, including Heaven and Hell, divine judgement, and resurrection. The Greeks acquired a love of Wisdom. Many rituals of Islam also come from Zoroastrianism.
- So, from the beliefs of many older religions grew some major ones.
- At about the same time of early Christianity, there was another Persian philosopher who combined Zoroastrianism with Greek thought. Suhrawardi, still important in Shiite Iran, taught that Light is Divine, pure, immaterial and everlasting. Everything comes down in a hierarchy from the Light of Lights, a system like Plato's archetypal forms. Souls are angels divided into the upper and lower realms and seek unification in Heaven.
- Another group that were part of the soup that mixed into Christianity were the Gnostics, whose beliefs included that the Supreme Light was the only Absolute Reality and that souls seek it.
- Some of us have just celebrated Hanukkah and lit a menorah—8 candles reminding us of the magic which kept a small amount of oil burning for 8 nights in the recaptured temple.

Menorah



- The picture above is from around 300 BCE from a stone once part of a temple.
- The menorah was not the same as the everlasting light but a symbol of the holiness of the space, a symbol of the good and the beautiful and everything positive, of light from the other side of reality. We know the story in genesis, how God separated the Light from the Darkness. We remember familiar verses: Psalm 119 “Your word is a lamp unto my feet” or Numbers 6 “The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face to shine upon you...” and these themes re iterated in the New Testament: in Matthew 27 “The people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light” or in John, who attributed this to Jesus “I am the Light of the world”. Light in Judaism is a metaphor for the Word, the Torah and the human soul. We cannot see Light, but it allows us to see the beauty of creation and be aware of God.
- Just as the menorah is a symbol of holiness in a temple, the lamps in mosques are there to enhance an atmosphere for the worshipper to find the essence of God.

Islam Lighting



- Above you see the design of a mosque is deliberate and uses light to fit the prayers in different times of day. Islamic scholarship studies the mystical meaning of Light, and there are many famous passages in the Quran. A famous verse (sutra 324, which begins with unfortunate punishments for sex offenses) begins: “Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth , His light is like a niche in which there is a lamp in a crystal..like a shining star, lit from the oil of a blessed olive tree...Allah has a perfect knowledge of all things”

Light



- The little clay lamps (above) called diya are omnipresent in India during Diwali, the ultimate Festival of Light. I was very lucky to be there then and to experience the aarti at night, when priests make offerings to the Ganges, and we set little lights in leaf baskets out on the waters with prayers. Diya are lit in temples as a blessing and especially after birth rituals. You see them in home altars, and they are used as Buddhist offerings, too. In Hindu rituals, light represents the offering of the soul to God and stands for wisdom, and immortality.
- Diwali comes in approximately November and celebrates the spiritual victory of light over darkness of good and knowledge over ignorance and evil. People clean their houses, shop, wear new clothes, feast and set off fireworks, everything in wild excess, and there is an incredible spirit of Joy.
- There's an association with Lakshmi, a mother goddess of tremendous powers, the wife of Vishnu, an intercessor for other gods and humans..like the Virgin Mary. She symbolizes fortune, wisdom, self-knowledge and spiritual liberation. You see her depicted sitting on a lotus leaf, floating in air at the creation of the universe. She stands for transcendence over the material world.
- So we see our cultural heritage comes from the roots of many religions.
- Some of us, including me, have a newer heritage

Hogmany Viking Lights Festival



WATCHMAN, TELL US OF THE NIGHT

Sir John Bowring (1792-1872)

? Jakob Hintze (1622-1702)

harmonized by J. S. Bach

H.W.S.

Slowly without dragging

Traveller

1. Watch - man, tell us of the night, What its signs of prom - ise are.
2. Watch - man, tell us of the night, High - er yet that star as - cends.
3. Watch - man, tell us of the night, For the morn - ing seems to dawn.

mp

Watchman

Trav - 'ler, o'er yon moun - tain's height, See that glo - ry - beam - ing star.
Trav - 'ler, bless - ed - ness and light, Peace and truth its course por - tends.
Trav - 'ler, dark - ness takes its flight, Doubt and ter - ror are with - drawn.

mf

Traveller

Watch - man, does its beau - teous ray Aught of joy or hope fore - tell?
Watch - man, will its beams a - lone Gild the spot that gave them birth?
Watch - man, let thy wand' - rings cease; Hie thee to thy qui - et home:

mp

cresc. -

Watchman

Trav - 'ler, yes; it brings the day, Prom - ised day of Is - ra - el.
Trav - 'ler, ag - es are its own; See, it bursts o'er all the earth.
Trav - 'ler, lo, the Prince of Peace, Lo, the Son of God is come.

mf

cresc.

-poco rit.



Let this flame remain with us, a symbol of the holiness we seek, dispelling the gloom, lighting a path to faith and hope, its radiance calling us to wholeness, casting the light of freedom, justice and peace upon the world.

CLOSING WORDS

Hindu Prayer

For what is not, lead me to what is; from
darkness, lead me to light; from death, lead me to
what is undying.

Brhadaranyaka Upanisad I.3.28

It's ~
COFFEE
~*time*

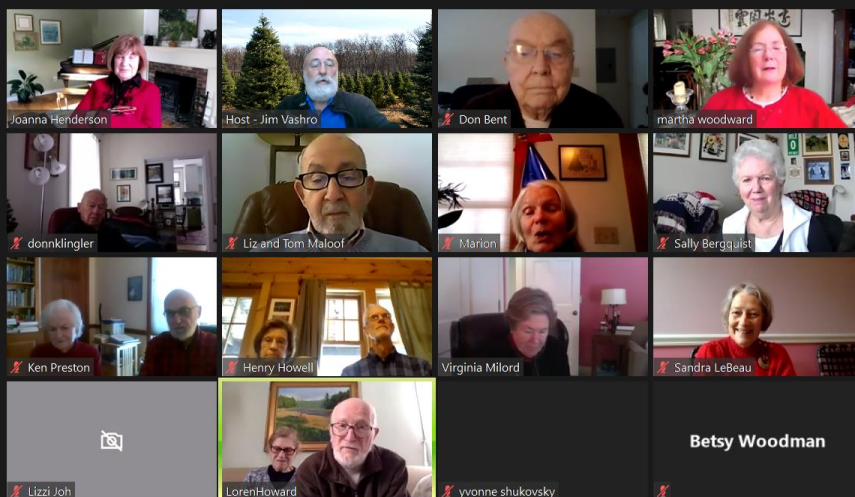


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- **End Recording**



clare bensley

Participants (17)

Find a participant

Host - Jim Vashro (Host, me)		
Joanna Henderson		
LorenHoward		
martha woodward		
Virginia Milord		
Betsy Woodman		
clare bensley		
Don Bent		
donnklingler		
Henry Howell		
Ken Preston		
Liz and Tom Maloof		
Lizzi Joh		
Marion		
Sally Bergquist		
Sandra LeBeau		

Invite

Mute All

End