

Unitarian Universalist Society of Grafton and Upton

“We Will Light Candles”

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Friday, December 24th, 2021



with Rev. Daniel Gregoire

Music Directors - Bob Nicoll and Barry Hall

Musical Introduction

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

Bob Nicoll, Barry Hall, Howard Kaufman

2021 Minister’s Special Greeting

Rev. Daniel Gregoire

Hello Friends,

This year’s Lessons and Carols service finds us again at home.

And, I know that for many this will come as a disappointment.

I am sad about not coming together in person, but for everyone’s safety and comfort, including my own, coming together online feels like the best way to go forward at this time.

While there has been tremendous progress in responding to the pandemic. There is still so much lingering uncertainty, anxiety and fear around COVID-19.

So, to have an in-person celebration, with a large group in close quarters, singing, dancing, telling stories and lighting candles, all of the things we are used to, feels much too soon.

However, I have faith that this too shall pass and I believe that we will be able to gather for Christmas soon, perhaps next year.

Until then, let’s encourage and support one another.

Let’s be courageous and forbearing with each other.

And, most of all let’s embrace the special magic of this season, as we carry the joy, hope and promise of Christmas into a Happy New Year.

Please Enjoy our Service of Lessons and Carols!

Opening Music	UUSGU Handbell Choir
“Hark the Herald Angels Sing”	
By Felix Mendelssohn and arranged by Kevin McChesney	
Call to Celebration of Lessons and Carols	Rev. Daniel Gregoire
Chalice Lighting	Kate Gregoire
Carol	UUSGU Choir and musicians
“O Come All Ye Faithful”	
Lesson	Christine Johnson
“The Astrologer Predicts at Mary’s Birth”	
By Lucille Clifton	
Musical Improvisation	Bob Nicoll
Lesson	Diane Pollard
“Virgin and Child with Music and Numbers”	
By William Bronk	
Special Music	Caroline and Lauren Scott
“Gabriel’s Message”	
Traditional Basque Carol, arranged by Barry Hall	
Prayer	Rev. Daniel Gregoire
Special Music	UUSGU Handbell Choir
“Silent Night”	
by Franz Gruber and arranged by Kevin McChesney	
Lesson	Kate Gregoire
“Mary’s Song of Praise”	
The Gospel According to Luke - Christian New Testament	
Musical Interlude	Barry Hall
Reflection on “In the Bleak Midwinter”	

Lesson

Debbie Pourali

“The Body is Like Mary”

By Jalaluddin Rumi

Translated by Daniel Ladinsky in his book, ‘The Purity of Desire’

Special Music

Diane Pollard

“What Child is This?”

Lesson

Rev. Daniel Gregoire

Appeal to Support the Relief Efforts of the American Red Cross in Kentucky

All donations received on Christmas Eve will go to the American Red Cross of western Kentucky to help those impacted by the tornadoes get back on their feet.



Use the QR code to donate with a credit card, or these apps:

Venmo: @UUSGU_Treasurer

PayPal: donate@uusgu.org

Choose “sending to a friend” (instead of “Paying for Good & Services”). Please add "**Kentucky Help**" to the memo.

Carol

UUSGU Choir and musicians

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

Lesson

John Cameron

“The Maid Servant at the Inn”

By Dorothy Parker

Special Music

Susan West

“O Holy Night”

by Adolphe Adam, English words by John Sullivan Dwight

Lesson

MB DeKara

“A Christmas Carol”

By Christina Rossetti

Choral Music

UUSGU Choir with Norman Hill, soloist

“In the Bleak Winter”

Music by Gustav Holst, words by Christina Rossetti and Barry Hall

Candle Lighting

Rev. Daniel Gregoire

Carol

“Silent Night”

Silent night, holy night
All is calm, all is bright
'Round yon virgin Mother and Child Holy infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.
Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar; Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.
Silent night, holy night
Child of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.

Benediction

Rev. Daniel Gregoire

Carrying the Light into the World

Rev. Daniel and Kate Gregoire

Postlude

“We Wish You a Merry Christmas”
“Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas”

The Allison Family Singers
Bob Nicoll, Barry Hall, Howard Kaufman

Musical selections were recorded by the singers in their homes

Choir and ensemble music videos were produced by Barry Hall

Additional videography and tech support provided by Kevin Hayes and Win Craft

The UUSGU Choir

Barry Hall, Director
Don Allison
Barbara Bucci
Patty Byler
Jackie Davison
AC Davison
Diana Daugherty
Diane Pollard
Daniel Gregoire
Kate Gregoire
Beth Hall
Cyndy Hill
Norman Hill
Checker Ives
Nancy LaPelle
Eileen Lloyd
Steve Lotterman
Anne Morris
Pat Morris
Diane Pollard
Debbie Pourali
Caroline Scott
Alison Snyder
Tom Trainor
Susan West

American Sign Language interpretation
by April Craft

The UUSGU Handbell Choir

Eileen Lloyd, Director
Don Allison
Patty Byler
Diana Daugherty
Kate Gregoire
Howard Kaufman
Steve Lotterman
Anne Morris
Brett Niver
Cherilyn Reno

The Allison Family Singers

Danae Allison
Dan Allison
Don Allison
Alison Snyder

Instrumentalists

Brett Niver - trombone
Bob Nicoll - piano, organ, guitar, cello
Barry Hall - strings, guitar, bass,
flugelhorn
Howard Kaufman - drums
Lauren Scott - alto saxophone
Patty Byler - recorder
Beth Hall - viola

We are blessed with an amazingly musical community. Thank you to all the members of our beloved community who made this Christmas Eve broadcast possible!

2021 Christmas Message from Rev. Daniel Gregoire



Kate and I are spending our second Christmas together as a married couple, here in Grafton at our home Agoueh Place. The draughty and creaky old house on Worcester Street is a dependable, calm and gentle presence in our lives; and we are so grateful for the place. It has been a mighty shelter in the storm of the pandemic.

We are also grateful for the presence of open space here in town. Kate and I are glad for the trails through woods and fields that allow our imaginations to run free, and the stress of the everyday to take flight. We are delighted to have access to quiet historic sites for local escapes. In these places we connect with the hopes and dreams of generations long passed, and imagine what current generations will leave behind. Our family is just as glad for the quiet time at home too, enjoying a cup of hot tea, sitting by the fireplace, time spent playing with the cat, and reading great works of poetry. Moreover, we are grateful for the great conversations we have with the members and friends of our wonderful church community at UUSGU. We can see that our faith community, a community of many faiths, is more united than ever in weathering this frightening time together.

I know that this is not the Christmas anyone had hoped for; as we find ourselves again in a holiday season freighted by the weight of an ongoing pandemic and the burden of an uncertain future. Nevertheless, it is important that we remember that we have a choice in how we tell the story of this troubled time in our lives. We can describe our current circumstances as miserable, frightening, or disappointing and end there. However, we can also do something different; we can center ourselves in a story of gratitude as we focus on what we do have. There are many ways to do this by pondering the great gifts of the everyday. We can consider the treasures of sunlight, air, wind, the ground beneath our feet, and the special people who journey with us through life. We can tell the stories of the golden insights, and moments of encounter

with the holy that stop us in our tracks. We can turn our attention to the people, places, and ideas that have withstood the test of time.

This Christmas, I can't help but think about and draw inspiration from the story of the Visitation of the Magi over two thousand years ago. These kings trekked across the desert to the humble dwelling of a frightened Joseph, Mary, and baby Jesus. Imagine that humble family's sheer astonishment at these strange visitors bearing extraordinary, life changing gifts during a dark and desperate time in their lives. Their gratitude must have been overwhelming, yet these gifts must've been small fractions of the treasures of the Magi. We don't have to read this as a historical account of an actual event to be completely knocked over by the powerful truth of the story: that miracles abound, that the universe, in its abundance, conspires to shower us with blessings, even during frightening times. Everyday there is something unexpected that calls our attention to a source of life that is entirely beyond our comprehension, and it sometimes shows up bearing gifts and the promise of a future story yet unwritten.

UUSGU, remember this story and all of the common stories of this holiday season. Immerse yourself in the myths and legends, remember our story as a community of faith that has come together despite the difficulties, to pour out our gifts, to celebrate life, to worship and to help one another. So many have helped to keep our community strong, lending their leadership, and their service to tend to something greater than themselves. As a church, we have so much to be grateful for and so many instances of the divine revealing itself in some act of compassionate service at the church or in the wider community. By remembering these things, we can let the fires of worries and the fires of fear burn themselves out through our inattention. As we shed this year for a new one, let's do those things that are within our power to do and let go of the rest. Let's shift our focus to the story of gratitude that warms the heart and soothes the care worn soul.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2022 from Daniel and Kate, and the Duchess, the cat.

Please consider making a special end of the year contribution to support the future and ongoing story of UUSGU by clicking the donate button below. We are grateful for your ongoing generosity.

[Donate](#)