

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

“2019 HANGING OF THE GREENS SERVICE”

Prelude

Narrator 1:

Monica Parson

Good morning and welcome! God’s Blessings to you. Over 2,000 years ago, as the story goes, a clutch of sleepy shepherds were watching over their sheep on a star-brightened hillside in Palestine. It was a still uneventful night. Suddenly the darkness was filled with a strange light. The stillness was broken by angel voices singing “Glory to God in the Highest, on earth peace, good will to all.” So begins Christmas, the most beautiful and meaningful celebration of the Christian calendar.

Narrator II:

Abigail Changoor

Christmas actually begins with Advent, the season through which we are moving. Both the seasons of Advent—the season of “going toward” the birth of Christ—and Christmas have a long history. These seasons and their customs have developed through many centuries and many countries. Old customs and observances are refined, renewed, replaced; new ones are added. Some of our customs have pagan origins but have been redeemed or converted by redefining their meanings. What is significant for us is not what they may once have meant but rather what they mean for us today.

Narrator I:

Please join me for the Litany of the Greens:

L: How can we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, the King?

P: With the branches of cedar, the tree of royalty.

L: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, the eternal Christ?

P: With garlands of wreaths, of pine and fir, whose leaves are ever living, ever green.

L: How shall we prepare this house for the coming Jesus, our Savior?

P: With arrangements of holly and ivy, symbolizing His passion, death and resurrection.

L: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, the Son of God?

P: By hearing again the words of the prophets who foretold the saving work of God.

L: For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

All: All Glory to God in the highest. **Amen**

Narrator II:

This morning our church building will begin to wear its Christmas apparel. For the first time our Christmas trees stand in the sanctuary. This day for the first time its lights will shine for us. As we make ready for the commemoration of the birth of the child by preparing this sanctuary, we make ready ourselves and the sanctuary of our own hearts. We are mindful that, although it is not Christmas yet, it will be here soon, very soon.

Narrator I:

As we decorate the church, not only will we explain the history of the symbols of these special seasons, but we will rededicate these symbols—and ourselves—to the

service of God.

Let us stand and sing “Angels from the Realms of Glory” UMH 220

All:

God of manger and star, let us enter your story once again and find ourselves kneeling with the shepherds, singing with the angels and worshipping the Magi. Touch our hearts with the wonder of birth, and the depths of your love. Speak to us in word and song and lift us to the realms of glory. Amen

Scripture: Isaiah 9: 6-7 *being read by Rahsaan Spence*

Narrator I:

Let us start our decorating! With the hanging of the wreaths!

From ancient times, evergreen have been considered a symbol of eternity, a sign of God’s everlasting nature. Isaiah tells us that there will be no end to the reign of the Messiah. Therefore, we hang wreaths shaped in circles, as a sign of everlasting life. These are symbols of Christ’s gift of eternal life and of the celebration of Christmas itself.

As the wreaths are being hung on the walls by *The Garraway Family*, let us sing stanza 1 & 2 of “Go Tell it on the Mountain” UMH 251

Narrator II:

The Poinsettia: The poinsettia speaks to us symbolically in several ways. The star shaped formation of ten leaves calls to mind the star which shone that first Christmas. In a less joyous sense, the color of the flower is blood red, reminding us of the male infants killed because King Herod wanted to eliminate any threat to his throne. We sometimes forget this part of the story, which made it necessary for Mary, Joseph and the Christ Child to flee to Egypt.

The children, *Agnes Park, Aaron & Alethea Khadaroo* will bring the poinsettias to the altar while we sing stanza 1-2 of “Lo How a Rose E’er Blooming” UMH 216.

Narrator 1:

It is said that it was **Martin Luther** who actually had the first Christmas tree in his home. According, to the story, he was walking through the forest of pine trees and firs on Christmas Eve. The stars shone so brightly upon the slender trees that they seemed to sparkle with starlight.

Narrator II:

The sight was so beautiful that Luther cut a tree and took it home for his children. On the ends of the branches, he fastened small candles and lit them so that the tree seemed to twinkle as though covered with stars.

Gleaming brightly in the lights of the Christmas candles, the glistening leaves and bright berries of the holly remind us of the joy and happiness that come to

humankind as we remember the birth of God's Son. (*Large Tree lit by The Hoolas Persaud Family*) while we sing O Christmas Tree.

"O Christmas Tree"

Carol:

*O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, O tree of green, unchanging.
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, O tree of green, unchanging.
Your boughs, so green in summertime, do brave the snow of wintertime.
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, O tree of green, unchanging.*

*O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, You speak of God, unchanging.
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, You speak of God, unchanging.
You tell us all to faithful be, and trust in God, eternally.
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, You speak of God, unchanging.*

Narrator 1:

The **mistletoe** has become the sign of merriment, **symbolized by the kiss**. But in ancient times, two warriors meeting under the mistletoe threw down their arms. Thus, it became a custom among Christians to place a spray of mistletoe upon the altar at Christmas time as a reminder of the peace of **God and the power of Christ to heal the hurts of Body and Soul**.

Narrator II:

Noah Armoogan brings in this reminder of the peace of God and the power of Christ – **the mistletoe**, as we join in singing the first & last verses of "**Good Christian Friends Rejoice**" UMH # 224. (*Mistletoe to be placed on the altar by Clifton & Evette Armoogan*).

Narrator 1:

In the sanctuary, candles stand; their Light a reminder of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World. As His light shines in the darkness, it brings up into the light those who follow his way. So the light is spread outward as each Christian brings his light into the world.

Carol:

"Silent Night" stanza 1 & 2 UMH 239
(*Candles on altar and candelabras are being lit by Jean and Joseph Persaud*)

"THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE"

Narrator II:

Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors in many ways by the prophets, but in these days, he has spoken to us by a Son.

Narrator 1:

Today we light the first candle as a symbol of Christ, our HOPE. May the light sent from God shine in the darkness to show us the way of salvation.

Hymn: “Light the Advent Candle” Stanza 1 FWS # 2090
(The first advent candle is being lit by Indira Seenauth & family)

Narrator II: “Let your light so shine before all people, that they may see your good works and give glory to your God who is in heaven!”

Carol: “Joy to the World!” Stanza 3, # 246

Narrator 1: Now with the beauty of the greens to remind us of the glory that came to earth at Christmas, let us hear again the story of the birth of Jesus – He who is called the light of the World.

Stephanie Baksh: Gospel of Luke 2:4-7

Lullaby Carol: “Away in a Manager” Stanza 1 #217

Maureen Asuncion: Gospel of Luke 2:8-16

Narrator II: Let us sing while the Angels are being hung
 “Angels From the Realms of Glory” Stanza 2 # 220
(Angels are hung between windows by Whittington/Ramdin Family).

Narrator 1: Now let us hear the story of the First Christmas Gifts.

Brittany Lane: Gospel of Matthew 2:1-11
 Let us sing the first and last Stanzas of: “We Three Kings of Orient Are” # 254

Narrator II: In all the legends of the Christmas story, the shepherds offer gifts. In an Old English play, one of the shepherds places his fur cap over the manger to protect the baby’s head; another places his gloves across the feet. So, today, we too, through our offerings, bring gifts to the Babe of Bethlehem.
 Now let us sing: “The First Noel” UMH 245 as the offering is being collected.

Offertory: “Communion with Jesus” (Edward Broughton)

Pastor: Prayer of Dedication

Pastor’s Words

Communion

Announcements

Narrator II: Now let us stand and raise our voices to sing, **“Joy to the World” #246**

Pastor: Benediction

Postlude

Announcements for Sunday, December 1st, 2019

1. The greeters have Welcome Folders for first-time guests.
2. Please be aware of those praying at the altar, hold your conversations several rows back.
3. Please come to church Early to join the Praise and Worship time at 9:45 am. Also, after the service begins at 10 am, the back door will be locked, and you will need to use the front door.
4. The Church sends condolences to the Family of Sis. Rose Schrader. Sis. Rose Schrader's brother, Delo Schultz passed away on November 25, 2019. He lived in California and passed away from Alzheimer's and an enlarged aorta. Please pray for Sis. Rose and her family.
5. The Rev. John Calhoun, our Covenant Relationship Missionary, is serving in Kyiv, Ukraine, Russia as the Coordinator of International Ministries. A new interesting letter with photos has been added to our Missions bulletin board. The Rev. John Calhoun tells what is happening with the ministry in Kyiv, Ukraine, Russia. We support him and his ministry with \$5.00 per member per year. Please use the small white envelope in the pew pocket. Add your name and or envelope #.
6. Our new statement for the United Methodist Insurance is \$6,600. On your white offering envelope, please check "Other," Write "Insurance" and indicate the amount.
7. There will be a UMW meeting, Sunday, December 8 after the service to elect officers for 2020. All ladies of the church are welcome!!
8. New and Renewal Subscriptions of the Upper Room for the year 2020 are now due. Regular Print \$10; Large Print \$12. Please see Alison Babb if you wish to purchase or renew.
9. On Friday, December 6 (new date), 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm, there will be **Bishop's Meeting with All Lay Leaders** at Grace UMC of Valley Stream (21 South Franklin Ave., Valley Stream, NY 11580). All Lay Leaders need to register.
10. On Saturday, February 8, 2020 (8:30 am -3:30 pm), 2020 Annual Lay Leadership Training Event will be held at Cristo Rey Brooklyn High School (710 E. 37th Street Brooklyn, NY 11203); Registration and Materials Fee - \$30. (Continental Breakfast & Lunch included) Please see Sis. Angella for a Registration Form, Deadline is January 10, 2020. (No walk-in Registrations Accepted)
11. Today's Greeters: Poonam Baksh, Juliet Ramson
Today's Ushers: Gordon Rambarran, Iva Woolcock
Usher on Guard: Iva Woolcock
12. Altar Flowers Provider for December: December 1: Aaron & Nadie Khadaroo
December 8: Celestine Garraway
December 15: Jean Asuncion

December 22: Jean Persaud
December 29: Juliet Ramson

**** Let us read the Word of God, the Bread of Life, daily.**

December 1 Deut. 30, 31; Ps. 40; 1 Cor. 1
2 Deut. 32-34; 1 Cor. 2
3 Josh. 1, 2; Ps. 37; 1 Cor. 3
4 Josh. 3-6; 1 Cor. 4
5 Josh. 7, 8; Ps. 69; 1 Cor. 5
6 Josh. 9-11; 1 Cor. 6
7 Josh. 12-14; 1 Cor. 7

December Birthdays

03 Richard Ramson
03 Irene Tier
04 Bob Naegele
07 Rose Schrader
10 Joseph Whittington
16 Noel Asuncion
16 Aaron Morgan
19 Brandon Morgan
31 Ariana Williams

**December
Anniversary**

05 - Blanche & Tony
Purificato
08 - Celestine & Winston
Garraway
17 - Catherine & Anthony
Whittington
19 - Jean & Nonoelo
Asuncion

If you would like to have your special days listed
here, please call the church office - 1.718.843.4841

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