

Universalist Unitarian Church of Joliet

Sunday, December 17, 2023 - 10:30 A.M. - "Women of Yule"

**Presenters: The Bittersweet Christmas Band (Phil Cooper, Kate Early,
Margaret Nelson & Susan Urban)**

*Please feel free to sing at home at any point in the service
where you feel moved to do so!*

Words to all the songs and readings, including congregational songs,
are on the pages following this one.

RINGING OF THE OPENING CHIME

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND WELCOME

INVITATION TO WORSHIP

PRELUDE: "We Need A Little Christmas," by Jerry Herman, from the musical "Mame"

OPENING WORDS by Oprah Winfrey

OPENING CONGREGATIONAL SONG: "Silver Bells," by Jay Livingston and Ray
Evans (see below)

CHALICE LIGHTING (unison) Rev. Dr. Linda Hart (see below)

COVENANT (unison) (see below)

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

SHARING OF JOYS & CONCERNS

A time for joys and sorrows of your personal life. So that all may share, please keep
your remarks brief and consider the sacredness of this time.

TIME FOR ALL AGES: "Invocation to Mother Holle," by Kerry Noonan

OFFERTORY

OFFERTORY MUSIC: "Winter Solstice," by Peakfiddler

INTRODUCTION

SONG: "The Women of Yule," by Susan Urban

HOMILETTE: When Yule Belonged to the Goddesses

SONG: "My Mother's Eyes," by Lee Murdock

REFLECTION - Phil Cooper

SONG: "Christmas in Prison," by John Prine (amended to a woman's point of view)

REFLECTION - Kate Early

SONG: "Lady of the Seasons' Laughter," by Rev. Dr. Kendyl Gibbons

REFLECTION - Margaret Nelson

CLOSING CONGREGATIONAL SONG: "Song of Solstice," by Jennifer Cutting (see
below)

CLOSING WORDS

UNISON CHALICE EXTINGUISHING (see below)

POSTLUDE: "Solstice Carole," by The Wyrd Sisters

WE NEED A LITTLE CHRISTMAS

Jerry Herman

Haul out the holly, put up the tree before my spirit falls again.

Fill up the stocking, I may be rushing things,

But deck the halls again now.

For we need a little Christmas, right this very minute,

Candles in the window, carols at the spinet.

Yes, we need a little Christmas, right this very minute,

It hasn't snowed a single flurry, but Santa dear, we're in a hurry.

Climb down the chimney,

Hang up the brightest string of lights I've ever seen,

Slice up the fruit cake,

It's time we've hung some tinsel on that evergreen bough.

For I've grown a little leaner, grown a little colder,

Grown a little sadder, grown a little older,

And I need a little angel sitting on my shoulder,

Need a little Christmas now.

Haul out the holly, put up the tree before my spirit falls again.

Fill up the stocking, we may be rushing things,

But deck the halls again now.

For we need a little music, need a little laughter,

Need a little singing ringing through the rafter.

And we need a little snappy happy ever after,

We need a little Christmas now.

SILVER BELLS

Jay Livingston and Ray Evans

City sidewalks, busy sidewalks, dressed in holiday style,

In the air there's a feeling of Christmas.

Children laughing, people passing, meeting smile after smile

And on every street corner you hear

CHORUS:

Silver bells, silver bells,

It's Christmas time in the city.

Ring-a-ling, hear them ring,

Soon it will be Christmas day.

Strings of street lights, even stop lights, blink a bright red and green

As the shoppers rush home with their treasures

Hear the snow crunch, see the kids bunch,

This is Mama's big scene, and above all this bustle you hear

CHORUS

Soon it will be Christmas day.

CHALICE LIGHTING (unison) by Rev Dr Linda Hart

We light this chalice as a symbol of the spark of life
which abides within us and around us.

May it be as a light in a dark night, a light in a window
that welcomes the weary traveller home.

May it be as a light in the hand of a trusted friend,
that guides us along the path.

May it be as the light in the face of one we love, bright with joy.

COVENANT:

Love is the Doctrine of this Church.

Our beliefs are as individual as those who believe.

To learn, to serve, and to live in peace,

This is the flame we carry, this is our Covenant.

INVOCATION TO MOTHER HOLLE

by Kerry Noonan

In the darkness, winds are blowing,
Far to the north, snow is falling,
She shakes her featherbed,
See how it flurries,
Come, Mother Holle, be here now.

CHORUS:

Come, Mother Holle, be here now,
Come, Mother Holle, be here now,
Come, Mother Holle, be here now.

Crone of darkness, darkness is keeping,
In midwinter it's You we are seeking.
Mother of bears, sleeping warmly,
Come, Mother Holle, be here now.

CHORUS

Dark your cloak, silver your tresses,
Cover the world as the daylight lessens,
Sparkle of starlight in your eyes,
Come, Mother Holle, be here now

CHORUS

Bless us with Your darkness so deep,
Grant us dreams as bear-like we sleep.
Outside it's cold, the hearth fire warms us,
Come, Mother Holle, be here now

CHORUS

THE WOMEN OF YULE

Susan Urban

She stands at the stove and she opens the oven,
There's a ham, and a casserole made with green beans.
On the counter are cookies she baked just this morning,
They are waiting for frosting in red, white and green.

There are friends and relations all making their way
To her home for her good food and fireside bright,
She has never once heard of the goddess Frau Holle,
But she follows her path on this dark Christmas night.

CHORUS:

In the coldest of countries, when Yuletide came round,
A thousand and more years ago,
When survival 'til Spring was an uncertain thing,
And the ground was all covered with snow,
Then the goddesses reigned as the Winter descended,
And the work of the women was honored.

She sits in her living room, yarn all around her,
Every hue of the rainbow in neatly wound skeins,
And the sweaters she knits for her grandkids for Christmas
Will keep them all snug in the snow and the rain.

And their parents are grateful, for times have been hard,
And the cost of such clothing their budgets can't stand.
Grannie walks in the path of the women who followed
The Norse goddess Hulda with the work of their hands.

CHORUS

She straps on her snowshoes, then calls to her wolf dog,
In the Porcupine Mountains when Winter is new.
And she moves through the forest, not heeding the cold wind,
Her parka is warm, and her fur mukluks too.

And her bow will sustain her large family this year
With the birds and small game she brings home from the woods,
And she offers her thanks to her goddess, bright Skadi,
For the mountains are fair, and the hunting is good.

CHORUS

MY MOTHER'S EYES

Lee Murdock

When I was a young girl a long time ago
December day dawning with blankets of snow
My father returning cross Lake Michigan
On a vessel named Bridge Builder Ten
Christmas was coming, excitement was here
With family and friends coming from far and near
To witness this refitted boat when she came
To the dock that gave Northport her name.

*I remember the look in my mother's eyes
As she scanned the horizon, the waves and the skies
Her hopes all for a bright future that lies
In the strength of her own husband's hands
And I remember the snow coming down
It swirled and it drifted all over town
And the words of assurance passed all around
When the Bridge Builder Ten didn't land
That night on the Leelanau sand.*

Tradition and family become very dear
With the loss of a loved one at that time of year
A widow and children reduced all to tears
From the kindness of neighbors at hand
Each Christmas Eve Father would go to the store
Pick out a dress that mother'd adore
Bring it back home for us kids to store
Amid all the gifts we had planned.

*I remember the tears in my mother's eyes
That sad Christmas morning when to her surprise
She opened a gift that her daughter devised
Of a dress that her mom would adore
I remember the smell of her hair
As it curled all around me as she hugged me there
And the words that she whispered into the air
That the love of a father abides
When he looks through his own daughter's eyes.*

The nightmare of wondering what happened out there
Was the grim Christmas present that we had to share
The loss of my father and Mother's despair
Kept us company all winter through
But spring came, then summer and autumn returned
As the year passed us by, we gently relearned
That beauty in life is around every turn
In the wheel of whatever you do.

*I remember the look in my children's eyes
As they scan the horizon, the waves and the skies
With a hope for a bright future that lies
In the strength of their own parents' hands
I remember the love and the tears
The dark days, the sunny days, down through the years
The hopes and dreams as well as the fears
That rise up from deep down inside
As we look through our own children's eyes.*

CHRISTMAS IN PRISON John Prine (amended to a woman's point of view)

It was Christmas in prison, the food was real good

We had turkey and pistols carved out of wood

And I dream of him always even when I don't dream

His name's on my tongue and his blood's in my stream

CHORUS:

Wait a while eternity, old Mother Nature's got nothin' on me

Come to me, run to me, come to me now

We're rollin' my sweetheart, we're flowin' by God

He reminds me of a chess game with someone I admire

Or a picnic in the rain after a prairie fire

His heart is as big as this whole goddamn jail

And he's sweeter than saccharine at a drug store sale

CHORUS

The search light in the big yard swings round with the gun

And spotlights the snowflakes like dust in the sun

It's Christmas in prison, there'll be music tonight

I'll probably get homesick, I love you, goodnight

CHORUS

LADY OF THE SEASONS' LAUGHTER by Rev. Dr. Kendyl Gibbons

Lady of the seasons' laughter, in the summer's warmth be near;

When the winter follows after, teach our spirits not to fear.

Hold us in your steady mercy, Lady of the turning year.

Sister of the evening starlight, in the falling shadows stay

Here among us till the far light of tomorrow's dawning ray.

Hold us in your steady mercy, Lady of the turning day.

Mother of the generations, in whose love all life is worth

Everlasting celebrations, bring our labors safe to birth.

Hold us in your steady mercy, Lady of the turning earth.

Goddess of all times' progression, stand with us when we engage

Hands and hearts to end oppression, writing history's fairer page.

Hold us in your steady mercy, Lady of the turning age.

SONG OF SOLSTICE

Jennifer Cutting,

'Tis the gateway of the year; shortest day and darkest hour;

Praises as our newborn Sun journeys back to its full power,

CHORUS:

Raise the song of Solstice high, through the wind and weather;

Welcome Yule with frost and fire and sing we all together!

Blessed be the darkness deep; all we learned there well worth knowing.

As below the seeds' long sleep nourished hope for springtide's growing,

CHORUS

Troubles of the old year past burning in the oaken fire,

Making way for greater gifts; glowing with our hearts' desire,

CHORUS

Merry meet and merry part, merry meet again,

Strangers only at the start, now are friends until the end,

CHORUS 2X

UNISON CHALICE EXTINGUISHING

Carry the Flame of Peace and Love Until We Meet Again

SOLSTICE CAROLE

The Wyrd Sisters

The fire is burning, the long night draws near

All who need comfort are welcome by here

We'll dance 'neath the stars and toast the past year

For the spirit of solstice is still living here

We'll count all our blessings while the Mother lays down

With snow as her blanket covering the ground

Thanks to the Mother for the life that she brings

She'll waken to warm us again in the spring

The poor and the hungry, the sick and the lost

These are our children, no matter the cost

Come by the fire, the harvest to share

For the spirit of solstice is still living here

The fire is burning, the long night draws near

All who need comfort are welcome by here

We'll dance 'neath the stars and toast the past year

For the spirit of solstice is still living here

The spirit of solstice is still living here