



The Torch

First Unitarian Church
of Salt Lake City

December 21, 2009

Volume 52, Issue 11

Reverently Yours

Rev. Tom Goldsmith



When we think about Christmas beyond the madness of wrapping gifts, baking delicacies, and worrying about cards and guests and schedules complicated by divorce and filial obligations, what comes to mind? Maybe the angels shouting to shepherds long ago: "Peace on earth and good will toward men."

The sad thing is, the angels never said that. The message in what was actually the correct translation: "Glory to God and on earth peace, toward men of good will." What is implied is that men of good will are those who please God. Next, peace will prevail among men with whom God is pleased. The moral: Peace does not just come from our good intentions.

I like the wrong translation a lot more. I like the meaning of hope wrapped in our ability to finally get right the good will towards our brothers and sisters. I don't like hope as a condition for pleasing God, unless pleasing God means extending the selfless side of our humanity to help others in need. Unfortunately, there's no recipe for pleasing God.

All we know is that peace is almost impossible to attain, that even in our sophisticated and high tech era, we still stand on one side of an Afghan mountain shooting soldiers who stand across the narrow ridge on the other side of the mountain and the last one standing, wins. We know that good will is hard to find, as we enlightened

people 2000 years after the birth in the manger deal, still prefer to benefit ourselves on Wall Street to the detriment of others; even a whole nation can suffer for the benefit of a few. Good will is scarce in trying to provide health care for our brothers and sisters. Good will evaporates when trying to protect the planet for future generations. Copenhagen is being referred to these days as Hopenhagen; it's as though it were Bethlehem and we await word from wise men and women and angels who tell us that we will be saved. But the real translation tells us that peace and goodness do not just happen from well-meaning people.

So where do we find hope this year as Christmas visits again and the calendar is about to signal 2010? An honest answer may be hard to arrive at, but emotionally we know what needs to be done, regardless of the right biblical translation. It really is about our intentions and actions, our vision and follow-through. It really is about opening our hearts to strangers and evolving into people with less self-preoccupation. Is it possible? I once had a philosophy professor as an undergraduate who insisted that anything conceivable was possible. Well then, peace and good will are certainly conceivable. So let us be a hopeful people because we can think and dream and imagine peace, and are willing to bring good will to all. That's what we heard the angels say, and there is no one correct translation of angelic pronouncements. Is there? Peace! Good will to all. The human heart can change; we believe this to be true. TRG



They're almost gone!

If you want our 2010 First Unitarian Musical Calendars, now is the time! Calendars are available in Eliot Hall during coffee hour, or contact David Owens at 801-390-0488

The Torch

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January 11, 2010

Submission Deadline:

Mon. January 4, 2010
at 9 a.m.

Events to be listed should occur after January 12th to ensure timeliness.

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Religious Education - News for the Village

RE Newsbits

Much Thanks!



Thank you to all those who were able to buy gifts for this years Giving Tree; we were able to give eight families, from Mountain View elementary, a brighter holiday season. Thank you so much!

Thanks to all the parents and high schoolers who volunteered, the annual holiday party was a success! We made crafts and learned about many holiday traditions that happen this time of year, including Solstice, Hanukkah, Diwali, Kwanzaa and Christmas. Erik Houghtby from the high school class played the tuba and trumpet and his friend Zac played the trombone to accompany our Christmas carols. Ian also played some of our favorites on the piano. All were fueled by excess amounts of sugar from our well stocked cookie potluck. It was so much fun, I'm already excited for next year!

Time to collect Guest at Your Table donations!

In recent weeks, our Guest at Your Table boxes and *Stories of Hope* have taught us about real people engaged in the struggle for justice in the United States and around the world. We have learned about our power to change the world when we support our Unitarian Universalist Service Committee and the many amazing people they partner with.

After Christmas, it will be time to return your Guest at Your Table box back to church. Please bring it to the Religious Education table in Eliot Hall after Sunday services on Dec. 27th, Jan. 3, or Jan. 10th. Before turning in your Guest at Your Table box, if possible, please convert your cash and coins to a check made out to "UUSC". Also, be sure to complete the form on the box with your name and contact information so that you will receive a receipt for your tax-deductible donation and you can be listed as a member of UUSC if your donation reaches the membership level. Please know that donations in any amount are highly valued and greatly appreciated. For your information, membership levels are \$40 Individual, \$75 Dual, \$10 Student/youth, \$20 Senior, \$40 Dual Senior. Donations of \$100 or more will be matched by the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, N.Y.

We'll announce the results of our Guest at Your Table program as soon as we are able. On behalf of UUSC, we thank and commend every person who has chosen to share their blessings through Guest at Your Table.

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RE Holiday Party Photos submitted by Jennica Davis



Endowment Fund News

New Ralph Waldo Emerson Society Members:

Barbara Ackron

Alan and Marjorie Coombs

Andrea Globokar

These church members have designated our church in their wills and estate planning. We gratefully acknowledge their generosity and support for designating our church as a beneficiary in their estate planning.

Endowment Fund Gifts

Generous gifts to the Endowment Fund have been received

In memory of

Pete Petersen

from

Steven and Patricia Horton

Jenifer Busam



WallE

Animal Ministry



The cat was found by Margie Benson once again on her porch looking for some food and love. Only this time, Margie noticed something wrong. His left front leg was

hanging badly mangled with the foot dragging and turned backwards. Margie took the injured "outside" cat to the owner who gave his care over to Margie because "it's just a cat."

Animal Ministry got together and helped the cat get the surgery he needed to save his life and also responsibly neuter him. Margie named him WallE after the robot in the movie that was all alone in the world.

As you can see from the picture, WallE had to have his complete left shoulder and front leg amputated. He has recovered quickly and is learning to compensate.

Jim & Tresa Stitley, along with Fritz - of course, adopted WallE and he is getting the love and care everyone deserves.

Thank you to all the Animal Ministry people who helped save this loving, lovable cat.

-submitted by Tresa Stitley

Animal Ministry will be meeting on the 3rd Sunday of each month in the Youth House (just north of the church on 1300 E.) at 12:30. Please enter by the side door.

Correction: Our next meeting will be Sunday, January 17th.

For more information, please contact Tresa Stitley at 801.671.2858.

Dates, Dates

UU Lunch Bunch Dates: December 20: **Pago** 878 S. 900 E.; December 27: **Café Med** 420 E. 3300 S.; January 3: **The Dodo** 1355 E. 2100 S.; January 10: **Café Niche** 779 E. 300 S.

Community Food Co-op: December 19th pick up from 9 to 10 a.m. January orders due by Jan. 15th.



First Unitarian Church
of Salt Lake City

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Salt Lake City, Utah 84102

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www.slccu.org



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Permit No. 812

Return Service Requested

Sunday Services

Sunday, December 20th

9:00 a.m.

Christmas Pageant

11:00 a.m.

"Lessons and Carols"

Be on hand to touch the Christmas spirit in either service or stay for both. Our children, our choir and minister will offer a timely infusion of warm holiday feelings

7:30 p.m.

Jazz Vespers

Christmas Kool featuring Nicole Madison

Sunday, December 27th

9:00 and 11:00 a.m.

"Epiphanies: Then and Now"

-Lay Service Committee

Sunday, January 3rd

9:00 and 11:00 a.m.

"Hope and Concerns for the New Year"

-Rev. Tom Goldsmith

Sunday, January 10th

9:00 and 11:00 a.m.

"The Downside of Positive Thinking"

-Rev. Tom Goldsmith

Holiday Services

December 20th
Christmas Pageant ~ 9 a.m.
Lessons & Carols ~ 11 a.m.
Christmas Kool Jazz Vespers ~ 7:30 p.m.

December 21st
Winter Solstice Celebration ~ 6 p.m.

December 24th
Candlelight Service ~ 6 p.m.
Candlelight Service ~ 10 p.m.