

UU Casper
Lamps of Hope
Dual Service
December 7, 2025

Note: As participants enter the room, electronic candles will be lit around the room and each participant will be handed a lit candle to carry to their seat with them.

9:50 am

Jayne: Prelude music 10 minute

Gathering and Welcome

RING CHIME

Cindy: Welcome/Introductions, children will stay in

Good morning! I am Cindy Wright, this morning's service leader and chair of the Membership Committee. The Membership Committee manages our outreach and inreach communications such as the website and newsletter as well as maintaining our membership rolls in the UUA's database. Please reach out to me, Annette, or Damion if you'd like to sign up for the newsletter or write an article for the website.

Cindy: Housekeeping Items

- ☐ Please check that your cell phone is muted.
- ☐ Exits
- ☐ Bathrooms
- ☐ Tea, Coffee & snacks

Cindy: Chalice Lighting - *"Hope" is the Thing with Feathers* by Emily Dickenson

"Hope" is the thing with feathers -

That perches in the soul -

And sings the tune without the words -

And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -

And sore must be the storm -

That could abash the little Bird

That kept so many warm -

UU Casper
Lamps of Hope
Dual Service
December 7, 2025

I've heard it in the chilliest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.

Jayne: *Opening Song: #118 *This Little Light of Mine*

Cindy: Joys and Concerns

The spirit of love is with us: it comforts us and connects us. If you have a joy or a concern this morning, you are invited to come forward and light a candle and share with our community. If you prefer, you may write your joy or concern on one of the prayer cards with the purple Altar of Hope box, which is at the back of the sanctuary on the bookcase. Altar of Hope cards will be burned in the next burning ceremony as a symbolic joining with universal healing energies. All offerings are private and treated with reverence and respect.

Centering and Reflection

Stewart: What is the Concept of a Guiding Light by Stewart McAdoo

What is the concept of a guiding light? To each, it may mean something different but for me, it is my moral compass. Internally it is factors in my decisions to do something true to myself based on my beliefs regardless of the outcome. Every day we may face decisions that can have outcomes contrary to our intentions but ultimately are made with our guiding light weaved into our decision-making process.

Not only do internal factors influence my personal compass, my upbringing and my past decisions that shaped the man before you today, but we are constantly affected by external elements that, to some challenge our guiding light, but for others help mold and shape our own personal journey. Ironically, my upbringing was challenging, and my path was likely to be drastically different had I chosen to allow external elements to fully influence my being. Standing today, I intend to use the vision of what I believe family should be for my children. The lessons learned at the family home, the traditions passed down during the holidays, are lamps that will burn within them long after childhood. However, I know that my own two children will be responsible for their guiding light while I am here and even after I have departed.

UU Casper
Lamps of Hope
Dual Service
December 7, 2025

The people you associate with, the community you set roots down to, the news you ingest, the tribes you form, all influence your sense of self at a visceral level. Some may be stoic to external influence and more prone to self-guiding principles while others embody them and shape their destinies with external forces driving their direction.

We each have a guiding light that plays into our very being. They drive the very person we are and depend on our past and our presents. Some use their light for personal wellbeing, some for their families and friends, and for some in more grandiose fashion to help others.

In the words of the late Harvey Milk: I know that you cannot live on hope alone, but without it, life is not worth living. And you, and you, and you have got to give them hope

He used his principles as a force to help others. His light was to give a voice to a marginalized community. Living authentically and fighting discrimination.

Another great man, that shaped the very history of this country once said: We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality” I give this credit to the late Dr. Martin Luther King.

Yet their lights did not go out. Their lamps still burn today — in the movements they inspired, in the communities they uplifted, and in the moral compasses of people like you and me if you share the same ideologies.

For those influenced by community should note that one lamp may light a room but many together can brighten a city. Our community is strongest when each of us allows our guiding light to shine.

I use these two gentlemen as examples of people who had stood on principles and used their moral compass to help others. Tragically, as history would unfold, they were cut short in their prime. They were cut short fighting for the very principles they stood on. One thing to note, importantly, is that their guiding light still shines through to today. This integrity, inside of all of us, does not extend to just our own personal being. Depending on who we influence or interact with, others are impacted by your guiding light. I, for one, still see these two men today in how I interact. They have influenced my moral compass and have intertwined their guiding lights into my sense of direction. To do right by others and to stand up for others that may not be willing to have a voice.

At the end of the day, your guiding light, your principles, your sense of being is driven by you and you alone. We can be influenced but ultimately, we are who we are with our own interpersonal sense of being. Something to consider, our own light is not a static path. It can be winding; we can deviate off course and self-correct. Who I expect to be in 10-20-30 years’ time may come to be a surprise when eventuality comes full circle. I, for one, am on the journey regardless of the outcome and hope that my light helps to influence those around me I hold most personal.

UU Casper
Lamps of Hope
Dual Service
December 7, 2025

During the holiday season, our lamps of hope glow brightest, in the meals we share, the kindness we extend, and the laughter we bring to one another.

Our guiding lights are not meant to be hidden. They are meant to be shared — with our families, our neighbors, and our communities. Just as Harvey Milk gave hope to those who felt unseen, and Dr. King reminded us that we are bound together in destiny, we too are called to let our lights shine. In this season of gathering, may our lamps of hope illuminate not only our own paths, but the paths of those around us.

Jayne: *Song: #184, *Be Ye Lamps unto Yourselves*

Cindy: *Unison Covenant

Love is the spirit of this church and service its cause.

This is our great covenant: to dwell together in peace,
to seek truth in love, and to help one another.

James Vila Blake (adapted)

Cindy: Story sharing

Before we move into decorating our lanterns, we're going to take a few minutes to reflect together on the real moments in our lives when light has shown through the dark.

In a moment, we'll divide into small groups of three or four. If you're joining us online, please interact in the chat or unmute yourselves. You'll have about five to seven minutes to share a short, personal story about something that brought you hope during a tough time. This doesn't need to be big or dramatic—sometimes the smallest moments are the ones that carry us through. It could be a person, an experience, something you witnessed, or even a shift inside yourself.

As you share, I invite you to listen to one another with openness, gentleness, and respect. Just offer your story, and let others offer theirs. There's no pressure to go deep if you're not feeling it today—just speak from where you are.

When we come back together, we'll carry those stories with us as we move into our lantern-making, letting them inspire the imagery and light we bring into our Lamps of Hope.

[~5-7 minutes]

Song: #381, in the tune of 372 Tallis' Canon

Please stay seated while we sing through song #381, in the tune of Tallis' Canon, a pretty piece written in the mid 1500s by English composer Thomas Tallis, which is #372 if you're curious.

UU Casper
Lamps of Hope
Dual Service
December 7, 2025

*From all that dwell below the skies
let songs of hope and faith arise;
let peace, good will on earth be sung
through every land, by every tongue.*

Cindy: Lamp Activity Introduction

Imagine for a moment a single small lamp burning in a vast night. One flame, fragile, yet it changes everything around it. Darkness retreats. Shapes appear. A path becomes visible. Suddenly we are not lost. That tiny light does something no amount of darkness can ever do: it reveals what was already there.

Across the multitude of cultures — from the three rays of Celtic Awen to the clear light of Tibetan meditation, from the seven cosmic lamps of the Serer Creator to the Hawaiian practice of mālama, from the uncreated light of Eastern Christianity to the firelight that gathers Aboriginal elders around sacred stories — one truth repeats itself in a thousand voices:

Light is not just light.

Light is how the invisible becomes visible.

Light can be how the sacred speaks.

Today I want to invite us to meet three faces of that same light inside ourselves and in our lives.

The first face is our inner light — the spark that every tradition says is already burning in us. The Buddhists call it the clear light of awareness. The Sufis call it the Muhammadan light hidden in the heart. The Yoruba, the Dogon, the Warlpiri — they all say the same thing in different languages: there is a radiance in you that was never born and never dies. It gets covered by fear, by habit, by noise, but it never goes out. Your job is not to create that light. Your job is simply to stop blocking it.

The second face is guiding light — the lamps we did not make but that we follow. Sometimes this light comes as values we inherited: the moral clarity of a parent, the courage of an ancestor, the compassion of a teacher. Sometimes it comes as divine beings or ancestors walking ahead of us — such as the Shekinah (the radiant presence of God in the created world), the atua (gods and spirits) of the Pacific, or the Morning Star of Aboriginal sky lore — holding their lantern high so we don't lose the path. These outer lamps are gifts. They show us the way until our own eyes adjust to the dark.

UU Casper
Lamps of Hope
Dual Service
December 7, 2025

And the third face is the hardest and the most beautiful: becoming a lamp unto ourselves. The Buddha's last words were "Be a lamp unto yourselves." He didn't mean "ignore all other lamps." He meant: one day you have to carry your own. One day the outer teachers fall silent, the traditions change, the old maps no longer match the land. In that moment you must decide what you will stand for, what you will protect, what you will refuse to let go dark. That is when the inner light and the guiding light fuse into something new: a light you now carry for others.

Tonight we are going to make that visible.

In a few minutes you'll each receive a small plastic lantern — simple, plain, waiting. On its paper panels you'll place images, words, colors, symbols that speak for these three faces of light:

- Something that reminds you of your own inner spark
- Something that represents the outer lamps that have guided you — people, beings, values
- And something that declares the light you now choose to carry forward into the world

When you light the candle inside your finished lantern, it will illuminate your values and representations of what guides you. These lanterns are a nice size for hanging on a Christmas tree, sitting on a shelf, or hanging from a hook somewhere. We have markers, crayons, washi tape, printed quotes, and lists of values that can all be used to decorate the panels. Once you are done, it's easy to insert into the lantern with the candle. It might be helpful to tape the ends of the panels together before or after inserting them. The vertical posts can snap easily, so please be mindful of that. When we are finished, we will share a word or two and show our lamps to the group.

So let's begin.

Take a breath.

Remember the light that is already in you.

And let's start crafting a lamp only you can carry.

Thank you.

[Transition immediately into the lantern-making activity]

Sending Forth

UU Casper
Lamps of Hope
Dual Service
December 7, 2025

Cindy: Closing Words/Benediction: *Remembering that the universe is larger* by Marjorie Newlin Leaming

Remembering that the universe is so much larger than our ability to comprehend, let us go forth from this time together with the resolve to stop trying to reduce the incomprehensible to our own petty expectations, so that wonder—that sense of what is sacred—can find space to open up our minds and illumine our lives.

Cindy: Extinguish the Chalice

We extinguish this flame, but not the light of truth, the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment. These, we carry within our hearts until we are together again.

Thank you to Jayne for the music, to [Names] for helping with the service, and to [Names] for helping with A/V and the Zoom room.

After the postlude, you are invited for tea and coffee and snacks.

Cindy: Announcements

Before our Postlude begins, we have a few announcements.

- ☐ Upcoming events, groups, and services can be found in your OOS, on our website, and in the weekly newsletter. If you would like to sign up for the newsletter, please speak with me after the service.
- ☐ Caroling Practice: Saturday, December 13 at 6:00 PM
- ☐ Caroling at the Mission!: Saturday, December 20 at 4:45 PM
- ☐ Yuletide Evergreen Spiral: Saturday, December 20 at 5:00 PM
- ☐ Programming Committee Meeting: Sunday, December 21 at 11:30 AM

- ☐ Does anybody else, in the sanctuary or Zoom, have other announcements, for the good of the community?

Cindy: Sharing the fruits of our labor and good fortune

During our Postlude, we invite you to share the fruits of our labor and good fortune. We give to remind ourselves how many gifts we have to offer. We give to remember that we are part of something bigger than ourselves. We give because we believe in music and sacred space. We give with the faith that, together, we have enough. You are now invited to participate in the blessing of giving to this free religious community during the postlude.

UU Casper
Lamps of Hope
Dual Service
December 7, 2025

Jayne: Postlude

After postlude and baskets are collected: “We give thanks for these gifts and dedicate them to continue the good works of this community.”

Tech Team: Clean up and set up Zoom for chatting with room