

Seeds for Celebration
Season of Lights, Winter 2021-2022
“O NIGHT, DIVINE!”

Jubilee! Community, Asheville NC

You're there on the floor- again- with that same blessed ball of lights that you're always untangling. Do they even work? You can't bring yourself to buy more, this is an act of honor. The lights must shine! Even halfway! There's something about the coming of the darker months, and our fascination in marking the days ahead with light. Any light will do. Why do we do it? There are great ways to answer this like a sociologist, but let's answer it like a Jubilant. We illuminate the dark because it's so dang hopeful. There's something about having little stars below as above, especially as we call in the light of new birth. Our most distant ancestors had a powerful call to hope as those in the Temple who found their oil burning miraculously for eight days. It's a calling to hope as Joseph and Mary beheld their new child of wonder, Jesus. It's a calling to hope as children today powerfully stand for a world that is equitable, verdant and joyous. All of these callings begin in the night, SWOOSH! The Divine assumes a form to chart a forward course. From frozen ground to spring seedlings, the Divine makes the tiniest lights shine in the night and gives us radical hope. That's what we've done at Jubilee for over three decades, and what we're being called to anew.

Why do we call these “The Seeds for Celebration?” So you, dear Jubilants, can revel in the divine harvest with us. This is your call to creatively involve yourselves in this work of light. As Matthew Fox, the founder of Creation Spirituality said in an interview: “People experience the Divine through deep experiences in nature. Most people are nature mystics. Nature... includes human nature. What humans give birth to in art and poetry, music and ritual, books and children... all this too is the ‘word made flesh’ or Divinity incarnated.”

No matter how frumpy or audacious, how blinky or brilliant, bring out your lights, Jubilants, and with anticipation we sing “O Night, Divine!”

Sunday, November 28th: O Night Divine of Hope
First Sunday of Advent, First Day of Hanukkah

Isaiah 2: 2-4 *“They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.”*

Matthew 3: 1-11, 14:19-21 *“The kingdom of heaven has come near,”* and *“They all ate and were satisfied.”*

Welcome to AHSCKNYE! That’s Advent, Hanukkah, Solstice, Christmas, Kwanzaa, New Year’s and Epiphany! A unique bit of Jubilee vocabulary with no perfect pronunciation. Today, we celebrate the A and H, with the silent T for Thanksgiving. As we light the first Hanukkah and Advent candle, the anticipation begins. Miracles have begun, enough to give us hope. While we might call the miracles of ancient days legends, are there miracles happening right now to give you hope? Look around. Give a listen. Make a list. Be surprised in the abundance which surrounds, and the abundance you have to offer this world... the one right in front of you.

Sunday December 5th: O Night Divine of Faith
Second Sunday of Advent, Seventh Day of Hanukkah

Isaiah 11: 1-11 *“The Earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as waters that cover the sea.”*

Matthew 1: 18-25 *“An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream.”*

Alan Watts: *“We are the universe looking at itself.”*

‘Tis the season for keeping the faith in everyday messages of wonder, ‘tis it not? For Joseph, the beginnings of miracles were only a dream away, a reassuring message that the Universe is indeed a mind-boggler but works as it ought to. The arrival of angels- to anyone- upends routine and suggests there’s much more going on than we can possibly understand. Naturally, there are folks who could be a little smug about seeing an angel- or incredulous. For others, the appearance of one divine messenger might just invite a succession of divine messengers (and possibly, less puzzling in appearance). From a hummingbird to a stray cat, we might be getting swarmed with angels who are imploring us to keep a little faith in miracles pulling through.

**Sunday, December 12th: O Night Divine of Joy
Buddhist Bodhi Day, Third Sunday of Advent**

Isaiah 35: 1-10 *“Waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.”*

Buddha, Metta Sutta *“May all beings be well, may all beings be happy.”*

Luke 1: 26-37 *“Do not be afraid.”*

The angels we put on trees these days are just adorable. They’re meant to inspire joy. There’s a good reason why the angel told Mary “Be not afraid.” Biblical angels- well- they’d make odd tree toppers. Let’s just say there’s extra in the eyes and wings department, leaving them not quite aerodynamic. Their work is a daily exercise of industrial strength magic. No matter who or what they are, angelic beings make the messenger gig look enticing to humans. Especially, if it’s to spread the good news of joy! More so when they resemble the traditional tree toppers.

**Sunday, December 19th: O Night Divine of Peace
Fourth Sunday of Advent, Solstice (Yule) Sunday**

Jeremiah 31: 10-14 *“Their life shall become like a watered garden.”*

Starhawk: *“The Great Mother goes into labor tonight.”*

Luke 1:39-45 *“Blessed are you...”*

The landscape artist Andrew Wyeth said of winter: “I do an awful lot of thinking and dreaming about things in the past and the future - the timelessness of the rocks and the hills - all the people who have existed there. I prefer winter and fall, when you feel the bone structure of the landscape... Something waits beneath it, the whole story doesn't show.” Today we celebrate Yule, the coming of the Winter Solstice, and acknowledging that whole story of which we are but a small, yet integral part. After the Solstice, the days become slightly brighter. May this be a time of savoring the divinity of night.

**Tuesday, December 21st: O Night Divine of Solstice
Calling of the Bears Ceremony with Yona Frenchhawk**

**Friday, December 24th: O Night Divine of New Birth
Christmas Eve**

Genesis 1: 1-5 *“And God said, “Let there be light!”*

Luke 2: 1-20 *“And suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host.”*

Jubilants love our AHSCKNYE traditions: The gifting tree for Foster Families, to the advent candles, to the annual ritual of “How do you spell or pronounce AHSCKNYE?” Tonight’s Christmas Eve services bring it all together. We’ll sing “Gloria in Excelsis Deo!” with American Sign Language, and drop the lights and process out in candlelight. It’s not *that* we do this, it’s *why* do it. In the spirit of new birth, we enter in expectation, and leave in awe. “Unto us a child is born!” And we come a way with the promise of new life. That’s a tradition which transcends these walls, transcends Jubilants, and transcends time. Shepherds, why this jubilee? Come and see!

**Sunday, December 26th: O Night Divine of Community
Kwanzaa**

Isaiah 61: 10-11, 62: 1-4 *“You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord.”*
Maya Angelou *“Into a daybreak that’s wondrously clear, I rise. Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave, I am the dream and the hope of the slave. I rise...”*

Maulenga Karenga, the founder of Kwanzaa, wrote in a meditation: “Let us give continuous attention to the future; and let us give deep consideration to the consequences of things.” On the edge of 2021, this is remarkably prescient. As a community in the crucible of change, we’ve been in continuous consideration. Now, we’re a little more prepared for the future. Lighting the first candle of Kwanzaa, Umoja (Unity), gives a little extra light and direction for what’s ahead.

**Sunday, January 2nd: O Night Divine of Light
New Year & Epiphany Sunday**

Isaiah 60: 1-6 *“Then you shall see and be radiant.”*

Matthew 2: 1-12 *“When they saw the star, they were overwhelmed with joy.”*

Have you heard of the Scottish tradition called ‘first footing?’ It’s lovely. There’s much to be made of who the first person will be to cross your threshold on New Years Day, and what goodies they will bring. What about the first surprise to cross your threshold, the first good news... the first epiphany? By nature, entering a new time always comes with revelations, especially if we are open to being surprised. So, how about this thing called 2022? What epiphanies await? The light is increasing upon us; we all are starlit wanderers, after all. Behold, where we’ve been led, and the gifts brought across this bright threshold of a new day.