

Meditation and Prayer
First Unitarian Church of Baltimore
December 21, 2008
Rev. Lyn Oglesby, Ph.D.

Wonder of wonders, god whom we call by many names and cannot comprehend, we welcome your spirit into our hearts this morning.

Here we are again, the Sunday before Christmas, the Sunday that Hanukkah begins. Let the light of that star, the light of the Hanukkah lamps and the increasing light after this Solstice day broaden our vision, warm our hearts, and fill our minds.

We honor the many traditions that have built our faiths and all that we aspire to. We honor the Solstice and our place in the universe. We honor the music, the sacred texts, the stories, and the traditions and rituals that frame our lives this season. We honor those faiths with which we are less familiar, and the wisdom we have yet to glean from them.

The holidays are difficult for many of us this year. Some are without shelter. Some are without jobs. Some are without their accustomed resources. Many of us are cutting back, and not just because it is fashionable to live more simply. Let the necessity of our frugality become a guide for a clearer vision of living, a helpful guide to setting priorities in what we spend, and in reducing our reliance on material things we may not really need. Let us be grateful for the Enoch Pratt Free Libraries, for modestly priced museums and art galleries, for interesting and decent programs on Public Television and National Public Radio.

Let us put love, rather than money into our gift-giving, by knitting and crocheting and ornament making and baking and assembling unique gifts that will always be remembered and treasured. Let us clear our closets of clothes

we no longer love or no longer fit into. Let us share what we no longer need with those who do. It is not too late to make a merry Christmas and Hanukkah for someone less fortunate.

Let good health and wisdom enrich our president-elect and his cabinet. Let us honor the service of the elected leaders who are moving on. Let the spirit of democracy move us to more responsible citizenship, to more engagement with our local communities and governments. There is much work for us all, to build a finer city, and to participate in issues that our state and federal legislatures grapple with. If we don't do our part, how can we cast aspersion on them?

Let us use this day and the gift of each new day to become better persons, to do more for others, to smile at children and strangers, to hum and sing as we walk the paths of our lives. Let us reach out to others when tragedy or disappointment crashes into our lives, or slowly sucks out our energy. And let us be there, just be there, offering a shoulder, a hand, or a casserole to those who reach out to us. There is always time. We can always do the laundry tomorrow when someone needs help. We can always postpone washing the dishes to call a friend who is in pain. Those of us who don't like housework can do a lot of good and in that, become more cheerful in our chores.

Whatever our circumstances, we are thankful for life's opportunities, and when opportunities are invisible, to know that they are there, when we adjust our way of looking at what life deals us. This too will pass, whatever it is, however awful it may feel, however dreadful. That is what sacred texts and poetry are there for. To enrich our vision, reshape our perspective. And when we are in despair, let us call a friend, who may be washing dishes or running the vacuum and be thrilled to hear from us. It sounds easier than it is, but in challenge there is hope and change and opportunity.

Let us commit to a community of love and fellowship and helping one another, and allow ourselves to be helped by others. Let us rejoice in this glorious season of cold and snow and gifts of love and light.

Amen