

## Las Posadas Service/Fourth Sunday of Advent

Today, if we did not cancel our services because of severe weather conditions, we would have had a joint service with El Dios Viviente, our sister congregation. Much work by both congregations was put into the planning of this service so we have included here a pdf of the liturgy for this Sunday. ([click here to view the liturgy](#))

The service would have included a reading of the Las Posadas, (Shelter for the Holy Family). In the Hispanic tradition, one of the oldest celebrations Las Posadas, was created by a friar about 1587 to introduce Christianity to the New World. It reenacts the Holy Family's search for a room at the inn. We were to sing carols and listen to the Hispanic versions of familiar Christmas hymns. At the end of the service, we would have sung in English and Spanish, a portion of the traditional Las Posadas song, as arranged by Barbara P. Garcia who graciously allowed us to use the arrangement which was first introduced at the Convocation of United Methodists in Worship, Music in 1993.

We would also have lit the 4th Advent candle - the candle of Love. In the tradition of the lighting of the Advent candles, Christ is the light of the world who brings us hope, peace, joy and love. Each candle we light represents these four gifts of God to the world through Jesus Christ. Christmas Eve or Christmas Day is when we light the Christ Candle. I invite you to come to the Christmas Eve Service this Wednesday at 7pm. We will light the Christ candle and from its flame, we will light many individual candles as we sing Christmas carols.

The Las Posadas and the lighting of the advent candles: these two traditions give us some insight into God's love for us. As with the search for a room at the inn, God often comes to us to seek a home in our hearts yet we do not recognize him or reject him altogether. In the Las Posadas, words of the final verse of the traditional hymn reads: "Let us sing now Alleluia! Welcome Jesus in your hearts. Celebrate this Holy Advent. Sin and darkness now depart!" When we welcome God's love in Jesus Christ into our lives, sin and darkness disappear. In its place, we find joy.

This is how great and powerful God's love is. It transforms a darkened world into one of light: of hope, peace, joy and love. All we need do is to open our hearts to Christ and let him dwell within.