



SMALL GROUP MINISTRY  
FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF  
SAN JOSE

## **A Gift Of Change**

“Presents are the sorts of things that fit on lists, complete with size and color preference. Presents are the sorts of things we are smart enough to ask for. Gifts are altogether different. We don’t usually think to ask for them, perhaps because we think we don’t deserve them, or don’t want to risk expressing the need. Gifts differ from presents because no matter what form they take, they always represent something greater, something deeper, something more enduring; they are about things like love, respect, and affirmation.”

-- David S. Blanchard

<b>Preliminaries</b>	Group and church calendars	<b>Singing / Coming out of the Silence</b> #184, <u>Singing the Living Tradition</u>	Be ye lamps unto yourselves Be your own confidence Hold to the truth within yourself As to the only lamp.  (repeat two or three times)
<b>Opening / Chalice Lighting</b> Rev. Lindi Ramsden, adapted	<p>Advent is the season of preparation, and today we light candles in anticipation of new vitality and new possibilities.</p> <p>Let this first candle be for faith, the trust that the foundation of life is good.</p> <p>Let this second candle be for hope, which renews our spirit and gives us strength to continue.</p> <p>Let this third candle be for love, which helps us to find the deepest meaning of human life.</p> <p>Faith, hope, and love: these candles symbolize the spark of divinity in each of us and in the web of life.</p>	<b>Sharing / Deep Listening</b>	Please share the responses you have to the questions you answered prior to the session.
<b>Check-in</b>	Going around the circle, take one or two minutes to share your joys or concerns about the upcoming holiday season.	<b>Singing</b>	(Please see the insert to select the song.)
<b>Reading Around the Circle</b> By David S. Blanchard, adapted	<p>This is a time of year when we ask—and are asked—what do you want? We ask and we answer. We shop, we wrap, we ship.</p> <p>And the season usually comes and goes so quickly that we never really answer the question: <i>What do you want?</i></p> <p>This can be a question for each of us to hold on to for a time in mind and heart. <i>What do we want?</i></p> <p>Not what would we like, but what do we want to give us a deeper connection with life and to help us give expression to our deepest selves?</p> <p>Not a long list of things, but a sense of clarity that illuminates what it is we are doing and why.</p>	<b>Discussion</b>	Please read silently the text on the front of the order of worship. Do you agree that there a difference between a present and a gift? Can you think of a time when you gave or received such a gift? Take a few moments as a group to exchange your thoughts on this.
<b>Sitting in Silence</b>		<b>Closing / Extinguishing the Chalice</b>	<p>In the busy holiday season, let us remember the true gifts of the spirit. Let us feel the blessing of community and the sweet expectation of good things to come.</p> <p>And now we extinguish our chalice but not the light of hope: hope for change that brings new blessings into our lives and the lives of those around us.</p>

## Singing Choices for Session 6 – A Gift of Change

### #225, Singing the Living Tradition (adapted)

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And with your captive children dwell.  
Give comfort to all exiles here,  
And to the aching heart bid cheer.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel,  
Shall come within as Faith to dwell.

O come, thou Day-spring, come and cheer  
Our spirits by thine advent here.  
Disperse the gloomy shades of night,  
Break through the clouds and bring us light.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel,  
Shall come within as Hope to dwell.

O come, O come, thou Lord of Love,  
Declare thy law all law above;  
From dire oppressions bring release,  
And lead us in the way of peace.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel,  
Shall come within as Love to dwell.

O come, thou Splendor very bright,  
As joy that never yields to might,  
O come and turn all hearts to peace,  
That greed and war at last shall cease.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel,  
Shall come within as Joy to dwell.

### #226, Singing the Living Tradition (adapted)

People look east, the time is near  
Of the crowning of the year.  
Make your house fair as you are able,  
Trim the hearth and set the table.  
People look east and sing today,  
Change, the Guest, is on the way.

Furrows be glad. Though earth is bare,  
One more seed is planted there.  
Lend your strength the seed to nourish  
That in course the flower may flourish.  
People look east and sing today,  
Growth, the Rose, is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim,  
One more light the chalice shall brim,  
Shining beyond the frosty weather,  
Bright as the sun and the moon together.  
People look east and sing today,  
Hope, the Star, is on the way.