

**“Twas the Night Before Christmas  
(at Toronto First)”  
(inspired by Clement Clarke Moore)**

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First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto  
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Twas the night before Christmas at Toronto First  
Some people felt festive, while some feared the worst...  
As the news of the world brought such troubles and dreads  
That concerns and catastrophes danced in our heads

Along with to-do lists and presents to wrap  
How we wished we could pause for a long winter's nap  
And wake up to a world much more peaceful and fair  
We hoped for some good news to come...but from where?

So we gathered that night, listened to the old story  
Of a star shining bright and a child born in glory  
The heavenly carols, the reverent speaking...  
Could they bring the hope and the peace we were seeking?

Could stories, could symbols, could imagination  
Bring joy to the world and bring hope to the nations?  
By the moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow  
Well, I had to admit that I just didn't know.

When what to my wondering eyes should appear  
But a re-kindled light that could overcome fear  
By affirming Love's message of inherent worth

Of each single person on this planet earth

Of the interdependent existence of All,  
And of justice, compassion and equity's call.  
Like a wandering shepherd, my meaning-filled search  
Had led me tonight to this uncommon church...

That welcomes deep wisdom both ancient and new  
From poets and prophets, indeed me and you!  
How it spoke to my soul and got through to my head  
And it gave me to know I had nothing to dread...

For deep in my heart there arose such a clatter  
As I realized the many ways our lives might matter  
From small acts of kindness, done timely and quick  
To the lighting of candles, each flame's burning wick

Bringing hope of new purpose, new meaning and joy  
To move us toward justice, new plans to employ  
As we seek to build bridges, to serve and connect  
To heal ragged edges of hate and neglect.

As I heard the old story, of the babe in the stable...  
In a flash, this old chalice I saw as a cradle  
That might hold all the love we might dare to put in it:  
All the joy and the hope and the faith...without limit.

It could welcome the stranger, the seeker, the friend  
It could light every life, to bring peace without end  
Yes... this chalice, this cradle, this vessel, this bowl...

It could take what is broken, it could make it whole.

Then, up to the rafters, my spirits they flew...  
With a heart full of hope...and a few sermons too...  
As such new ways of living, such visions they came  
That we sang, and we shouted, and called them by name:

On Kindness, on Courage, on Wonder and Wisdom  
On Presence, on Patience, on Friendship and Listening  
From the Narthex, to Workman, to Sunderland Hall...  
Til we dash away, dash away, dash away all...

To go follow our stars...  
To go love this world right...

Merry Christmas to all,  
and to all, a good night.