

December, 2017

Expressions

A Publication of the

CLAREMONT CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL LIVING

509 S. College Ave, Claremont, CA 91711 / 909-624-3549



A Note From The Rev

by Rev. Tracy Earlywine

"All the darkness of the world cannot extinguish the light of a single candle." - Francis of Assisi

Dear Ones,

Happy holidays! All of them!

Across many traditions, the celebrations of Light take place during the winter months when days are short and Nature appears to be sleeping. The candles of the Hanukkah menorah and those of the seven principles of Kwanzaa, the lights of Christmas and the flame of the Yule log all remind us of the true Light - the flame within burning brightly. No matter how dark life may seem, the Light of the One lives in each heart and shines into the world. Every smile, every gift given and received, every hug, every shared meal, every colored light is Spirit here and now and in every season.

So celebrate! Celebrate the holidays! Celebrate every point of light, whether candle flame or Christmas tree, and remember the True Source - that inner light which shines so that everyone may know love.

Blessings and Light,
Rev. Tracy

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Ed Graff, Interim Editor





The Story of Kwanzaa

by Sarah Redmond



Kwanzaa is an African American holiday celebrating Family, Community and Culture. Kwanzaa was created by Dr. Maulana Karenga in 1966. His goal was to create the first African American holiday and to "give Blacks an alternative to the existing holiday and an opportunity to celebrate themselves and history rather than simply imitate the practice of the dominant society."

Kwanzaa is celebrated from December 26 through January 1. It is based on the agricultural celebration of Africa called "the first fruits" celebrations which were times of harvest, ingathering, reverence, commemoration and recommitment. Therefore, Kwanzaa is a time of celebration of all the "first fruits."

Kwanzaa was created out of the philosophy of Kawaida, which is a cultural nationalist philosophy. It is celebrated by millions of people of African descent on all continents throughout the world. This includes all religious traditions, all classes, all ages and generations, and all political persuasions on the common ground of their "Africanness" in all its historical and current diversity and unity.

The most widely known aspects of Kwanzaa are the Essential Values of Kwanzaa, which introduce and reinforce the seven basic principles. These contribute to building and reinforcing community among African American people, as well as Africans

throughout the world. These values are called the *Nguzo Saba* (in-goo-zo sah-bah) which in Pan-African language means "the Seven Principles."

The *Nguzo Saba*, first in Swahili and then in English, are:

1. *Umoja* (Unity): To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race.
2. *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination): To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves.
3. *Ujima* (Collective Work and Responsibility): To build and maintain our community together and make our brother's and sister's problems our problems and to solve them together.
4. *Ujamaa* (Cooperative Economics): To build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and to profit from them together.
5. *Nia* (Purpose): To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.
6. *Kuumba* (Creativity): To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.
7. *Imani* (Faith): To believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers,
(*"Kwanzaa" continues on page 3*)



(“Kwanzaa”, continued from page 2)

our leaders and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

These principles stand at the heart of the origin and meaning of Kwanzaa, for it is these values which are not only the building blocks for community but serve also as its social glue. They are the most recognized and publicized of all Kwanzaa traditions.

Finally, Kwanzaa is a celebration of the Good: the good of life, common culture, friendship, the bountifulness of the earth, and the wonder of the Universe.



Note: Dr. Maulana Karenga was born Ronald McKinley Everett on July 14, 1941 on a poultry farm in Parsonsburg, Maryland. He was the 7th son and the 14th child of a Baptist minister. He earned a Ph.D. in Political Science from Alliant International University in 1976, and a second Ph.D. from USC in 1994. He also received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Durban in South Africa.

Earth Moves In A Mysterious Way by Betsy Rose

Earth moves in a mysterious way
Her wonders to unfold
She fashions beauty out of clay
Like straw spun into gold

She holds us all within her breath
Enfolds us in her grace
We cling like children to her breast
This glowing jewel in space

I lose her face a thousand times
In crowded streets of fear
But when I gaze at starry skies
I see her shining clear

I lose her voice amid the din
And clamor all around
But if I listen to the wind
I hear her sacred sound

And though this human enterprise
Is poised 'tween hope and hell
Earth circles in her endless dance
And whispers “All is well”

And in the darkest season
Amid the winter’s storm
She sings to us of spring to come
And keeps our spirits warm

Earth moves in a mysterious way
Her wonders to perform
She fashions beauty out of clay
Our mother and our home

Continuous Thanksgiving

by Brad Wethern

Why do we wait all year to celebrate Thanksgiving?

Those who know, who are successful, who are enjoyable to be around all celebrate Thanksgiving every single day of their lives. That is because they know life is so much better when they do and so much harder when they don't.

Many ask the question, "Is the glass half empty or half full?" Those who celebrate Thanksgiving every day know that it doesn't matter. The glass is always there to be refilled. If it is half empty, they give thanks for having used what is gone. If it is half full, they give thanks for what is being replenished.

They know that if they do not actively give thanks, the glass of water becomes stagnant and eventually evaporates into nothingness.

These people are experimental sometimes, and try going a day without giving thanks to see what happens. They discover that life is not as buoyant, not as fulfilling, not as easy. Life without gratefulness is like a great painting with no one to look at it.

You can turn your life into a great painting by simply being thankful it is there.



Advent: Preparing for Something New and Amazing

Advent is a time to prepare for the birth of something completely new. Synonymous with being awake or aware, Advent is a time to prepare for a spiritual birth, deepening our connection with/in God.

Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas. Each Sunday, a candle is lit and an intention for the week is spoken. Typically, these candles are set in an Advent wreath: four around the perimeter and one Christ candle in the middle. (Not all traditions use the Christ candle.)

Week one's intention is Hope, expecting and trusting in God for our good. We expand that by setting our attention on the first two steps of Treatment. During this week, we know that there is ONLY God and we are truly one with the Divine flow. Everything we think, do, say or even feel must be consciously aligned with this flow.

Week two's intention is Love. We begin with self love, becoming gentle witnesses to ourselves. Once we do that, we can see past what we judge to be "bad" or "wrong." We can see God everywhere. We can become emissaries of Love.

Week three's intention is Joy. Its candle is pink while the others are purple. The idea (*"Advent" continues on page 5*)



(*"Advent," continued from Page 4*)

might be that, after spending two weeks dumping our ego need for control, struggling to release judgment, we get to take a break and have a little joy. Actually, when we change our habits from control and judgment, joy becomes a natural byproduct.

The fourth candle represents Peace. Peace comes with release, "letting go and letting God," opening to receive the good our loving "father" wishes to bestow on us. While this sounds easy, how many of us take back control from our Divine Source? We look over God's shoulder to make sure he's doing it right. Letting go is how we fully empty ourselves and open up to something new and wonderful.

On Christmas Eve, the Christ candle brings us full circle. We began with the first two steps of Prayer Treatment: knowing God is our Source and we are one with that Source. We went on to embody this knowing. We wrapped ourselves in joy and gratitude. We rested our weary human hearts and allowed them to be filled. We can now embrace the cosmic divine union. We can walk in the Presence, however it shows up in our lives.

May your Advent be blessed, and may you be a blessing during this sacred season.

Namaste,

Marianne Cordova-Breen, RScP



Advent Candle Affirmations

Candle 1. Prayer ('Hope')

"We light this candle in Prayer, acknowledging our oneness with the Divine: with Divine Right Action, Wisdom, Joy, Peace and Love"

Candle 2. Gentle Witnessing ('Love')

"We light this candle in gentle self observation, paying loving attention to what we demonstrate in our daily thoughts, words and actions, both habitual and spontaneous. We are expressions of God, of unconditional Love."

Candle 3. Gratitude ('Joy')

"We light this candle filled with gratitude for the ever-flowing Grace of God, for the Divine Substance we swim in, for the endless possibility of expression and experience, for being one with God and all creation."

Candle 4. Letting Go ('Peace')

"We light this candle releasing all that does not serve our highest good, all that may prevent us from being the best for the world, all that is not in the image and likeness of God. We let go of attachment to appearances and know that all is good, all is God."

Christ Consciousness Candle

"We light this candle knowing there is One Limitless Life, which returns to us what we think into It. The Infinite is in and through us, and in and through everything." This is the Christ Principle acting in us.

Claremont Center for Spiritual Living, 509 S. College Ave., Claremont, CA 91711

Office Hours Tuesday-Thursday, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. & Friday 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

909-624-3549 / www.claremontcsl.org



Calendar of Events for December, 2017

Claremont CSL Events

Ongoing Events:

Sundays -

AA Meetings, 8 AM; Chapel
Meditation, 10 AM; Chapel
Sunday Service, 10:30 AM; Sanctuary
Fellowship Hour, 11:30 AM; Holmes Hall
Apostolic Church, 2:00 PM; Chapel
Living Proof Service, 4:30 PM; Chapel

Mondays -

ManKind Project, 7 PM; Chapel

Wednesdays -

Meditation, 6:15 PM; Practitioner Room
Wednesday Service, 7 PM; Chapel

Thursdays -

Kindly Conversations, 10 AM; Chapel

Saturdays -

Yoga Class, 9:30 AM; Chapel

Special Events:

Tree Decorating Party, 12/2, 10 AM,
Sanctuary

Drum Circle, 12/2, 3-5 PM, Chapel

Sacred Sounds Meditation, 12/8, 7-8:30 PM,
Chapel

Christmas Dinner Dance, 12/10, 7-10 PM,
Holmes Hall

Board Meeting, 12/17, 12:30 PM

Candlelight Service, 12/20, 7:00 PM,
Chapel

World Peace Meditation, 12/31, 4:00 AM(!),
Chapel

Sacred and Cultural Events

- 3-24 *Advent*, joyous preparation for celebration of Christ's birth.
- 8 *Bodhi Day*, observed by Buddhists to commemorate Gautama's enlightenment.
- 10 *International Human Rights Day*, established by the U.N. in 1948.
- 12 *Eid Milad Un Nabi*, an Islamic holiday commemorating Muhammad's birth.
- 12-20 *Hanukkah*, Jewish celebration of the the Maccabees' victory over Antiochus and the rededication of Temple in Jerusalem.
- 16-24 *Las Posadas*, a 9-day celebration in Mexico commemorating the trials of Mary and Joseph during their journey to Bethlehem.
- 21 *Winter Solstice / Yule*, the shortest day of the year. Marked by Pagans and Wiccans with celebrations focusing on rebirth and renewal.
- 25 *Christmas*, when Western Christians celebrate Jesus' birth. (Eastern Orthodox Christians will celebrate Christmas on Jan. 7 in 2018.)
- Dec. 26 to Jan. 1 - *Kwanzaa*, an African-American holiday started by Dr. Maulana Karenga in 1966 to celebrate universal African-American heritage.



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Licensed Practitioners

You can email prayer requests to:

prayer@claremontcsl.org

You may also call Practitioners directly at the following numbers:

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Librarian, Historian, Sound Ministry -

Ed Graff, 909-938-9676

Music Ministry -

Jeff Harrison, 714-928-7738

Pet Ministry -

Diane Clements, RScP, 909-947-5197

Sunday Hospitality -

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