

LISBON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
December 27, 2020 The Season of Christmas
“At Home Worship”

Call to Worship

Listen for God’s word this day.

May the word of Christ live richly within us.

Give thanks for God’s good gifts.

We gather with grateful hearts.

Rejoice and be glad in Christ, our Savior.

We worship this day in spirit and truth.

Opening Prayer Nourish us, holy and loving God, that we may grow in wisdom and grace as we continue to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child. Clothe us with compassion and kindness, as he taught, that we may grow in love and unity. All this we pray through the power of your Holy Spirit, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Scripture Reading *“I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God.”* Read Isaiah 61.10-62.3

Prayer of Confession You have chosen us for yourself, O God, and yet we choose other paths, other roads, other priorities. Guide us back to you, we pray. Forgive us when we destroy harmony and when we withhold forgiveness from one another. Clothe us with your love and mercy, that we may live as your people of unity and community. All this we pray in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Time of Silent Confession *Our loving God invites us to share the confessions of our hearts that we may know the comfort and peace of forgiveness.*

Words of Assurance Be thankful in this good news: Christ has

forgiven us; Christ will forgive us. In the name of Christ Jesus, we are forgiven and clothed in love, ready to share God’s Christmas love in all the world.

Scripture Reading *“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman...”* Read Galatians 4.4-7

Remembering our Joys and Concerns in Prayer *We come to worship with many concerns upon our hearts but also joys in our lives. You are invited to share them with God in this time of silence.*

Prayer Loving God, from the beginning of time you have brightened our darkness with the light of your love, your grace, and your mercy. In these days, O God, you have spoken to us by your Son, your Word made flesh. Continue, we pray, to comfort your people. Hear us as we pray for _____, in particular. May your light continue to shine forth that the fullness of your heart be made known for the healing of all people. All this we ask in the holy name of the One who has taught us to pray.....

The Lord’s Prayer

Scripture Reading *“I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.”* Read Luke 2.1-20

Celebrating the Twelve Days of Christmas

The Twelve Days of Christmas is probably the most misunderstood part of the church year. Contrary to much popular belief, these are not the twelve days *before* Christmas, but in most of the Western Church are the twelve days from Christmas until the beginning of Epiphany (January 6th; the 12 days count from December 25th until January 5th).

The popular song *The Twelve Days of Christmas* is usually seen

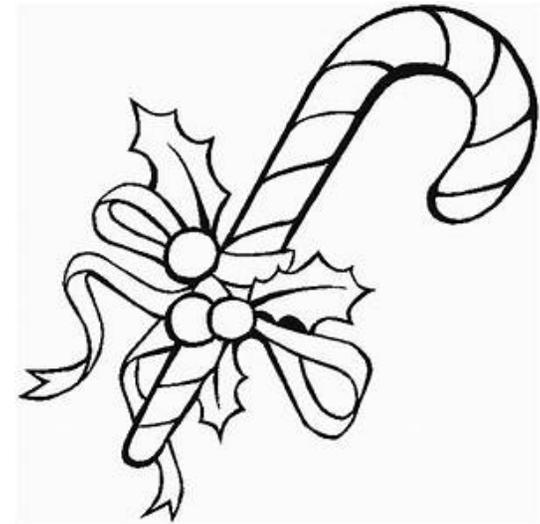
as simply a nonsense song for children. However, some have suggested that it is a song of Christian instruction dating to the 16th century religious wars in England, with hidden references to the basic teachings of the Faith. They contend that it was a mnemonic device to teach the catechism to youngsters. The "true love" mentioned in the song is not an earthly suitor, but refers to God. The "me" who receives the presents refers to every baptized person who is part of the Christian faith. Each of the "days" represents some aspect of the Christian faith that was important for children to learn.

It is certainly possible that this view of the song is legendary or anecdotal. Without corroboration and in the absence of "substantive evidence," we probably should not take rigid positions on either side and turn the song into a crusade for personal opinions. That would do more to violate the spirit of Christmas than the song is worth. So, for the sake of historical accuracy, we need to acknowledge this uncertainty.

Perhaps, when all is said and done, historical accuracy is not really the point. Perhaps more important is that Christians can celebrate their rich heritage, and God's grace, through one more avenue this Christmas. Now, when we hear what was once thought a secular "nonsense song," we will be reminded in one more way of the grace of God working in transforming ways in our lives and in our world. After all, is that not the meaning of Christmas anyway? *(Adapted from the Internet)*

Enjoy reading the likely (or maybe unlikely??) meaning of each of the verses of *The Twelve Days of Christmas* found on the insert.

Words of Benediction May the word of Christ live in us richly. May the love of God clothe us in compassion and kindness. May the power of the Holy Spirit grant us peace, both now and into the new year.



Lisbon United Methodist Church
welcomes, nurtures, and serves
all people
with the love of Christ.