



## First Church Tucson Weekly Digest

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# “Our Weary World Rejoices”

By Bishop Bob Hoshibata on December 18th, 2020

Dear Members and Friends of the Desert Southwest Conference,

In the familiar Christmas song, French composer Adolphe Adam wrote these words of encouragement: “A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!”

In these weeks of Advent, we light successive candles and hear messages in scripture, song, and word about hope, peace, joy and love. We look toward December 25 with faithful anticipation of the birth of the Christ child!

Likewise, with a spirit of expectation, news of the COVID-19 vaccines brings hope to a weary world. It is right and just that medical care workers are among the first to receive the vaccine. We pray that they will be protected even as they continue to care for many who are hospitalized or in need of medical assistance. Even with this new hope in the vaccine, we watch as the rates of COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations, and deaths continue to rise to alarming levels in Nevada and Arizona. Although hope is on the horizon, it is not yet fully realized.

As we finalize plans for celebrations for the upcoming holidays, many of us may be disappointed that we cannot gather in person with our families and loved ones. But let's keep in mind the many persons who are facing the pain of an empty place at the table caused by a loved one's illness or death due to COVID-19.

Many churches that began offering some form of in-person worship (outdoors, drive-thru, or socially-distanced indoors) have scaled back and are returning to primarily online, virtual worship. This is a safer and more responsible practice in our communities at this time.

Please keep our commitment to “Do no harm” and care for others by observing these safety precautions: wear a mask, practice social distancing, stay home as much as possible, wash your hands. Please continue to practice the procedures in your local church's comprehensive plan and covenants. And keep praying fervently for an end to this pandemic.

There is hope! But we must continue to do our utmost in these next weeks and months. As we celebrate a very different Christmas, New Year and Epiphany, here is a prayer that brings hope to my heart:

*Tender Shepherd,  
Bring to my awareness your constant companionship  
To my weariness your matchless strength,  
To my brokenness your healing touch,  
And to my joy your blessing. Amen.*

*- Forty Days with Wesley, by Ruben P. Job*

Peace from our house to yours!  
Bob and Greta Hoshibata

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### **A Blessing – With a Touch of the Miraculous**

*By Anonymous*

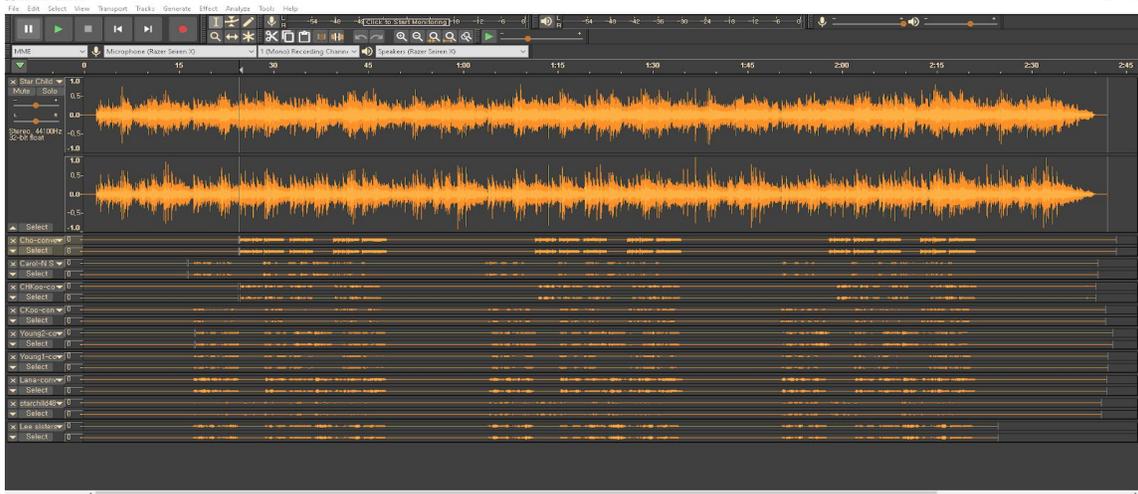
I went to the grocery store with warnings from family members (which you are probably receiving too) – Be careful – remember COVID! Which of course I do because the news sources are quick to give us the daily statistics.

After finding what I needed I went to the check-out lane and was actually only second in line. The clerk behind his plexiglass shield was patient when I decided I really didn't want the head of cabbage. I took out my purse to pay him, after which the change coins slid down the chute of the money machine. I picked up the coins, grocery bags in the cart, and headed for my car, stopping at a trash receptacle to discard the wipes they give you to sanitize your carts when you come into the store. At my car I opened the trunk, put the groceries in, and slid in the front seat. My next stop was the library, about 10-15 minutes away – and as I was parking at the library I went to get my purse, to get out my library card. No purse! Not on the front seat, nor the back – I hopped out to open the trunk – not in there either! Oh my gosh I thought – where is it? Could I have left it at the store? Who would do such a dumb thing as that?!!!

So I checked the trunk again, hopped back in the car and with a knot in my stomach, headed back to the grocery store. I wasn't sure if I should ask God for help since I did such an irresponsible thing. But I did – I prayed that there could have been some nice, kind lady who would understand – an open purse in a parking lot left in the shopping cart. When I got to the store I parked and rushed in. The guy just inside saw my semi-frantic look and asked if he could help me. And there happened to be a policeman there too, and when I told my story they both said – 'Oh yes – just go over there to customer service – they have it'. (The policeman also asked my name). He in fact was kind enough to retrieve it along with the customer service person.

Now there was no question about talking to God! How amazingly blessed I was to not have to go through all the steps one needs when their money, property, and identity is stolen. I'm feeling this might even fit into the category of 'amazing grace'.

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“Editing our Virtual Choir voices.”

Visit our Youtube Channel for our Christmas Eve Premiere

December 24th, 2020 @ 6:00 PM

[bit.ly/fumcYouTube](https://bit.ly/fumcYouTube)



### Ongoing Work of The INN

“Our church has been a blessing to asylum seekers, as this Christmas tree photo shows from last December. Since the winter of 2016, thousands of lives have been touched. As an update--U.S. agencies stopped bringing families to our shelter in March of 2020. Pastor Paul, Gretchen Lopez, and other Board members have met every month via zoom with a heart to learn and help. Migrants wait in very hard circumstances south of the border and in US detention centers. FUMC graciously provides storage, and with the help of partners-- hygiene

products and baby items have been delivered to several camps.

What next? Policies will shift again. Volunteers will be needed. Pray as we work to find a new shelter site(s) to provide hospitality, but much differently, given the need for separation of guests and volunteers during the pandemic. Another goal is achieving 501c3 status. Using the new PO Box 43332, Tucson, AZ 85719, you may send support via check payable to The INN of Southern Arizona. The Desert SW Conference also directs aid to the INN.

With gratitude, Nan (rollingsnan@gmail.com)

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THIS WEEK'S  
ANNOUNCEMENTS & GATHERINGS

## Christmas Virtual Choir Premiere

Join us at **6PM** on our Youtube Channel ([bit.ly/fumcYouTube](https://bit.ly/fumcYouTube)) this Christmas Eve for our gift to you. A Christmas Eve reflection will also be available.

## Recruiting Weekly Digest Contributors

Email [office@firstchurchtucson.org](mailto:office@firstchurchtucson.org), text (520)850-4547, or submit your holiday pictures at <https://bit.ly/fumcsubmit> and share your joy with our family of faith.

## Women on a Spiritual Quest

*We are on break until January 4th, 2021.*

## Exploring Biblical Wisdom

*We are on break until January 5th, 2021.*

## Progressive Christianity Book Study

*We are on break until January 7th, 2021.*

## Sunday Morning Live!

Join us live on Sunday mornings on Youtube. **Sun @ 10AM**

Visit <https://bit.ly/fumcYouTube> and subscribe to the channel.  
(Address is case-sensitive.)

## Korean Language Ministry

1월 8일까지 쉽니다.

# The Longest Night Virtual Worship Service

Tonight, Reconciling Ministries Network will livestream on Facebook and Youtube a free and interactive experience of worship, music, Scripture, and more. **Mon @ 6 PM**

<https://www.facebook.com/RMNetwork>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/rmnvideos>

## Christmas Day Virtual Party

Thank you for keeping social distance and restricting travel during this season. We know it will be especially difficult for those of us who may now need to spend Christmas Day alone. For those of you who can, we would love to see you at our virtual Christmas party over Zoom! We are preparing games and fun for our time of gathering so join in our fellowship on **Dec 25th @ 10AM**

<https://dscumc.zoom.us/j/97274927766?pwd=bVlqNmZjTk84bHFHd0JRS0U5R0c4Zz09>

**ZID: 972 7492 7766**

**PW: 6226481**

## Support the Ministries at First Church Tucson

Now is the time to give courageously to ministries that matter to you.

Visit this [link](#) or go to [www.bit.ly/givetofumc](http://www.bit.ly/givetofumc) to set up online donation.

You may also send gifts via Paypal to recipient address: [finance@firstchurchtucson.org](mailto:finance@firstchurchtucson.org)

And as always, you can mail in checks to the church office. Alternatively, have your IRA advisor automatically make payments from your IRA to the FUMC checking account.

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### THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Deanne Kelly (Dec 23)

Bonnie Steel (Dec 26)

Christiana Ageh (Jan 3)

*(If we have missed your birthday or anniversary, please let us know so we can update our records!)*

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## SONG FOR **THOUGHT**

“Shine, Jesus, Shine”

**Graham Kendrick**

by **Lorena Suarez**

Director of Music Ministries on December 20, 2020

The song *Shine, Jesus, Shine*, also known with its first line *Lord, the Light of Your Love*, was written by Graham Kendrick in 1987 and published the same year by Make Way Music.

Graham Kendrick (1950) is an English singer, songwriter, and worship leader. Kendrick was trained as a teacher, but in 1972 he started writing songs and until now he has composed more than 400 hymns. Undoubtedly, his most successful composition is *Shine, Jesus, Shine*. In 2005, in a survey by the BBC's Songs of Praise program, this joyful song was voted tenth of the United Kingdom's favorite hymns.

This hymn has been performed in several important events around the world; its words of hope and joy have been translated to various languages, arriving to thousands of people worldwide. Enjoy!

### **Lyrics:**

Lord, the light of your love is shining  
In the midst of the darkness, shining;  
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us,  
Set us free by the truth you now bring us.  
Shine on me, shine on me.

*Shine, Jesus, shine,  
Fill this land with the Father's glory,  
Blaze, Spirit, blaze,  
Set our hearts on fire;  
Flow, river, flow,  
Flood the nations with grace and mercy,  
Send forth your word,  
Lord, and let there be light.*

As we gaze on your kingly brightness,  
So our faces display your likeness;  
Ever changing from glory to glory,  
Mirrored here may our lives tell your story.  
Shine on me, shine on me.

### **Suggested recording:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4hXJ9ax2FY>

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## LECTIO DIVINA PRAYER GUIDE

for Individuals and Families

### CENTERING - *Practice Square Breathing*

- Inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds,
- Exhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds.
- Repeat as necessary.

### SONG OF PRAISE

Select a song of your choice, or  
Refer to this week's Song for Thought

### OPENING PRAYER - *Psalm 19:14*

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart  
be acceptable to you,  
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. Amen.

### READING

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

### REFLECTING

Take a minute or two in silence.  
Allow your thoughts to rest on a word, a phrase, a memory from this passage.  
Journal or share your thoughts from this moment of meditation on the passage.

### RESPONDING

Respond to the reflection through the guidance from the Holy Spirit.

### MINUTE MEMOIR - by Paul Cho

David is well known to us for several reasons. One quality that I think is noteworthy is that David was found to have a heart after God. After building himself a home and finding peace, David sought to build a temple for the Ark. It is easy for us to be fixated on ourselves, our achievements, our journey. Yet, David's response reminds us to turn our attention back toward a heart after God.

Furthermore, we find that God's heart was indeed for us. God desired all along to be with us, to be in our midst, moving about, guiding, leading, walking by our side. It is what God established through Jesus Christ. Emmanuel, God with us, is in Christ Jesus. As we await Christmas, I pray that we might receive anew God who longs to dwell beside us.

### RESTING

Dwell in your reflection and response.  
Take time to offer God praise and glory.  
Repent and seek forgiveness.  
Offer joys and the concerns, adding in your personal prayers.  
Lastly, offer a thanksgiving for God's grace and mercy.

### CLOSING PRAYER *Wesley Covenant Service Prayer*

I am no longer my own, but yours.  
Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;

put me to doing, put me to suffering;  
let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,  
exalted for you, or brought low for you;  
let me be full,  
let me be empty,  
let me have all things,  
let me have nothing:  
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things  
to your pleasure and disposal.  
And now, glorious and blessed God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
you are mine and I am yours. So be it.  
And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.  
Amen.



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
915 E. 4th St., Tucson, AZ 85719  
[www.firstchurchtucson.org](http://www.firstchurchtucson.org)  
[office@firstchurchtucson.org](mailto:office@firstchurchtucson.org) | [pastor@firstchurchtucson.org](mailto:pastor@firstchurchtucson.org)  
(Office) 520-622-6481 | (Pastor Paul) 520-850-4547