This presentation traces the history and development of many of the world’s most endearing holiday customs, all of which involve lighting up the winter season — from the burning Yule log, festive Christmas tree lights and sparkling candles in windows, to the lighting of luminarias and setting off fireworks in the American Southwest and the traditional ritual lighting of the Hanukkah Menorah.

The show also recounts the historical religious and cultural rituals practiced during the time of winter solstice — not only Christian and Jewish, but also Celtic, Nordic, Roman, Irish, Mexican and Hopi. It also takes a look at some of our more light-hearted seasonal traditions: from gift-giving and kissing under the mistletoe to songs about lords a-leaping and ladies dancing; and the custom of decking the halls with greenery and candles. St. Nicholas, Sinterklaas, Kris Kringle, Father Christmas, and Santa Claus all drop by as well.

Naturally, there is some astronomy in Season of Light. Audiences learn a selection of Northern hemisphere winter constellations, and find out why we even have seasons, as we demonstrate the Sun’s path across the sky throughout the year, and the Earth’s tilt and orbit around the Sun.

Of course, the program explores the possible astronomical explanations for a “Star over Bethlehem” in the last quarter of the show: comets, meteors, novae and supernovae, and planetary conjunctions.

Season of Light is visually rich, culturally inclusive, musically satisfying, and soothing as a warm drink on a cold winter’s night — and the perfect program for that end-of-the-year program slot!