

DAYSRING DAYBOOK

Monthly Newsletter of Dayspring Presbyterian Church, 11445-40 Ave, Edmonton, AB, CAN, T6J 0R4

December 2020

CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD *and right here in Edmonton*

The theme of this issue is the same as the theme of Dayspring's worship service on Sunday, December 20, the 4th Sunday in Advent.

For most of the people of the world, Advent and Christmas are being celebrated, this year, in ways that are very different from our normal patterns. That is something few of us would normally experience.

The co-editors spent 15 months in New Zealand (1989-90). On Christmas Eve, when we celebrate the coming into the world of the Light of the world, imagine floating hundreds of paper boats down a small river that runs through Christchurch carrying lighted candles.

Imagine celebrating a Christmas feast at a B-B-Q with friends in a local park.

Imagine singing "In the bleak mid-winter" when the outside temperature is 25 degrees Celsius.

And imagine not being able to find a Christmas tree or even Christmas tree lights.

In our Northern Canadian culture, we complain (at least some of us do) if there is no snow for Christmas. "It doesn't really **feel** like Christmas."

It doesn't **feel** like Christmas if we cannot get together with family and friends for a meal.

But what does Christmas really **feel** like.

It can mean cultivating a spirit of generosity - because, after all, Christmas is about God's generosity toward humankind.

It can still mean the expressions of love, tangibly expressed in words and gifts, that we offer to others.

It can mean making financial contributions to organizations that are doing good work.

And it can mean just taking time to revel in the fact that we have a relationship with God who, two millennia ago, became vulnerable, with the vulnerability of a baby, and lived (still lives) in our midst.



And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen His glory, the glory as of a father's son, full of grace and truth.

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- Poland, The Netherlands, Portugal & Brazil.

FROM OUR MINISTER: A different kind of Christmas

A year ago I was referring to the image of “roses (that) can be pruned and the harsher you prune it, the better it bears new branches and flowers. When there is almost only a stump left, the miracle that happens is that some brand-new life sprouts.”

Little did we know what was waiting for us just three months later. Nobody would have imagined the huge blow that all parts of society would undergo. The church is no exception.

There is however one huge difference between the church and the world at large - or the general public - out there. There are those who come up with creative ways to make life work as well as it can be possible.

To my mind, even though the church is subjected to all the harshness that is possible, we as believers have a unique life-altering message that is embedded in our outlook on life. When we say we believe in the resurrection of Christ into new life, we have already stated that very little will take our hope away from us.

Our approach to life is one of optimism and of thinking outside of the box. These types of times that we are undergoing have historically been the times for Christian communities to thrive at their best. The seed of new growth defines who we are. Christmas at home, with small family units gathering in their homes, are where we can make a tremendous difference. Let's think in new ways.






Let's allow God's Holy Spirit to renew us and to continue growing to be a vibrant life-filled community.

FIVE STORIES

Dayspring comprises families from many different parts of the world. On December 20, five of those families share stories about the way in which they celebrate Christmas.

The families sharing in the service, coordinated by our Christian Education team and staff include -

-  A family from Pakistan who are currently living as refugees in Trinidad
-  A family recently arrived in Edmonton from Cameroon
-  A family from the Philippines that has been in Edmonton for several years
-  A family from South Africa that has been in Edmonton for several years.
-  A family that identifies as Canadian, with roots in English and French Canadian culture

What happens as we listen to persons accustomed to very different Christmas practices than the ones with which we are familiar???

We become more keenly aware that our way is not the ONLY way that Christmas can be celebrated.

We also become more aware of the common elements of the celebration.

In this year of COVID-19, when our usual patterns for celebrating the Christmas season have been disrupted, we might even discover some ways that WE might change our Christmas habits to meet the challenges of this particular Christmas season.

Difference and difficulty can be challenging!

It can also afford us an opportunity to grow and change!

SWEDEN

The Yule Goat has been a Swedish Christmas symbol dating back to ancient pagan festivals. However, in 1966, the tradition got a whole new life after someone came up with the idea to make a giant straw goat, now referred to as the Gävle Goat. According to the official website, the goat is more than 42 feet high, 23 feet wide, and weighs 3.6 tons. Each year, the massive goat is constructed in the same spot. Fans can even watch a livestream from the first Sunday of Advent until after the New Year when it's taken down.

JAPAN

Although Christmas isn't a national holiday in Japan (an estimated one percent of the population is Christian), its citizens still find an interesting and delicious way to celebrate. Rather than gathering around the table for a turkey dinner, families head out to their local Kentucky Fried Chicken. The tradition began in 1974 after a wildly successful marketing campaign called "Kurisumasu ni wa kentakkii!" or "Kentucky for Christmas!" The fast food chain has maintained its yuletide popularity, causing some people to order their boxes months in advance or stand in 2-hour-long lines to get their "finger lickin' good" food.

ICELAND

Iceland celebrates 13 days of Christmas. Each night before Christmas, Icelandic children are visited by the 13 Yule Lads. After placing their shoes by the window, the little ones will head upstairs to bed. In the morning, they'll either have received candy (if they're good) or be greeted with shoes full of rotten potatoes if they're bad.

FINLAND

On Christmas morning, Finish families traditionally eat a porridge made of rice and milk topped with cinnamon, milk, or butter. Whoever finds the almond placed inside one of the puddings "wins"—but some families cheat and hide a few almonds so the kids don't get upset. At the end of the day, it is customary to warm up in a sauna together.

DENMARK

Before Christianity came to the Danes, Christmas Day was a celebration of brighter days, jól, as it occurred just before winter solstice. Today, homes are decorated with superstitious characters called nisser who are believed to provide protection. On the evening of December 24, Danish families place their Christmas tree in the middle of the room and dance around it while singing carols.

MARTINIQUE

In the French Caribbean island of Martinique, la ribote is a longstanding tradition where families visit their neighbors during Advent and on New Year's Day bearing holiday food like yams, boudin créole, pâtés salés, and pork stew. They sing Christmas carols together into the early hours of the morning, adding their own creole verses to traditional lyrics.

NORWAY

In Norway, the Christmas season, called julebord, begins Dec. 3, filling up local bars and restaurants throughout the month. Families celebrate Little Christmas on Dec. 23; each have their own ritual for the day that may include decorating the tree, making a gingerbread house, and eating risengrynsgrøt (hot rice pudding).

IRELAND

The Irish leave a tall red candle in a front window overnight, a welcoming symbol of warmth and shelter for the holiday season. Traditional Christmas fare in Ireland often includes homemade roast goose, vegetables, cranberries, and potatoes.

BARBADOES

A Christmas table in Barbados isn't complete without a baked ham decorated with pineapple and sorrel glazes, a rum cake, and Jug Jug, a dish inspired by the Scottish influence on the island combining pigeon peas, guinea corn flour, herbs, and salt meat.

POLAND

On Christmas Eve, many families share opłatek (an unleavened religious wafer), each person breaking off a piece as they wish each other Merry Christmas. Dinner may not begin until the first star appears in the night sky and, traditionally, an extra setting is left at the table should someone show up uninvited.

THE NETHERLANDS

Sinterklaas is the Dutch name for Saint Nicholas, the man recognized by children by his long white beard, red cape, and red miter. Kids put a shoe by the chimney or back door and wake up on Christmas morning to find treats like gingerbread men, marzipan, and chocolate letters inside.

PORTUGAL & BRAZIL

On Christmas Eve, Brazilian and Portuguese families eat dinner as late as 10 p.m. Then, at midnight, they exchange gifts, toasts, and wish each other a Merry Christmas. Midnight mass, Missa Do Galo (Rooster Mass), is a chance to meet neighbors and extended family to wish them well for the holiday season. The service is often followed by fireworks in the town square.



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DayBook Deadlines
3rd Sunday of September, October
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SESSION

Moderator: Heinrich Grosskopf

Session Clerk: Gina Kottke

Deputy Clerk: Iris Routledge

Roll Clerk: Jim Jeatt

Other Elders

Hostensia Bineba	Sam Malayang
Bill Davis	Samuel Mforteh
Jane de Caen	Jan Ray Moncada
Darlene Eerkes	Nick Nation
Peter Eerkes	Laura Patterson-
Carina Grosskopf	Fortin
Ransford Kusi-	Heather Tansem
Menkah	Mary Waugh

MINISTER

The Rev. Dr. Heinrich Grosskopf

CHURCH STAFF

Church School Coordinator: Lynn
Vaughan

Youth Coordinator: Fionna McCrostie

Worship Arts Coordinator

Gordon McCrostie, B.Mus., M.T.S.

Pianist: Binaifer (Binu) Kapadia, B.Mus.

Alternate Pianist

Darolyn McCrostie, B.Mus.,P.D.A.D.
(Education)

Administrative Assistant: Linda

Custodian: Jim