

DAYSRING DAYBOOK

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

December 2023

FINAL ISSUE OF THE DAYBOOK

As the headline indicates, this is the last issue. There have been many changes in Dayspring since we assumed editorial responsibility in 2001, taking over from Lynn V. At that time, it was called the *Dayspring Dispatch*. Gradually the demand of a monthly deadline has become a bit much for us, so it is time to put this baby to bed.

In this issue, we share Marilyn's research on two other festivals that occur at this time of year and present some information about the colours that are used in our sanctuary throughout the year.



KWANZAA is a weeklong cultural holiday celebration, created in 1966, of Pan-African and African American heritage and culture. Kwanzaa begins on December 26 and lasts through January 01. Each day is dedicated to a different principle: unity, self-determination, and creativity, and features gift giving and candle lighting.

According to Maulana Karenga (a figure in the Black Power movement), the name Kwanzaa derives from the Swahili phrase "matunda ya kwanza," meaning "first fruits." First fruits festivals exist in Southern Africa and are celebrated in December/January with the southern solstice. Karenga was partly inspired by an account he read of the Zulu festival Umkhosi Wokweshwama. It was decided to spell the holiday's name with an additional "a" so that it would have a symbolic seven letters.



Quote of the Month

"When you reach the end of what you should know, you will be at the beginning of what you should sense."

— *Kahlil Gibran in Sand and Foam*

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LITURGICAL COLOURS USED IN THE CHURCH

Colors play an important part of the worship of the Church. They change according to the seasons of the Church year. Colors are a primary source of symbolism, and as such tell us much about what we believe about the lessons we hear during and about what we do during worship.

There are five basic liturgical colors: Blue, White, Green, Purple, and Red.



Advent – Blue: Following the tradition of an old English practice, Blue is the color for Advent. During the Middle Ages, when blue was an expensive color to reproduce, purple was often used instead. This is why you still see some churches using purple in Advent. Theologically, Blue is the proper color for this season, because Blue is the color associated with Mary, and Advent is all about Mary as we await with her the arrival of the Incarnate God. Blue is the color of hope, expectation, confidence, and anticipation. These are all adjectives which describe the season of Advent.



Christmas and Easter – White: White is the color of both Easter and Christmas. It is the color of celebration, joy, and peace in the Western world. With the color gold, white symbolizes the greatest work of God in the world, specifically His incarnation into this world at Christmas, and His triumph over death and evil at Easter. White is the color used for funerals, as we celebrate the passage of another soul into the Kingdom of God. Likewise, it is the color of baptisms and weddings, as we celebrate the arrival of another child of God into his household of faith, and as we celebrate the union of soulmates into one family in the eyes of God.



Epiphany and Pentecost (Ordinary Time) – Green: Green is the color of revelatory experience, and so is the color of the feasts that celebrate God's revelation to humankind: Epiphany and Pentecost. Epiphany, the season after Christmas, celebrates Christ's revelation as the Incarnate God to the Gentiles. Pentecost occurs after the Easter season and includes Trinity Sunday (return to white), which celebrates the revelation of the One Eternal God as revealed in the persons of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The season falls within the late Spring and Summer months, when we see the natural world grow green with leaves, vines, and crops. Therefore, green symbolizes our spiritual growth in Christ, nurtured by the Church and the Gospels.



Lent – Purple: Purple is the color of humility, penance, and wisdom that comes from inward discernment. It is also the color of royalty. The extreme differences between the two (humility and royalty) express one of the great lessons of Lent: Christ as the servant-king and our endurance to be as such to the world as well. In penitential theology, purple is the color of inward reflection, which is one of the important things we are called to do each Lent in preparation for Easter.



Holy Week and Pentecost Sunday: Red: Red is the color of excitement, energy, power, and all things intense and passionate. As such, red is the color of the Holy Spirit. It calls to mind the flames that descended upon the Church at the Day of Pentecost, and so is the color of the Feast of Pentecost. It is also sometimes used on Palm Sunday and during Holy Week, recalling the work of the Holy Spirit at Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem and His Passion. Finally, red is used for the commemoration of all martyred saints. Red recalls the blood shed for the Faith and the Church.



Good Friday – Black: Black is generally used on only one day of the year: Good Friday. It is the color of extreme, deep sorrow. Good Friday is the only day of the year that such sorrow is expressed in the Church. On Good Friday, the Communion Table is usually kept stripped. On Holy Saturday, the Table remains stripped with no hangings at all. (Note: Black is not appropriate for Christian funerals, as Christian funeral rites are Easter liturgies – and so white is more appropriately used).

FROM OUR MINISTER

I have two critical things to say:

First: "Merry Christmas!"

I'm probably supposed to do one of those encouragement letters and remind people about the necessity of December offerings for our essential continuation. Mayhap I was to mention the substantial tax benefits of charitable Christmas gifts. Well, there. In a roundabout way, I've done it. Still, there's something closer to my heart.

"Lovely" is a good word. Certainly, this year has had challenges. For the first time, I am enjoying (perhaps abusing) the benefits of having so many more competent folks around me than ever before

My time with you has been lovely. The congregation, the staff, the friends, the Session, the neighbours, the other churches nearby, the Board, and the people!

As Proverb 27:17 says, "Iron sharpens iron." I feel "sharp" here. Services at Dayspring are the single most "meditative" and "reflective" I have ever encountered. There has always been, and there still is, something incredibly special about this Dayspring community of faith. We gather in the name of Jesus Christ, "God with us," born into a troubled world and share our sorrows, His truths, and our hopes.

Second: "Thank you to John and Marilyn Carr for all of the work, prayers, thoughtfulness and more you have put into this ministry for so many years and throughout so many critical and historical events.

(The Rev.) Brad Childs



The Feast of HANUKKAH (sometimes spelled Chanukah) is an ancient Jewish festival celebrating the purification of the Temple during the time of the Maccabean revolt in 167 BC. This followed a time of religious persecution of the Jews by the Seleucids (a Greek power founded in 312BC in West Asia during the Hellenistic period). The Seleucids polluted the altar of the Temple in Jerusalem with pagan sacrifices. Under the leadership of Mattathias Maccabeus, his five sons and other followers rebelled and reconquered Jerusalem.

After cleansing the Temple, rebuilding the sanctuary, consecrating the courts, and making a new sacrificial altar and holy vessels, they burned incense on the altar, lit the lampstands, and joyously celebrated for eight days of dedication that became known as Hanukkah.

Hanukkah is the only Jewish festival not recorded in the Hebrew Bible. Jews gather at nightfall with family and friends throughout eight days, to light one additional candle on the menorah each night (signifying the length of time the usual supply of lamp oil lasted).



A menorah typically has 8 Candles. However, there is a ninth candle that is called the shamash or "servant." This ninth candle's primary function is to kindle the other lights. It is also available to "serve" if one of the other candles blow out. It reminds people of the importance of loving and serving others..

Other activities during Hanukkah include playing with a dreidel, gift-giving, singing, praying, and eating. During the festivities, the lighted candles are reminders that to share light is to rebuke hate. In 2024, Hanukkah begins on December 25.

Some symbols

Notice that this Kwanzaa banner incorporates a Menorah,



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

And here is a Dreidel. It's a spinning top with four Hebrew letters/symbols on the sides: Nun, Gimel, Hey or Chai, and Shin. The letters form an acronym for the Hebrew saying Nes Gadol Hayah Sham, which can be translated to "a great miracle happened there," referring to the miracle which Hanukkah is centered around. According to a tradition first documented in 1890, the game was developed by Jews who illegally studied the Torah in seclusion as they hid, sometimes in caves, from the Seleucids under Antiochus IV. At the first sign of Seleucids approaching, their Torah scrolls would be concealed and be replaced by dreidels.



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