



The Assistant Pastor

December, 1928

Christmas

"Christmas comes but once a year." Yes, it is true, that Christmas which brings a season of surfeiting; an orgie of balls and dances; a feverish seeking of pleasures; when millions are exchanged for dross; when happiness is sought through the lavish giving and receiving of presents; when the world puts on a veneer of happiness; that Christmas comes but once a year and well it is that it is so.

But such a Christmas is merely a travesty on the real Christmas. It is a counterfeit that the wily devil has succeeded in slipping into many homes just as the treacherous money-changer adroitly passes his false money or short change. The Christ Child in the manger is merely a trade mark of that ephemeral — passing — idea called the Christmas Spirit that, at best, moves to deeds of charity and expressions of carnal love.

The real Christmas comes once a year and then every other day of the year and then continues throughout eternity. UNTO YOU IS BORN THIS DAY IN THE CITY OF DAVID A SAVIOUR, WHICH IS CHRIST THE LORD. This is the cause for rejoicing on Christmas Day: this is the great central theme of every true pastor's sermon on every Sunday throughout the year; this is the marrow of every funeral sermon; this is his message at every death-bed; this is the red thread in every God-pleasing service before the family altar. It is the soul's anchor in death, the key to Heaven. Because of this Christmas Message hell quakes and believers sing with joy, not once a year but throughout the entire year and will continue their song of praise and thanksgiving forever and ever and ever.

We wish you all a happy, real Christmas.

THE ASSISTANT PASTOR

Published by the pastor of the Jerico and Saude Lutheran churches affiliated with the Norwegian Synod of the Synodical Conference.

CHURCH DIRECTORY

H. M. TJERNAGEL, Pastor

SAUDE

Trustees: Iver Ellingson, Carl Swennumson, O. N. Anderson.

Treasurer: Nels Ellingson.

Secretary: Chris. Treider.

Ladies' Aid: Mrs. John Natvig, President; Mrs. T. Swennumson, Secretary; Mrs. Muns Munson, Treasurer.

Cemetery Committee: Alf Vaala, H. O. Natvig, John Borlaug, Anna Vaala, Lena Landsverk.

JERICO

Trustees: Alvie O. Knutson, Severt Fossen, Fred Amman.

Treasurer: J. A. Robinson.

Secretary: J. A. Knutson.

Ladies' Aid: Mrs. Albert Haugen, President; Mrs. Alvie Knutson, Secretary; Mrs. M. A. Robinson, Treasurer.

CHURCH SERVICES

Jerico—First and third Sundays, 10:45 a. m.; Saturday school every Saturday, 10 a. m.; confirmation class, 2 p. m., Fridays.

Saude—Second and fourth Sundays, 10:45 a. m.; Saturday school, 2 p. m.; confirmation class, 9:30 a. m., Fridays.

Fifth Sundays by special announcement.

Christmas services will be conducted as follows:

JERICO: Christmas Day, 10:45 a. m. Services in both languages. In the evening at 8 o'clock, Christmas tree program. The program will start on the minute. A collection will be taken for the home where Hans Bleken is so well and faithfully cared for.

Note also: English services at 10:45 a. m. on Sunday, December 30th.

Furthermore, it is herewith announced that on Sunday, December 16th, a Norwegian service with communion will be held.

SAUDE: Second day of Christmas, 10:45 a. m. Christmas tree program in the evening of the same day at 8 o'clock p. m. The Christmas tree program will be all English while at the morning services both languages will be used. In the evening Hans Bleken's present home will be remembered with a collection.

New Year's Day, English services at 10:45 a. m.

May God bless all our Christmas services to the quickening and strengthening of our faith, hope and love. Faith in the Savior who is born. Hope of the forgiveness of all our sins and eternal life through Him. Love that reaches our triune God in Heaven and the remotest corners of the earth. A love that is fruitful of good deeds to the glory of God and the benefit of our fellow redeemed be he friend or foe.

Such a Christmas will, indeed, be a Happy Christmas, not merely a season of passing fun and excitement.

CONFIRMED AND BAPTIZED

On Sunday, November 18th, Arthur Cuttsforth, Clarence Cuttsforth and Louis Douglas were confirmed in the Jerico Church and Mrs. Sever Johnson was baptized.

On the following Sunday Mrs. Thos. Swennumson and Mrs. Julian Natvig were baptized in the Saude Church.

A short course in the fundamental truths of the Christian religion had been given this class of six by the pastor. We welcome them all as communicant members of our church. May they and we all truly be strangers and pilgrims in this world on the way to our heavenly home. That we may not tire and weaken and fall on the way, God has provided means to encourage and strengthen us: His Word and the Sacrament of the Altar. When these means are neglected, strength to continue the pilgrimage must soon fail.

One of the warnings of the approach of death from intense cold is a strong desire for sleep. "Oh, if I could lie down and sleep, if only for a minute, how delightful, then I could go on again against the biting cold with renewed strength." To steal a nap under such circumstances would mean entering the long sleep.

Similarly let it be warning to you of the near approach of spiritual death when the desire seizes you to relax for a time, step off the narrow way of the pilgrims and seek a little diversion and rest from watching and praying, among the settled inhabitants of the land. Neglect to drink regularly from the fountain of perpetual strength and courage, the Word of God, will bring on such fatal departure from the pilgrim's narrow way, that way which alone leadeth to life and joy eternal.

The annual meetings of our churches were held November 16th at Jerico and the 21st at Saude. Both meetings were poorly attended. We can believe that some members had valid reasons for not attending, but that all who failed to meet up had good and sufficient reasons for being absent is not at all likely.

Fortunately we had a quorum at both meetings and could transact business. At Saude Iver Ellingson was elected to the office of Trustee in place of Oscar Natvig whose term expired. Nels Ellingson and Chris Treider were reelected Treasurer and Secretary, respectively. Oscar Borlaug, Louie Natvig and Alfred Larson were elected to solicit subscriptions to lærerlønns- and synodekassen.

At Jerico John N. Anderson's term of office as Trustee expired and Alvie O. Knutson was elected to the office. John A. Robinson and Jeff A. Knutson, treasurer and secretary, were reelected. Committee to solicit subscriptions for lærerlønns- and synodekassen: S. S. Roberson, Mark Robinson and Alfred Robinson.

L. A. Robinson and Hans Braham were named as representatives to the Mayville (N. Dak.) Convention of Synod next June.

The financial reports will, according to resolutions of the congregations, be printed in the January issue of our parish paper. All concerned are herewith requested to remember that the editor must have said reports in his hands on or before January 1st.

A CHRISTMAS BREEZE FROM ALASKA

On my visit to the Eskimo villages Igloo and Agiopak shortly before Christmas of a certain year, I invited all our members and friends to the Christmas festivities at the home station Teller.

Wednesday, the 21st, the first guests, a widow with her grown-up son and daughter and seven dogs, arrived. To be sure, this was a little early from our view-point, but the Eskimos have no very definite conception of time. On the 23rd, three sled-loads came, drawn by about two dozen dogs. The 24th, five more sleds hove to, augmenting our list of week-end guests considerably and, incidentally, adding another three or four dozen dogs to our kennels. On Christmas day morning, many more glid up to our doors, all smiling and happy, and all from grandpa to the baby, a bundle of furs. Each sled added its quota to our malamute dog chorus.

Be it known that each and every one of the more than 100 dogs now assembled had a pair of robust lungs. Each could growl; every one carried a chip on his shoulder, and was anxious to sink his fangs into the curs about him. An occasional set-to took place when a mooring, now and then, gave way to almost constant tugging. A malamute dog cannot bark, but he can howl and yowl most wierdly and yelp excruciatingly. Wolf is the foundation stock of the malamute dog. The chorus work of these hundred and some dogs is a very distinct memory from my Christmas seasons with the Eskimos.

On that particular Christmas Day that I am thinking, eighty-two Eskimos were present at the morning services. All squatted on the floor. Every room in the combination missionary's residence and orphanage was filled. We had no chapel or church. I could not but feel that the scene was witnessed by the All-seeing eye with delight and that the ground to be sown was good ground. We sang a number of our Lutheran hymns, and I told the Christmas story as recorded by St. Luke, calling special attention to the two ideas "a Savior" and "Which shall be to all people." All were very attentive.

The last of our guests left on the second day of Christmas. The majority of them had, consequently been with us about three days.

The menu we had offered our guests follows:

BREAKFAST

Oatmeal mush — no cream
Bread — no butter
Tea

DINNER

Boiled beans
Bread — no butter
Tea

SUPPER

Boiled rice — no cream
Bread — no butter
Tea

The Christmas-eve supper was a little more elaborate. Then raisins were added to the rice, and a small piece of reindeer meat and a doughnut was offered. To the Christmas dinner a piece of pumpkin pie and a piece of raisin-bread was added.

About thirty could be accommodated at tables, the rest were served on the floor. It was a pleasure, indeed, to be host to so many happy guests. The only

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difficulty was to avoid stepping into the dinner-plates as one moved about among them seeing that all were properly served. All ate heartily, but not rudely. All chatted gaily as they ate and laughed merrily at the least provocation, but not boisterously. After the meals "koianna," "illeranemuk," "tank 'u" — all of which means one and the same thing — resounded through the dining rooms.

Though we were surrounded by bleak and barren stretches of ice and snow yet, had you peeked in at us that Christmas eve, you would have seen a Christmas tree as the center of attraction. The tree was a stub of an old 2x4 to which was tacked twigs and short crooked branches of scrub willow that could be found by those who knew where to excavate in the snow-drifts. Ingeniously decorated by the women of the mission, don't be so sure that it looked primitive and crude. Certain it is that all present thought it very pretty. The children of the orphanage had been taught to speak pieces; we heard more about our Savior and sang songs to His praise and, withal, had a very pleasant and blessed evening.

On the evening of Christmas Day I spoke to the assembled guests on the three verses following the Christmas gospel, Luke 2. That the Word of God is the manger wherein the Christ-Child can be found to-day was stressed, and all were finally urged to follow the shepherds' example and "make known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child."

It was encouraging to have a number later come and ask for Bible pictures that they might show them to people who came to their homes. Do you, dear reader, make an effort to show Jesus to those who come into your home?

House mothers whose hearts all but stop at the unexpected coming of two or three guests for the night are, I am pretty sure, pondering how lodging was provided for so many. "You must have had a very large house," I hear someone say. We had a six-room, story and a half building. Eskimos carry their own bedding — a sleeping bag — whenever they leave home for the night. All the host need do is to provide floor-space — a space 6x2 will do —, and the guest is comfortably lodged.

"And did they all sleep in the same house with your family?" Why not? Should we join our voices with theirs in prayer and songs of praise to a common Father and Savior and speak to them of the great white-robed throng before the Throne and the Lamb, gathered from all nations, and kindreds and people, and tongues, and the hope of some day joining it with them, and then be too finical to spend a night or two with them here under the same roof?

It is true, some of our guests had in former days stained their hands in human blood. Such a one was Atkritoak, one of the jolliest and most interesting men in our crowd. There was a time, not far back, when he boasted of three killings to his credit. But since then the Christ-Child had come into his heart and life and, as one expressed it: "Long time ago Eskimo plenty kill; missionary come, no more kill."

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