

Swedish Christmas: Immanuel in Days Gone By

By Grace Protheroe



Christmas in Sweden is the longest, merriest, and magical celebration of the year and even in the world. I have

put down some facts gathered from the Internet as well as memories and church history.

“God Jul,” Merry Christmas, would be heard one month early. Every word that has “jul” attached means it is about Christmas.

Early in Immanuel’s history the business meeting minutes record plans being laid in November for the “Sondagskolan” “Julprogram.” Also, plans for “Julotta as usual.” This is how the church family celebrated the “Jullov” holidays.

Children of Immanuel’s Sunday School began practicing for “Julprogram” before Thanksgiving, as today. Excitement flowed as the children took their places and portrayed once again the story of Jesus’ birth. Treats for each had been prepared and handed out at the end of the program— that is until parents complained about the sugar content of the treats. They were replaced by shiny, crisp, juicy, red apples from Swanson’s, purchased by the box. For many years the choir practiced and performed a Cantata as well.

...Continued
on page 2



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Swedish Christmas 2

Memories of Christmas 2

Capital Fund Campaign 4

Signs of the Times 5

Revolve Tour 5

Angel’s Aware 7

Recent Baptisms at IBC 7

Calendar, Birthdays & Anniversaries 8

Memories of Swedish Baptist Christmases

By Gene Woodwick

Little did I know when I decided to be the only Irish person in a Swedish Baptist Church at Preston, WA how profoundly our family traditions would morph into the meaningful celebrations of Christ’s birth.

How the Bergstoms, Carlsons, Petersons, Ericksons, and all the other Swedish people, some babes in arms, from the Old Country, would enfold us into their deeply held beliefs as Swedes whose parents had fled to the US

in the late 1800s where it was illegal to belong to any private religious study outside of the state church. A church where the ministers were civil servants kept citizenship records, tax records and who as functionaries of the upper classes left much to be desired in promoting a Christian life. Freedom of religion was not a mere theory to the folks I knew—they tenaciously clung to the belief the local church is the authority and not the means to a governing group in another state.

...Continued on page 3

Swedish Christmas ...continued



The church glowed with the huge lighted tree. It reached almost to the high ceiling. The beautiful stained glass windows reflected the lights from candles and

other strings of colored lights. Volunteers from the church had spent the Saturday before decorating with a cup of hot cocoa or cider in one hand and lots of teasing and laughter.

In Sweden, excitement begins the first Sunday of Advent with the lighting of the first candle and each "Sondag" another lit with growing anticipation. St Lucia day, a festival of lights, on Dec. 13th honors Lucia who was one of the first Christian martyrs, killed for her religious beliefs by the Romans in AD 304.

The Christmas tree is not brought in until a day or two before the 25th and is decorated with gaily wrapped candies, glass bulbs and often straw trinkets.

The height of the celebration is Christmas Eve

(Julafton). No work is done that day except feeding livestock and last minute preparations. A Smorgasbord was first on the order (a feast) which included: sil (pickled herring), lutefisk (dried fish soaked in lye water), cooked and served with boiled potatoes and cream sauce. Ham, pickled pig's feet, sweet breads, buns, cakes, ginger cookies, and as always the Swedish lingonberries (cranberry like). My dad brought a few of these dishes to our Jul celebration. The meal was usually topped off with a rice pudding, an almond was put in it and lucky one to get us could expect something good the next year or a marriage.

After the meal "Tomte" comes, a "Jul" elf who lives



under the floor boards of house or barn. He supposedly looks after the family and livestock all year. He often brings presents to the children who leave him a bowl of porridge. Old timers are now complaining that he looks more like Santa Claus all the time. All the family climbed into

the horse drawn sleigh for an early morning "Julotta" at their church. The drive often became a race and the winner believed to have the best harvest. Dad remembered carrying lighted torches and sticking them in the snow while they worshipped.

In our church the last year of Julotta mentioned was 1937, changes

were coming. But 1942 Christmas saw the few Swedes gathered in the early morning for Julotta with my father.

In Sweden the Jul spirit and enjoyment lasts until Jan. 14th which is "Knuts (corner) Dag." This is the day to discard the tree and devour all the edible decorations. Practical jokes and chanting as they flung the old tree into the snow and promises to reunite with their beloved pine in one year.

Editor's Note;

This church has a rich heritage that is practically unknown to many who worship here. We owe much to those who have gone before us that prayed and sacrificed to build and to survive. We have asked Grace Protheroe for a series in 10-year increments of the history of the church. We've interrupted the series for this special article and will continue the series next month.



"In Sweden excitement begins the first Sunday of Advent with the lighting of the first candle."

"The Christmas tree is not brought in until a day or two before the 25th and is decorated with gaily wrapped candies, glass bulbs and often straw trinkets."

Memories of Swedish Baptist Christmases ...continued

Christmas was a time to celebrate the freedom in Christ. Although Advent was a minor celebration the season began with the decorating of the church sanctuary. The outer door was adorned with a heart-shaped wreath whose evergreen branches symbolized the everlasting love of Christ. Evergreen swags draped from the choir loft, the cross beams of the church to symbolize everlasting life through Christ. Red tulips, beloved of the Swedes for symbolizing the new life in Christ, were as important as the poinsettias. The tree carried straw ornaments to remind one of the manger where Jesus was born. Candles in the windows were a welcome for those without a home to find their way home in the church.

Naturally the choir was practicing their music that always featured "Stilla natt, heliga natt" where if the audience couldn't wrap their tongues around the Swedish words they were welcome to hum along with the music of "Silent Night, Holy Night," followed by the reading of Psalm 114. Pearl and Ruby, daughters of long ago Pastor Carlson would be asked to sing "Vid Betlehem en vintermatt" (First Noel) and those in the audience joined in with the songs from childhood belting

out "Dagen är kommen" (Adeste fideles) with Charlie Erickson leading the pack.

Folks like Anna Larson invited the young boys of our family (with an admonition they could invite their parents) to a Smorgasbord. What a treat. Red candle sticks and winter flowers adorned the entry table. In the dining room the leaves had extended the table to its fullest. The riser in the middle of the table was draped with white linen to match the tablecloth and down both sides marched plates and plates of food the boys remembered so well as adults. Lutefish, pickled pigs feet, pickled herring, cabbage pudding, fruit soup, potatis korv, smoked salmon, pickles, Swedish ham, and dozens of pastries, cookies and other small boy delights.

By Christmas Eve all work was done except last-minute preparations for the church service. The girl in the congregation nearest to 16 years of age, would enter the darkened church all dressed in white with an advent wreath and burning candles like a crown on top of her hair. The solemn procession to the organ playing "Santa Lucia" was an experience no

Lucia bride ever forgot. The children's program around the crèche caused parents to hold baited breathes, children to stand on tiptoe to see Grandparents and parents, the teenagers to promise themselves this year they would not get the giggles. Finally, the choir performed, and the lights came up. Every child (even those far past the child age) were wiggling in the pews waiting for the deacons to begin distributing the little boxes with Christmas scenes on the sides and the small cloth handle on the top that were absolutely filled with traditional hard candies. And the oranges passed out by the elders tasted better and sweeter than any orange from a store.

By midnight, it was time for the final prayer and the dreamy trip home. But Christmas would not be over until New Year's Eve when children fell asleep on the pews while the congregation prayed and praised in the coming year with the traditional Watch Night service. The Swedes and the Irish felt, indeed, the birth of the Christ child was plenty of reason to look forward to God's plans for the church and the family in the coming year.

The Prince of Peace

Shout ye earth and sing for joy
Welcome the birth of a baby boy
In a manger laid on hay
God's own Son was born today

Messiah He has come at last
The time of sorrow it has past
A shoot has sprung from Jesse's stem
Messiah will redeem from sin

Hail our lovely Prince of Peace
Who from sin will us release
Blessed Savior, Morning Star
Offering salvation near and far.



For Such a Time As This

Capital Funds Campaign Under Way

By Merv Beyer



Immanuel Baptist Church

“Further in the history of Immanuel there was a time when debt was so oppressive as to nearly cause the collapse of the church.”

The national economy is in a recession. Times are uncertain. Our legislators in the other Washington seem determined to pile massive debt upon us. Those were some of the concerns of our church leaders many months ago when considering the timing of a capital funds drive we knew would be needed once we were in our new facility.

On the other side, we have a God who is able, a facility that will allow us to minister to our community in ways that were never possible in the old one, and new people are drawn into our fellowship. The acquisition of the property with funds from the first FOR HIM capital funds drive, the cooperation by the city, and the people from the northern border to Oregon, to Florida and Texas, Louisiana, and other places far away who came to help us build were confirmation of God’s direction for us.

Further in the history of Immanuel there was a time when debt was so oppressive as to nearly cause the collapse of the church. In 1929, the church (built in 1906) was in need of repairs at a cost of \$5,000 (and would have undoubtedly cost more except for the fact the work was done by a

building contractor and dedicated charter member, Nels Nelson). The Great Depression hit shortly after the work was completed. Immigrant Swedes were no longer coming to the area in numbers to help a church that conducted services only in Swedish. Records show that periodic “interest only” payments were made and by 1942 there still remained a debt of \$2,000. It was such a burden fiscally that it had become one spiritually as well.

Faced with closing its doors, the church made an appeal to the Swedish Baptist Conference in Seattle. Conference Missionary, Ole Larson (father of Grace Sturm Protheroe), agreed to come with his family in March of 1942. By October 1st, they had developed a plan for clearing the debt by December 20th. By December 18th, the goal was realized and notes and mortgages were burned at the New Years Eve service, and the people rejoiced in being freed from this bondage. The church was now able to look forward and not at the darkness behind.

The purpose of our capital funds campaign is two-

fold: first, to retire the debt on our building in an orderly manner and secondly, to allow us to continue and expand the ministry through tithes and offerings to the General Fund. Commitments are made prayerfully and considered as “faith promises.” Records of giving are kept only for the purpose of providing personal documentation for tax purposes and not against commitments.

The mantra used for this drive are the words of Mordecai in Esther 4:14 to his ward, cousin, and Queen of Persia as she faced a life and death decision in the life of her people. “*For such a time as this*” might well have been words for action by others in Esther’s time: by Ezra as he faced persecution in rebuilding the temple and by Nehemiah in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, and others down to our own time. Praise God for those who responded.



Signs of the Times

By Lon Howell

After 100 years on 4th and J Streets, we moved to our new Immanuel church home in November, 2008. What a glorious day that was! I'm sure all of us gave directions to our family, friends and co-workers so they could find 1200 Soule Avenue. The directions you gave were great! Our sanctuary was filled with over 500 people.

Did we really tell others to drive down Soule Avenue? Even though we are saving souls at 1200 Soule Avenue, the actual entrance is not there!

We probably advised others to travel Northbound on Lincoln Street, turn right onto Washington Street, go down four blocks, and turn into the church driveway on the left. Or we advised them to travel Southbound on Lincoln, turn left onto Arnold Street and keep driving until the road becomes the church parking lot entrance. Easy for us. We make that drive **slowly** through the residential neighborhoods at least once a week.

Who would have thought to locate

a new church in the North end of Hoquiam, in a residential zone, away from the main highway, next to a peaceful river where God's Word is heard, where people meet together to grow in their faith, where people have the finest of meals, where youth play on playground equipment, where people play softball or soccer? God would and He did.

God led us to the promised land at 1200 Soule Avenue. It's up to us to spread the word that God is in the North end of Hoquiam waiting to meet each and every one of us.

To help visitors, tourists passing through, newcomers, and even us, get to the church on time, two new direction signs have been installed. The signs are on Lincoln Street, observed by Northbound and Southbound drivers.

The signs direct drivers and pedestrians, down Washington Street, to **Immanuel Baptist**

Church and Sonshine Park.

Now everyone that we haven't invited to church should be able to find us on their own. The church direction sign was made possible by a donation, and the City of Hoquiam installed the sign for Sonshine Park.

The signs are reflective, so we can see them during our dark, winter times. In the daylight, the signs really catch our eye.

So next time you are driving to church on auto-pilot, please take a moment and notice the new "signs of the times" on Lincoln Street.



The Revolve Tour—4 Real

By Sheryl Rush

Concerts, food, drama (on stage), an explanation of guys, a girls' weekend 3 hours away from parents and chores. What more could a teenage girl ask for?

Jeff Johnson bravely took 12 girls between the ages of 12 and 20 to Portland, OR to the Women of Faith sponsored event, The Revolve Tour – 4 Real, on November 13th and 14th. During the conference, the girls (and Jeff) with 7000 other girls and sponsors enjoyed concerts and music by Group 1 Crew, Stellar

Kart, Britt Nicole, and the Revolve Praise Team; drama from the Revolve Drama Team; and conversations from several great speakers.

The tour's theme, 4 Real, focused on real issues that teenage girls face in everyday life, like peer pressure, gossip, the true meaning of beauty, being true to your real self and, of course, guys, just to name a few. Jenna Lucado prompted

the girls to reconsider what true beauty is and how to achieve that beauty in *Redefining Beautiful*. Chad Eastham brought insight into a guy's mind with *Guys are Waffles; Girls are Spaghetti*. Courtney Clark Cleveland, Bianca from Group 1 Crew, Jenn Helvering and...

...Continued on page 6



“We then had a year or two where we didn’t have anything and then last year Jay Rosenbach started talking with Mike Walsh and myself about getting something going again.”

Men’s Ministry

By Wayne Cotton

The Men’s Ministry has done many exciting things in the past several years. First, Bob Brown, Joe Durham, and I led a Wild At Heart series that went very well. We followed that up with a Wild At Heart revisited small group for men.

The men also organized a Valentine Banquet for our wives and girlfriends that went very well as we cooked, did entertainment, and Tom Bodwell was our MC.

We then had a year or two where we didn’t have anything, and then last year J Rosenbach started talking with Mike Walsh and myself about getting something going again. We (J, Mike, and I) got together to try and come up with some ideas. We decided to first form a leadership team, that team included Mike Walsh, J Rosenbach, Bob Brown, Marty Brooks, and

myself with Pastor Kent being optional. The first order of business was to elect a point person and Mike Walsh was immediately railroaded – I mean elected.

“Last year went great as we had six get-togethers with as many as 60 plus men coming out to either watch a video or listen to a special speaker...”

Seriously, Mike has taken the lead and done a great job of giving us direction and keeping us on task.

Last year went great as we had six get-togethers with as many as 60 plus men coming out to either watch a video or listen to one of many special speakers we had come to speak into our lives.

This year (2009 - 2010), we’ve tried some different things starting with a fishing trip after church one Sunday that I believe had around 12 guys. We followed that up with some clam digging trips. Finally, we will have a seafood dinner where we will enjoy all the trophies we either caught or purchased. Yeah, I said purchased, as we have a few couch potatoes who would rather buy their fish or clams than go out and get cold! The dinner will be held on December 6. Today!! Hope you all come out and enjoy the catch.

In the future, I believe we will be getting back to our more traditional get-togethers where we get together, eat, tell stories, and just get to know each other. So stay tuned for more info!!

Revolve Tour—4 Real...continued

By Sheryl Rush

others told of personal decisions and experiences and their consequences to guide the girls to truly consider the choices and decisions that they will face. They also spoke of the grace of God for His forgiveness and to use those experiences to reach others.



These speakers and others encouraged the girls to explore who they are in God’s eyes, not just in the eyes of the world. One of the main points of the weekend was this: we don’t know who we are for real until we know who God is for real. Our definition of God defines how we define ourselves.

The girls (and Jeff) all had a great time traveling in the pouring rain, NOT getting lost in downtown Portland or on the way to Beaverton to Southwest Bible Church where they spent the night, hanging out at the Rose Garden Arena, and just having a “girl-y” time. Sorry, Jeff. We are looking forward to the next Tour in March of 2011!

“Angels Aware” Children’s Christmas Program

As the holiday season approaches, the children of Immanuel are eagerly preparing for their upcoming Christmas Program which will be featured during the Sunday morning service on December 13th.



The program is entitled *Angels Aware*, and centers around a discussion between the angels

directly before the birth of Christ.

A lively conversation develops as these celestial beings endeavor to comprehend why Christ must come to earth and how he will appear.

They realize that the Savior must come to suffer for the sins of the world. They are shocked

that he will appear as a humble babe instead of as a popular hero. Heidi Hague and Joyce Cunningham are heading up the program, which currently consists of 20-25 children.

A number of volunteers are also making angel costumes from white sheets.

The children practice each Sunday before Children’s Church in the Youth Room.

Additional practices are scheduled for Dec 5th & Dec 12th from 10am-12:00pm, and Sunday after church, Dec 6th.

Hannah Palmer is starring as Sarah, head of the Sera-

phim angels, Alex Ham will be Michael the Ark Angel, and Elizabeth Hoefs will star as Gabriel. Logan Clements will play the part of Herald, leader of the Herald angels.

The program will be followed by a reception in the Fireside Room. Cookies and warm drinks will be provided.

We hope to see a number of parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins join us as we celebrate the birth of our Savior.

“The program centers around a discussion between the angels directly before the birth of Christ. A lively conversation develops as these celestial beings endeavor to comprehend why Christ must come to earth and how he will appear.”



Recent Baptisms at IBC

We are excited to announce that there have been seven baptisms at Immanuel during the past few months.

Five of the seven people baptized were young children who were anxious to demonstrate their commitment to Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.

Several weeks prior to the baptisms, Pastor Kent met with these children on a group and individual basis early Sunday morning.

He explained the significance of baptism and listened as they expressed their love for God.

On November 1st, April (11), Amy (9), and Abby (6) Twibell were baptized. The following week Nick Davis (8) and Gary Aube Jr. (11) followed suit. This was a special time for all the families involved.

Leanne Berry, aged 19, was baptized on November 15th during the Sunday morning service. Leanne regularly attends IBC’s Youth group and helps with AWANA in the Puggles & Cubbies Classroom. It has been a blessing to see so many young people dedicate

their lives to following Christ. We are excited that God is working in our children and that they are remembering their Creator in the days of their youth (Ecc. 12:1). We know God has great things in store for them. Larry Wood, a new member, was also baptized this past Fall.



DECEMBER 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1.	2. Adult Bible Study, 6:30pm AWANA 6-8pm	3	4.	5.
6. Men's Fish Dinner, 5 pm HS Youth Group 7-8:30pm	7. Women's Bible Study, 7:00pm	8	9 Adult Bible Study, 6:30pm AWANA 6-8pm	10	11 Elder/Deacon Christmas Party, 6:30 pm	12 Ladies Christmas Cookie & Sock Exchange Party
13 Kid's C-mas Program, AM service HS Youth Group	14 No Women's Bible Study.	15 Young Adult Christmas Party	16 Adult Bible Study, 6:30pm AWANA 6-8pm	17 Jr. High Youth Group, 7-8pm	18	19 Church caroling party, 6:30pm
20 Prime Timer's Potluck Special Christmas Service HS Youth Group	21 No Women's Bible Study	22	23 No Adult Bible Study, No AWANA	24 No Jr. High Youth Group Christmas Eve Service, 8pm	25 Christmas Day	26
27 HS Youth Group	28. No Women's Bible Study	29.	30. No Adult Bible Study, No AWANA	31. New Year's Eve		

December Birthdays

4th—Gary Bolich
5th—Candy Cozzutto
5th—Billy Lonn
5th—Candy Cozzutto
7th—Wayne Cotton
7th—Joe Durham
8th—Steve Ealey
9th—Michelle Wilson
10th—Bill Priamos

16th—Jolie Aronson
17th—Liz Bruher
17th—Wes Harris
23rd—Gary Geddes
24th—Debbie Aube
24th—Mo Fuhrer
26th—Kristin Anderson

December Anniversaries

1st—Dennis & Michelle Luce
12th—Delbert & Pam Pratt
15th—Darrin & Leo Moir
30th—Roger & Carol Barbo

Keep Us Informed

If there is an upcoming event or meeting you would like posted in the Soule Messenger, email or call the office @ 533-2012, info@ghibc.com

“Sounds of Christmas”

A luncheon & program designed for women of all ages.
Thursday, Dec. 10, 2009 @ the Aberdeen Log Pavilion.
11:30 a.m.—\$12.00 inclusive.

- **Special Feature: The Goldenaries of Weatherwax HS**
- **Speaker: Lois Williams, “Keepsakes”**

Reservations & cancellations are necessary
Call Linda @ 532-3129, or Jeanette @ 532-7998