

THE PARISH LIGHT

The Parish of the Northern Lights Newsletter - December 2017



The Twelve Days of Christmas

From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly. Someone during that era wrote this carol as a catechism song for young Catholics. It has two levels of meaning: the surface meaning plus a hidden meaning known only to members of their church. Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality which the children could remember.

1. The partridge in a pear tree was Jesus Christ.
2. Two turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments.
3. Three French hens stood for faith, hope and love.
4. The four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
5. The five golden rings recalled the Torah or Law, the first five books of the Old Testament.
6. The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.
7. Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit: Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership, and Mercy.
8. The eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes.
9. Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self Control.
10. The ten lords a-leaping were the Ten Commandments.
11. The eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful disciples.
12. The twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed

The Legend of The Candy Cane

According to the legend of the candy cane, this candy was first created back in the 18th century. At that time, in certain areas of Europe, there was said to be a ban on public displays of Christianity. Christians were oppressed and no Bibles or crosses could be owned at the time. One man found this oppression distressing and wished he could share the love of Jesus and the joy of Christmas with the rest of the world. When Christmas came around, children didn't get to see nativity scenes or enjoy learning about the truth of Christmas. As a candy maker, this man prayed to find a way that he could offer local children a Christmas gift that would allow him to [communicate the real story of Christmas](#).

His prayer led to an idea--The Candy Cane.

- **The Shepherd's Staff:** He chose to make the candy cane in the shape of a shepherd's staff. After all, Jesus is the shepherd to his followers and the Bible notes that the "sheep" would hear His voice and follow him (*Psalm 23:1, John 10:11, John 10:27-30, Isaiah 40:11*).
- **The Letter J for Jesus:** Not only was the candy cane in the shape of a staff, but when held upside down, it formed a "J," which stood for Jesus (*Luke 1:31, Matthew 1:21*).
- **He is A Rock:** The candy maker chose hard candy for the candy cane, which was done to remind children that Jesus was our "rock," dependable and strong (*Psalm 31:3*).
- **By His Stripes:** Wide red stripes were added to the candy cane, representative of the crucifixion and the blood Jesus shed for our sins.
- **Red-His Shed Blood:** Through his blood, we are given salvation and life (*Revelation 1:5, John 3:16, Luke 22:20*).
- **White-Purification from Sin:** There are also white stripes on the candy cane, which represents the holiness, and purity of Jesus, who was sinless (*I John 1:7*).
- **Sweet Fragrance of Christ:** Peppermint was the flavor that the candy maker chose for the candy cane. Peppermint was very similar to hyssop, which was used for sacrifice and purification in the Old Testament, [reminding us of the sacrifice that Jesus made for us](#). It also reminds us of the spices brought by the Wise Men when they came to visit Jesus (*Psalm 51:7, John 10:29, Matthew 2:11*).
- **Broken For Us:** Of course, when the candy cane is eaten, it is often broken, which the candy maker meant as a reminder that when Jesus was crucified, his body was broken (*I Cor. 11:24*).
- **Love of Christ:** The candy cane was also made to be given as a gift, representing the love of Jesus when he gave us the gift of salvation.



The Missing Five Pound Note

Chippenham George worked for the Post Office and his job was to process all the mail that had illegible addresses. One day just before Christmas, a letter landed on his desk simply addressed in shaky handwriting: 'To God'. With no other clue on the envelope, George opened the letter and read:

Dear God,

I am an 93 year old widow living on the State pension. Yesterday someone stole my purse. It had \$100 in it, which was all the money I had in the world and no pension due until after Christmas. Next week is Christmas and I had invited two of my friends over for Christmas lunch. Without that money, I have nothing to buy food with. I have no family to turn to, and you are my only hope. God; can you please help me?

Chippenham George was really touched, and being kind hearted, he put a copy of the letter up on the staff notice board at the main Fareham sorting office where he worked. The letter touched the other postmen and they all dug into their pockets and had a whip round. Between them they raised \$95. Using an officially franked Post Office envelope, they sent the cash on to the old lady, and for the rest of the day, all the workers felt a warm glow thinking of the nice thing they had done.

Christmas came and went. A few days later, another letter simply addressed to 'God' landed in the Sorting Office. Many of the postmen gathered around while George opened the letter. It read,

Dear God,

How can I ever thank you enough for what you did for me? Because of your generosity, I was able to provide a lovely luncheon for my friends. We had a very nice day, and I told my friends of your wonderful gift - in fact we haven't gotten over it and even Father John, our parish priest, is beside himself with joy. By the way, there was \$5 missing! I think it must have been those thieving fellows at the Post Office.



The Story Behind The Song

Bringing in the Sheaves

Psalm 126:6 “he that goeth forth and weepeth, hearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”

Knowles Shaw, “the Singing Evangelist,” wrote this gospel song in 1874. Four years later, on June 7, 1878, he and Elder Kirk Bader boarded a train in Dallas, en route to McKinney, Texas, where Shaw was beginning an evangelistic campaign. As the train chugged across Texas, the two men fell into conversation with a Methodist minister named Malloy. Malloy asked Shaw his secret to success in his meetings. Shaw answered by saying that he depended much on the power of song, always kept Jesus before the people, and made them feel that they were sinners and needed just such a Saviour. As they were talking, the felt the car go off the track, bouncing over the ties. All of a sudden, everything became as dark as night. When Mr. Baxter came to, the coach was at the bottom of the embankment. After he got out, the first person he saw was Malloy. Baxter asked Malloy if he saw Shaw. Baxter feared that Shaw was under the wreck since Shaw had pushed Baxter to save his life. They went to the wreck and saw a man’s hand pointing upward out of the water. It was Mr. Shaw’s. Baxter called for help, and about 15 minutes later, Shaw’s body was pulled from the water.

According to Knowles Shaw’s diary, he had recorded more than 11,400 conversations with Christ during his 19 years of preaching. He was born in 1834 and died in this train wreck in 1878.





St Andrew's Zion Christmas Concert

Wednesday, December 20th

Pot luck at 6:00 pm with concert to follow

Come and enjoy a wonderful evening of entertainment



Christmas Eve Service Times (with Rev. Christobel Lynes):

9:00 am – St Thomas, Perryvale

10:30 am – St Paul's, Boyle

1:30 pm – Christ Church, Wandering River

7:30 pm – St Andrew's Zion, Colinton

Youth Group News



Upcoming youth group: December 10 2017, following service at St. Andrew's Zion

We encourage you to join us for service at 10:30am.

On December 10, the youth are bringing in any clothes they no longer need or fit them etc. and they will be passed on.

Please plan to attend - so if this means booking off work do that, if you need a ride let us know we can help out with that. Contact Cathie (cathie.mmaestro@gmail.com) or Joanna (joannamuzyka@hotmail.com)

All youth grade 7 and up (Age 12+) are welcome so grab a friend and join us!



I wish each and every one of you and joyful and blessed Christmas and a wonderful New Year.

Jan Overacker
