

In **Russia**, Christmas is centered on the Christmas Eve "Holy Supper", which consists of 12 servings, one to honor each of Jesus' apostles. The Russian traditions include their Christmas tree.

The festive period in **Greece** lasts from December 25th to January 6th. Most families set up Christmas trees and shops have decorations and lights. Presents are placed under the Christmas tree and are opened on New Year's Day. The Christmas meal usually includes lamb or pork and desserts such as Kourabies (butter cookies).

Israel is a Jewish state so the Jewish majority does not celebrate Christmas. They celebrate *Hanukkah* instead. In the Palestinian territories and in some areas under Israeli control a Christian minority exists. They celebrate Christmas. This is especially prevalent in *Bethlehem and Nazareth*.

In **Venezuela** Christmas is celebrated as a religious holiday. As in Colombia, the presents are brought by "El Niño Jesus" (Baby Jesus) instead of "Papá Noel" (Santa Claus). Children write request letters to Baby Jesus. The presents are sent by Baby Jesus at midnight, and most people have a party, which goes on until sunrise.

In **Spain**, the Christmas holidays last twelve days and are referred to as "Navidad". Most homes and churches display a Nativity scene.

A large family dinner is celebrated on Christmas Eve and can last until 6 o'clock in the morning. Children will usually receive one or two presents on Christmas Day, brought by "Papá Noel" (Father Noel). On January 6th a huge parade welcomes the Three Kings to the city. Children put their shoes in the window on January 5th in hope that the Three Wise men deliver them presents.



VERSE OF THE MONTH

And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

Luke 11:9 (KJV)

So I say to you, Ask and **keep on** asking and it shall be given you; seek and **keep on** seeking and you shall find; knock and **keep on** knocking and the door shall be opened to you.

Luke 11:9 (Amplified)

"Whatever the Lord is dealing with you about, whether it is an inward issue of the heart or an outward circumstance at home or at school. If you will persistently take it to the Lord in prayer and do as He instructs you you will see results to that which you are asking. Just be consistent and don't stop until you see results."

Give a Gift

"Christmas is not just a date, it's a spirit."

Christmas is not just a time to receive but to give. Be sporadic this year, give a thoughtful gift to someone you don't normally give a gift to. Send Shaquille or Mr. Frank a Christmas card. Expensive gifts aren't always the best, but gifts that have thought and heart mean the world and are never forgotten.



BIRTHDAYS & SPECIAL EVENTS IN



December

1st - Shaquille Walls

3rd - *Stickle's Anniversary*

4th - Nicole Marcoux

7th - Milton Edmundson

7th - Ambryss Flores

8th - Stephanie Smith

11th - *Christmas Caroling &*

"Singing Around the Tree"

18th - Christmas Play

23rd - Cailin McNamara

25th - CHRISTMAS DAY!!

28th - Angel Cordle

Christmas Play Coming up.

Bring your cameras for pictures after the Play is over.



NCO Kids

Monthly News

December 2009



Christmas Evans

Christmas Evans was the one-eyed preacher from Wales. Evans was the son of a poor shoemaker, he was born at Esgairwen, in the parish (a pastor's house), of Llandysul, Cardiganshire, on Christmas day in 1766. Evans father died when he was just a child, his widowed mother allowed her brother, James Lewis, to take Christmas under his care at his farm. He remained here six years, doing what he could on the farm, his wages were his food and clothing; during this time he suffered many hardships. His selfish and drunken uncle was a very cruel man, years later Evans used to say, "It would be difficult to find a more immoral man in this whole wicked world than



James Lewis."

Christmas brought up with no education, that at the age of 17 he could not read or write a word. During his stay on his uncle's farm he had several narrow escapes of being killed: at one time he was stabbed, at another he was nearly drowned, at another he fell from a high tree with a knife in hand and at another time a horse ran away with him, passing at full speed through a narrow passage; but the Lord delivered him from all this near death experiences, apparently the Lord had something greater in store for Christmas.

During a revival which broke out in the Presbyterian Church at Llwynrhydowain, under the pastor, Rev. David Davies, young Evans, with several others, got saved. The young believers were anxious to learn how to read, they spent most of their earnings to buy Bibles and candles and for months the met in a poor barn and pored over the Word of God until they could read it in their own native tongue, Welsh.

A great trial now awaited the poor lad. Some of his friends from his past life were so enraged when they heard of his conversation, that one dark night, six of them, beat him with sticks so unmercifully that he lost the sight of one of his eyes.

Evans would borrow books and study them extensively, thus he learned a little English. After six months of schooling, under the tutelage of his pastor, he rapidly grew in knowledge and in grace that he soon became anxious to preach; but the loss of an eye, and certain fearful dreams which he had, greatly discouraged him. In course of time, however, an opportunity presented itself, and his first sermon, committed to memory was delivered in a cottage.

Before he was twenty-one he joined the Baptist Church and was baptized by the Rev. Timothy Thomas, a man of firm faith and great zeal.

Having preached his first sermon in a cottage, Evans now began to occupy some of the village pulpits in the neighborhood; he became quite popular. However, his health had began to fail, regardless he set off on a preaching tour through several of the nearby counties, preaching two or three times a day, and always three times on Sunday. He became widely known and very popular.

In 1792, at the age of 26 Evans married Catherine Jones. The couple moved to a small one-room parish. The parish was in such ruins that Evans, who measured a little over six feet in height, could not stand upright in it. But Evans never asked for more, this great man and his cheerful little wife, Catherine, spent twenty years of their married life here, without a murmur or a frown. Now the one-eyed preacher, who at seventeen could not read a word, made himself a master of Hebrew and Greek. He had few books, but the few he had were very select. Sermons were wrote in that one-roomed cottage that shook the hearts of thousands.

Christmas Evans was a man of prayer, herein was the secret of his success. On one of his travels, he stopped along the way and spent three long hours wrestling with God for an outpouring of the Spirit; a mighty revival followed.

Forty times he traveled on horseback, sometimes through snow and rain, from North to South Wales, for the purpose of raising money for chapels. He preached every day in the week and often three times on Sundays. At some places he was not treated with great hospitality.

Evans' greatest trial came upon him with the death of his beloved Catherine in 1823, he was 60 years old. Catherine had been a true help-mate to him, often accompanying him on some of his longest journeys through wind and rain, snow and hail; blessed with a discerning mind and being a keen observer of character, her advice was of great service to him. She was

thoughtful, prayerful, hopeful, and always cheerful. Her little cottage was always open to poor preachers who passed that way. She was a great treasure to her husband.

Then came other troubles: many of his Churches became so restive and self-willed that he left, accepting an invitation to the Baptist Church of Tronyvelian, Caerphilly.

At Caerphilly he was blessed with peace and prosperity. Several of his great sermons were preached here to large and admiring congregations. He was persuaded by a friend to offer his hand to a well-to-do lady in this neighborhood. At first, he declined, but being lonely and wanting a companion, he married an old friend from his home town who made him a good wife the remainder of his days.

In the spring of 1838, at the age of 72, after 53 years of ministry, he and his wife set off to raise more money traveling to several towns, preaching as he went, and taking up collections. He was getting very feeble, and his work was nearly done. On Sunday, July 15th, he preached twice; in the evening of the following day he preached in England, As Christmas ended his sermon he drove one last point home to his congregation, "Preach the Gospel to them all; tell them all that I am the Savior; that all are welcome to participate in the blessings of My salvation. I am the same Lord over all, and rich unto all that call on Me."

At the close of the sermon, on reaching the foot of the pulpit stairs, he was heard to say, "*This is my last sermon!*" and so it was; from that hour he gradually sank. At two o'clock on the following Friday morning he passed on. His last words were "GOOD-BYE! DRIVE ON!" Evans said that the heavenly chariots had come to take him home. They tried to arouse him, but he had gone! Up over the everlasting hills in heaven's chariot, and by heavenly postmen, to his home in the skies, this faithful old servant of God was driven, in the 73rd year of his age, and the 54th of his ministry.

Christmas Around the World

In **Mexico**, it is traditional for children to receive their gifts not on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, but on January 6th, the Feast of the Epiphany (twelve days after Christmas). In memory of the day the Three Kings brought gifts to Baby Jesus.

In **China**, since 99% of the Chinese people are not Christian, the main winter festival in China is the Chinese New Year or 'Spring Festival' which takes place at the end of January. Chinese Christians traditionally decorate their houses with beautiful paper lanterns and set up their 'Trees of Light', with paper chains and flowers.

In **Australia**, Christmas coincides with the height of summer and Sydney's world-famous Bondi Beach is a popular venue for *non-traditional* barbecues and the occasional surfing Santa. Adelaide's Christmas Pageant (Adelaide is South Australia's capital) is one the most popular holiday parades in the world and annually attracts as many as 400,000 people.

A thousand years ago in **Sweden**, King Canute declared that Christmas would last for one month, from the feast of St. Lucia on December 13th. On that day, the eldest daughter of the family wears a white dress with a red sash, and places an evergreen wreath with seven lighted candles on her head, taking hot drinks and cakes to each family member.

In the **United Kingdom**, Christmas nutcrackers containing small toys are still a distinctive national tradition at holiday meals. Christmas decorations stay up until January 6th in the UK, but it's bad luck to have them up any later.