



# The United Endeavor

DECEMBER 1969

UNITED EVANGELICAL CHURCH BALTIMORE, MD. 21224



## THE DEEPER MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

As we get into the hubbub and the vicious schedule that goes with the celebration of Christmas - the trees, lights, gifts, pageantry, greeting cards, family get-togethers - it is rather an easy matter to forget that the center of Christmas is a Person. He is the Person who has shown us what "a truly human existence" means. He is the Person in whom God has entered receptively into history. He is the Person in whom Christian faith sees both God and man.

If it seems a bit incredulous to state that in Jesus we see both God and man, may we remind ourselves that the life of Jesus, whose coming to earth we celebrate at Christmas, was truly human. He was born a baby and grew to become a man. These facts have been attested to by history.

But, how then can we say He was completely divine? May we pose the simple question - If God should come personally into a human being, what kind of person would that be? Certainly we would allow that He would be known through the same kind of perfect goodness that we know to be God. And that is what we see in Jesus our Lord.

Jesus, however, did not begin as a man, as a human baby and develop

into a God. Jesus was and is God and man from His very Incarnation, His birth upon earth. Too frequently, as we pass our days here, we celebrate an Advent, a Christmas and then the glory fades from our lives, our hearts and souls. And we go on as if God were not God. We live as if Jesus were not Jesus. What we need to remember is that there is this deeper meaning to Christmas - that while our poor celebration will fizzle and fade, the Man (with a capital M this denotes more than mere man, but a man God) - this Man we celebrate does not fade out. 'Of his kingdom there will be no end.' Jesus is forever. He will remain alive forever in the lives of those who gladly receive God's transforming gift of love. May we be such folk!

adapted from editorial in "Pulpit Digest."

JOY TO THE WORLD



CHRIST LIVES!

## SERVICES OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS TIME

ADVENT SUNDAY SERVICES

Nov. 30th - 1st Sunday in Advent

We begin the Advent season with the traditional 'hanging of the greens' which occurs during the 10:15 a.m. service. The Advent Order of worship brings Advent music, the Advent message to both the 8:00

a.m. service as well as the later service. Message by Pastor Rasche on 'Preparing for Christ's Birth.' Also featured in the late service will be the dedication of the new Advent wreath, which will hang in the chancel on the pulpit side.

#### Dec. 7 - 2nd Sunday in Advent.

This being the first Sunday of the month both the 7:45 a.m. & the 10:15 a.m. services will be Communion services. Also features will be the Advent ceremonial of the hanging of the wreaths. Sermon on "Trouble at Christmas."

#### Dec. 14 - 3rd Sunday in Advent

Our beautiful Italian creche is to be on display with this Sunday, and the message topic will be "Where Does God Fit In?"

This will also be Tinsel day at United Church. See article at other spot in this issue.

#### Dec. 21 - 4th Sunday in Advent

Sermon on "The Irony of Advent" in 8 a.m. service, and the annual service of the Church School at the 10:15 a.m. service. Ceremony of the Christmas tree and the Poinsettia altar in this service.

### CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

#### Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve

Identical services at 8 p.m. and 10:45 p.m. These will be the candle lighting services which are so beloved of our congregation. Pastor Rasche's Christmas message will be entitled, "Silent Night." The Christmas Memorial service will also be a part of these two services.

### SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

#### Dec. 28 - Last Sunday of Year

Our choirs will present the message in song in the 10:15 a.m. service. It is entitled "Wonderful Love." Preaching service at 8 a.m. with a post-Christmas message.

### NEW YEAR'S EVE SERVICE

Only one service on New Year's Eve, this being at the hour of 8 p.m., a service brief enough to enable you to get to any midnight festivity or party you may have in mind. Sermon by Pastor Rasche.



## THE WHITE GIFT

There was once, according to legend, a strange country called Cathay, ruled over by a mighty warrior named Kublah Khan. He had made himself lord of the whole land by reason of his strong will and trusty sword. He had the respect and confidence of all his subjects.

His birthday was celebrated each year with a festival called 'The White Feast.' On that day the king and his court assembled themselves in a great white room of the palace to receive the gifts and offerings of his subjects. The floors of that room were of the purest white marble and the walls hung with the richest coverings of snow-white silk. Each subject, as he approached to present his gift, was dressed in white and the gift was white.

The absence of color and use of white signified to the king that the love and devotion of his subjects was without stain. Both rich and poor brought great and little gifts, but each was regarded by the king as of equal importance.

It has become customary that we bring 'white gifts' in the name of our king Jesus at the time of His birthday, these gifts being given through the church to a worthy cause in the name of our Lord.

We here at United invite you each year to bring a 'white gift' each Sunday for someone else. This year we have chosen the men at the Ft. Howard Veterans Hospital, and invite you to bring such little items as deoderants, hair brushes, hair dressing, hand lotion, post cards, tooth brushes, tooth paste, stretch socks, address books. Bring to Church School and to church. The gifts will be wrapped and prepared for delivery as a part of our Tinsel Day activity. Do not bring them wrapped, we will wrap them. May we each share in this giving of 'white gifts' for others at Christmas.





## TINSEL DAY IS A HAPPY DAY FOR ALL

We would be most delighted to have you and your family join us at the church on Tinsel Day, Sunday, Dec. 14th, beginning with the noon service.

Perchance you've been hesitant about coming heretofore, so better make up your family mind to come this year.

Here is a rundown of the activities of the day:

We begin with a prepared dinner at about the noon hour, for which there is no direct charge, but an offering received of your descretion.

After the meal, about 1:30 pm the children and youth go to their departments to decorate the rooms for Christmas, putting up the departmental tree and prettying every thing up. At the same time the older youth and adults have the privilege of decorating the tree in the sanctuary, while other adults are engaged in a Christmas handicraft project.

When the big tree is finished, we gather in the sanctuary for the ceremony of the lighting of the tree and the singing of carols in the dim glow of late afternoon. After that we return to the lower auditorium for our 'birthday party for Jesus,' and for a piece of birthday cake and the conclusion of the day.

Both the very young, the children and the parents and grand parents are heartily invited to this occasion. Do come, for it is one of the loveliest days in all the year here at your church. We do ask that you sign a reservation slip for yourself and family if you are coming to the meal. These slips can be secured at the church and in Church School classes.



## THE ADVENT WREATH

With this Advent season we incorporate another meaningful custom in our Advent Sunday services, the inclusion of the Advent wreath. This is a wreath which hangs horizontally in the Chancel and which has four candles (one for each of the Advent Sundays) plus the Christ candle in the center. Our 'wreath' is of bronze with inscribed with Biblical messages in kiln-fired colors. There is one pink candle and three violet candles, the pink signifying the expectation of the Lord, to be lighted the 1st Sunday in Advent, the others to be lighted on succeeding Sundays, and the Christ Candle on Christmas Eve. The lighting of these candles will become a part of our Advent ceremonies, and each will be introduced by appropriate Scriptures.

## CHRISTMAS JOY



## THE VALUE OF CEREMONIALS

It has been some years since the interpretation of our Advent ceremonies has been given in full. A number of new folk have joined our fellowship since, and it may be worthwhile to again give words of explanation.

Jesus, in His ministry upon our earth, made much use of illustrative material, to illustrate the message of God He was expressing. It is always good to illustrate, to make plain the message of our faith so that all may understand. The message of Advent is so wonderful that we cannot let it be puzzling to anyone, thus we use many means to picture this message.

Some of these means are the ceremonies we have incorporated into our Sunday Advent services, whereby we not only give explanation to spiritual truths but beautify our services. The Christmas greens, the wreaths, the poinsettia and the tree, as well as the Christmas

creche, together with the Scripture readings, the music of the hymns and the choirs, plus the messages from the pulpit - all add together to bring the message of Christmas into our hearts, that we may abide in the love of God through Christ and seek to live the Christ life all our days.



## CHRISTMAS BASKETS

There is hunger, there is need in some of the families of our own church and of the other churches of our community. There is hunger in the lives of some families who may not be a part of any church but are our neighbors. We of the churches of Canton have banded together to provide some aid at Christmas to such families in the form of Christmas baskets.

To make these baskets possible we invite you, as a church member, to share your goods with others at Christmas. We desire canned goods and staple foods, but please bring them to Sunday School or church by Sunday, Dec. 21 at the latest, earlier, if possible. We need your help.



## CHRISTMAS MEMORIALS

Many of our folk have been accustomed to making memorials in memory of departed loved ones at Christmas. We prepare a special brochure for these memorial gifts, and the Memorial service is included in the services on Christmas Eve. However, we request that these memorials be received not later than Sunday, Dec 14, that the office staff may have sufficient time to prepare the brochure.

## THIS AND THAT

1970 sets of envelopes will be ready by Sunday, Dec. 21 and will be found on tables in the basement of the church bldg (Friendship Hall) If

you have used your 1969 envelopes, a set for 1970 will be prepared. If you have not had 1969 envelopes or have not used them, no new sets are prepared. To receive a set, and thus maintain your membership, you are asked to make the request directly to Pastor Rasche..... May we take this admonition to have all our 1969 envelopes used up by the end of this year..... Pastor Rasche is completing the 8th year of his ministry in Baltimore with the 1st Sunday in Advent..... Also Pastor Rasche has been elected to the office of President of the Chesapeake Association of the Central Atlantic Conference of our United Church of Christ, for the interim to May, 1970. This was brought to pass because of the departure to another church of the current president, Pastor Royer..... If any of our shut ins desire communion at the Advent-Christmas season, be free to contact the Pastor. However these communions will be administered earlier than right before the day of Christmas, due to the heavy schedule here at church..... Rather than list 'shut-ins' for this month, it is suggested that you may desire to contact many more at the Christmas season with cards and notes. Your thoughtfulness at this time can make their lives much happier..... Last, but not least, our Poinsettia Fund. Each year we provide poinsettia to grace our altar for the Christmas services. The gifts to our Poinsettia fund supply the means of purchasing poinsettia. Your memorials can be toward this fund, or extra poinsettia fund gifts can also be made.

Now, a happy holiday season to all

### THE

### UNITED ENDEAVOR

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by

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