

## Christmas the world over

December is the busiest month of the year. Shoppers fill the streets, carrying packages for their families and friends. Bright store windows hold shining displays of toys and gifts. Houses are lit up with Christmas lights.

Women are bustling about the kitchen preparing cakes, cookies and all kinds of sweets.

Men are busy stocking the liquor cabinet with homemade wine.

Children bring home decorations for the Christmas tree they made at school, and some may be practising a part in the Christmas play.

Families gather traditionally at Christmas time to share their happiness and exchange gifts. Each family has their own customs, which they follow during the holidays. Some families exchange gifts on Christmas Eve, while others wait until Christmas morning.

In Great Britain, children hang their stockings by the fireplace, hoping that Father Christmas will fill them with treats. The British call the day after Christmas Boxing Day. On this day, most families give money to the milkman, postman, others who have served them during the year.

Plum pudding originated in Great Britain and since pies developed from mutton pies, which were originally cooked in the shape of a manger. Christmas dinner includes roast peacock, headcheese and boar's head.

In Germany, Christmas trees are decorated with candles and candy. Lubbecker marzipan is a favorite candy for the tree. Everyone gathers on Christmas Eve for the Bescheerung, a ceremony to light the Christmas tree. Afterwards, the children receive their gifts. Many Germans enjoy goose for Christmas dinner.

In Italy, the people will fast on the day before Christmas. The family holds a ceremony around the presepe, which is a miniature scene of Bethlehem with tiny figures of the Holy Family, shepherds, and wise men. The family prays as the mother places Baby Jesus in the manger. Then Christmas gifts are exchanged.

Italians reserve Christmas Day for religious ceremonies. On the eve of Epiphany, Jan. 6, according to legend, La Befana, a fairy queen comes down the chimney with gifts for the children.

In Spain, the people dance at Christmas time. After Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, the streets quickly fill with dancers and onlookers.

In France, children put their shoes on the doorstep on Christmas Eve, so Le Petit Noel (the Christ Child) can fill them with gifts. The French use mistletoe as a symbol of good luck. In southeastern France, the whole family helps bring in the yule log, which may be big enough to burn from Christmas to New Year's Day.

In Quebec, many families will get together after church on Christmas Eve, and party until midnight. The hostess serves a steak and kidney pie, then gifts are exchanged.

In Mexico, the Christmas season lasts from Dec. 15 to Jan. 6. Members of the family hold a Posada on each of the nine nights before Christmas Day. The Posada is in memory of Mary and Joseph's search for rooms on the first Christmas Eve.

They form a procession from room to room, led by two children who carry figures of Mary and Joseph. At the door of each room the children beg to enter, but are refused. When the children reach the room

containing the altar, the wanderers are admitted. They put the figures of Mary and Joseph in the tiny stable of a miniature of Bethlehem. The figure of Jesus is put in the manger the last night of Posada, Christmas Eve.

The fun begins after each Posada. The host invites everyone into his courtyard to break a pinata. The pinata is a gaily decorated crock or papier-mache figure filled with gifts and candies. It hangs by a cord from the ceiling, and each child is blindfolded, then given a long stick. Everyone swings with all their might, trying to break the pinata open. When it breaks, the children scamper after the gifts and candy that falls from the pinata. Children from Guatemala and Honduras also enjoy the pinata.

Estonians eat their dinner on Christmas Eve, but every meal the father doesn't feel well and has to leave the table. A few minutes later, a knock on the front door, and Santa enters. He opens his large red sack, and distributes gifts among the family. Then he hurries away to the next house. Christmas Day is a time to visit relatives and friends.

Ukrainians have their traditional seven-course meal on Dec. 24. The meal includes two kinds of cabbage rolls, porch (beet soup) and three or four perogoyies (dough, potatoes and cheese mixture). Gifts are exchanged on Christmas Day. The Ukrainians follow the Gregorian calendar, and celebrate again on Jan. 7, but the traditional meal does not follow rigid rules. New Year's Eve is celebrated Jan. 14.

However you celebrate this special event, The Herald staff wishes you a Merry Christmas, a Joyeux Noel, Boas Festas, Blühe Kerstzeiten and Froliche Weinachten.



Glen and Janeen McCaughty of Prince Charles Drive in Georgetown sing Christmas carols at the Alliance Church



## HARK, THE HERALD ANGELS SING

(Key of G)

Hark the herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the new-born King,  
Peace on earth and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled!"  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,  
Join the triumph of the skies,  
With the angelic host, proclaim,  
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."

Refrain:  
Hark, the herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the new-born King."

Christ, by highest heaven adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
Late in time behold Him come,  
Offspring of a virgin's womb,  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see:  
Hail, the incarnate Deity,  
Pleased as Man with man to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel!

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!  
Hail, the Son of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all He brings,  
Risen with healing in His wings,  
Mild He lays His glory by,  
Born that man no more may die,  
Born to raise the sons of earth,  
Born to give them second birth.

## SHEPHERDS IN THE FIELD ABIDING

Shepherds in the field abiding,  
Tell us, when the seraph bright:  
Greeting you with wondrous tidings  
What you saw and heard that night.  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo.  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo.

We beheld it is no fable:  
God incarnate, King of bliss,  
Swathed and cradled in a stable,  
And the angel strain was this:  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo.  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo.

Choristers on high were singing,  
Jesus and His Virgin-birth  
Heavenly bells the while a-ringing,  
"Peace good-will to men on earth."  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo.  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo.

Thanks, good herdsmen, true your story,  
Have with you to Bethlehem,  
Angels hymn the King of glory,  
Carol we with you and them.  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo.  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo.



## WHILE SHEPHERDS WATCHED

(Key of F)

While Shepherds watched their flocks by night,  
All seated on the ground,  
The Angel of the Lord came down  
And glory shone around,  
"Fear not," said he (for mighty dread  
Had seized their troubled minds):  
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring  
To you and all mankind."

"To you in David's town this day  
Is born of David's line  
A Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;  
And this shall be the sign:  
The heavenly Babe you there shall find  
To human view displayed,  
All meanly wrapped in swathing bands,  
And in a manger laid."

This spake the Seraph; and forthwith  
Appeared a shining throng  
Of angels praising God who thus  
Addressed their joyful song:  
"All glory be to God on high,  
And to the earth be peace;  
Goodwill hereafter from heaven to men  
Begin and never cease."



## ADESTE FIDELIS

Adeste Fideles,  
Laeti triumphantes,  
Venite venite in Bethlehem  
Natum videte  
Regum angelorum

Refrain:  
Venite adoremus, venite adoremus,  
Venite adoremus, Dominum

Deum de Deo  
Lumina de lumine,  
Gestant puellae viscera  
Deum verum  
Genitum non factum

Cant nunc eus,  
Chorus angelorum  
Cantent nunc aula caelestium  
Gloria!  
In excelsis Deo!

Ergo qui natus  
Die hodierna,  
Iesus, tibi sit gloria,  
Parvis aeterni  
Verbum caro factum.

## Glad Tidings



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## Festival of Light, Hannukkah celebrated

While Christians celebrate this Christmas season and its festive lights, the Jews, too, are celebrating a festival of The Lights.

Hannukkah which began Dec. 16 and lasts eight days commemorates a daring deed in ancient Jewish history and leads to a time of singing and joy, rededication and of giving and togetherness.

Each night the families of orthodox and non-orthodox Jews will honor the celebration by lighting one of a series of nine-candles in a candelabra known as a menorah.

To many Jews Hannukkah represents a fulfillment of the struggle of the religion through the centuries and the Jews ability to survive.

The celebration includes the story-telling of how Judah Maccabee, his family and some followers recaptured the Jerusalem Temple from the Greek

conquerors in the Second Century BC.

The menorah plays a significant part in the history as it was one of a few sacred objects not destroyed by the Greeks. A miracle, making the festival of the lights important, occurred when a small supply of sacred refined lamp oil burned for eight days while the Jewish rebels prepared new fuel inside the Temple. That is why the menorah has nine stems, eight to commemorate the miracle and a ninth to light the others.

Gift giving is symbolised during the eight-days of Hannukkah which leads many people to make a comparison between the Christian celebration of Christmas and Hannukkah. As well many Jews have taken to celebrating the season with "Hannukkah Bushes" or Evergreen trees.

## "Season's Greetings"

### THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

(Key of F)

On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me  
A partridge in a pear tree.

On the second day of Christmas my true love gave to me  
Two turtle doves, and a partridge in a pear tree.

On the third day of Christmas my true love gave to me  
Three French hens, two turtle doves and a partridge in a pear tree.

On the fourth day of Christmas my true love gave to me  
Four mockingbirds, three French hens, two turtle doves and a partridge in a pear tree.

On the fifth day of Christmas my true love gave to me  
Five golden rings, four mockingbirds, three French hens, two turtle doves, and a partridge in a pear tree.

On the sixth day of Christmas my true love gave to me  
Six geese a-laying, five golden rings, four mockingbirds, three French hens, two turtle doves, and a partridge in a pear tree.

On the seventh day of Christmas my true love gave to me  
Seven swans a-swimming, six geese a-laying, five golden rings, four mockingbirds, three French hens, two turtle doves, and a partridge in a pear tree.

On the eighth day of Christmas my true love gave to me  
Eight maids a-milking, seven swans a-swimming, six geese a-laying, five golden rings, four mockingbirds, three French

hens, two turtle doves, and a partridge in a pear tree.

On the ninth day of Christmas my true love gave to me  
Nine ladies waiting, eight maids a-milking, seven swans a-swimming, six geese a-laying, five golden rings, four

mockingbirds, three French hens, two turtle doves, and a partridge in a pear tree.

On the tenth day of Christmas my true love gave to me  
Ten lords a-leaping, nine ladies waiting, eight maids a-milking, seven swans a-swimming, six geese a-laying, five

golden rings, four mockingbirds, three French hens, two turtle doves, and a partridge in a pear tree.

On the eleventh day of Christmas my true love gave to me  
Eleven pipers piping, ten lords a-leaping, nine ladies waiting, eight maids a-milking, seven swans a-swimming, six

geese a-laying, five golden rings, four mockingbirds, three French hens, two turtle doves, and a partridge in a pear tree.

On the twelfth day of Christmas my true love gave to me  
Twelve drummers drumming, eleven pipers piping, ten lords a-leaping, nine ladies waiting, eight maids a-milking, seven

swans a-swimming, six geese a-laying, five golden rings, four mockingbirds, three French hens, two turtle doves, and a partridge in a pear tree.

## Santa's Mailbag Ho! Ho! Ho!

All letters received to Dec. 18

### Have a Merry Christmas

Dear Santa:  
I really like the things that you gave me last year. This year I would like to have Super Slider Snow Skates if you can thank you very much. See you later.  
Love Chris.

Dear Santa:  
I know I've never seen you but I still believe in you! All I want is a Cher Doll and an Art Kit, a Barbie Doll, and a dress. That's it!  
Thank you for every thing you gave me last year.  
Love Joanne

Dear Chris:  
Merry Christmas and a pleasant day to you and your family. I am happy you liked the gifts last year. Thank you for writing.  
Santa

Dear Joanne:  
Thank you for still believing in me. There are some children who don't but that doesn't stop me from visiting them each year on Christmas. Ho! Ho! Ho! Have a very Merry Christmas.  
Santa

Dear Santa:  
I want a U.S.S. Enterprise, for Christmas. How are your elves? How are you too? and how is Mrs. Claus?  
Love Randy.

Dear Santa:  
I want a puzzle of you and U.S.S. Enterprise.  
I wish all of you a M-E-R-Y Christmas.  
Love Ricky Robinson

Dear Randy:  
Everyone here at the North Pole is fine. We are getting ready for the big day which is not far off. Be a good boy, Randy, and I am sure you will be surprised at what you find Christmas Day.  
Santa.

Dear Joanne:  
That's a nice thought, you wanting a puzzle of me. Have a very Merry Christmas.  
Santa.

Dear Santa:  
I liked the presents you gave me last year. This year I want a Barbie pizza baby-that-away and the game of Jaws I am 7. I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year too.  
Love, Jean J.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Claus:  
If it isn't too much work for you and your elves, and you have enough art work shops for everybody. I would like an art workshop for Christmas.  
Merry Christmas  
Love Todd

Dear Jean:  
A very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you, too. That's a nice Christmas gift list you sent me. Rest assured, I will note all your wishes.  
Santa.

Dear Todd:  
Mrs. Claus says hello to you and thanks you for the nice letter. You will be pleasantly surprised Christmas Day. Please have a very Merry Christmas.  
Santa



Dear Santa:  
Can I please have Binne Man drms, money magic, hugo and a new stocking.  
Love Rodney O.

Dear Rodney:  
Have a very Merry Christmas. Thank you for your nicely written letter and I will take note of your list. Merry Christmas.  
Santa.

Dear Santa:  
Thank you for your nice gifts last Christmas. I am going to tell you what I want for Christmas. I want a barbie doll and hugo for Christmas.  
Love Colette Post

Dear Colette:  
I have noted your Christmas list and must say that your printing is very nice. Thank you for writing and I hope you and your family have a very Merry Christmas.  
Santa

Dear Santa:  
I wish you a Merry Christmas. This year I want baby-that-away and doctor hugo. Thank you I am 7. I will leave a plate of cookies.  
Love Annette Klein

Dear Annette:  
The cookies will be a pleasant snack during my travels on Christmas Eve. Thank you and I hope you and your family have a very Merry Christmas.  
Santa

Dear Santa:  
I liked the presents you gave me last year.  
I tried to be a good girl.  
I wish you could say hello to Mrs. Claus for me.  
Love Juli

Dear Juli:  
Mrs. Claus says hello. Being a good girl is sometimes a most difficult job and I hope you will never give up trying. I have made a note of your letter and hope you will have a Merry Christmas.  
Santa

Dear Santa:  
I wish you a Merry Christmas. This year I want a new desk and some writing paper.  
Love Joseph

Dear Joseph:  
Thank you for your Christmas list. I imagine you might just be preparing yourself for a career as a writer. If so, I wish you much success.  
Santa

Dear Santa:  
How is Mrs. Claus? Thank you for my presents last year. How is Rudolph? This year I would like you to bring me TV magic I will leave you cookies and milk. I wish you a Merry Christmas Santa Claus!  
Love Rosemary L.

Dear Rosemary:  
Rudolph is in fine spirits and eagerly awaiting his trip with me this week. The cookies and milk will be a nice pleasant snack during the cold trip. A very Merry Christmas to you Rosemary. Mrs. Claus is very well, thank you, and wishes you the best for the festive season.  
Santa

Dear Santa:  
Dear Santa I want a horse and a toy gun! That's all!  
Love Arthur

Dear Arthur:  
Have a very Merry Christmas. I hope you will be surprised with the gifts you find Christmas Day.  
Santa

Dear Santa:  
Thank you for last year's presents. Please give me some writing paper I am 7 years old.  
Love Lori.

Dear Lori:  
Hmm I suppose you would like the writing paper I will send some nice letters to your friends at Christmas, eh? Well, I wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas. And good luck with your writing.  
Santa.

Dear Santa:  
I like the gifts you gave me last year. I would like a set of drums a trumpet a fire truck and Jaws. That is all that I want.  
Thank you  
Love David

Dear David:  
I hope you will be pleasantly surprised Christmas Day when you look under the Christmas tree. Have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, too.  
Santa

Santa's Mailbag continues inside

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