

Christmas

OPENING

Wednesday November 21, 2018

Supplement To...

The ALEXANDRIA Times-Tribune

The CALL-LEADER

Tribune



Christmas traditions around the world

At Christmas, Christians all over the world celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Traditional Christmas decoration often can be admired and festive celebrations can be joined in most countries, even in many of the countries where Christianity is not the religion of the majority of people. Christmas trees are a popular decoration as are tiny sparkling lights in windows and on walls.

Christmas all over the world is celebrated on Christmas Day, the 25th of December. Some countries however have different Christmas traditions and Christmas traditions and celebrations take place over a longer period of time. Below you will find some interesting Christmas facts for various countries.

Christmas in France
In many regions in France, Christmas celebrations start with St Nicholas day on the 6th of December. Then children get sweets and little gifts. Cities are decorated in France, especially in the Alsace region, where they say the first decorated Christmas trees appeared as far back as the 14th century.

Christmas Decorations in Strasbourg/France
On Christmas eve, Children put their polished shoes out in front of the chimney and hope that 'Père Noël' (Father Christmas) fills the shoes with sweets. Christmas Day, the 25th of December is a public holiday and families get together for a big feast. On this day also presents get exchanged.

Italy
In Italy, a nativity scene, a 'presepe', is usually put up in churches, town squares and often in houses and is for many the most important parts of Christmas decorations.

The nativity scene display with a crib filled with straw, originally stems from Italy and is now common occurrence in many countries around the world. In Italy, 'Babbo Natale', that's how Father Christmas is called in Italian, hands out presents to children on

Christmas Day. Still in many families, gifts are exchanged only on Jan. 6 – the day of Epiphany. The people wish each other 'Buon Natale', which means Merry Christmas.

Christmas in Germany
In the weeks leading up to Christmas, Christmas markets are set up on main squares in many cities.

Houses are often decorated with lights and ornaments in December, however the Christmas tree is usually only put up in the homes only in the morning of the 24th of December.

Festive Christmas celebrations in Germany begin on Dec. 24 on Christmas Eve. Shops close early on Christmas eve, so remember that you have to get your Christmas shopping done until lunchtime.

Christmas in England
In England, Christmas decorations start early. Many families decorate their houses with lots of fairy lights and sparkling displays.

Often the house owners collect donations from visitors to their displays in aid of local charities. So remember if you like a display place some spare coins into the honesty boxes and help the good causes.

Christmas is celebrated on Christmas Day, the 25th of December.

Christmas in Norway
In Norway, children wait for 'Julenisse', the Norwegian Santa Claus. On Christmas Eve, the 'Julenisse', brings presents to the children. During the month of December, children wait eagerly for 'Jul', that is how they call Christmas.

Christmas in Iceland
In Iceland, children put their shoes on the windowsill so the 'Juletíde Lads', the Santa Claus, fills the shoes with little goodies.

Christmas celebrations in Iceland start on 24th of December, Christmas eve. Families get together and enjoy good food and many visit midnight mass.

See World on Page 8

Bless the tree

By ROBERT RAY

When the world was new, after the ice, the flood, the dinosaurs, and asteroid collisions, trees flourished over the globe. Great forests of every variety became a beautiful garden, a garden of Eden. Geologists tell us that the Ginkgo is the oldest tree.

Necessities for man are water, food and shelter; trees, after caves, gave shelter and fuel and a certain amount of food. It must have taken a great deal of lumber to build the mythical ark or the fabled Trojan horse. Thus, we now have timber as business and trees as a sacrifice. The wheel, the cart, the chariot were invented and thousands of temples were

roofed. Many forests were depleted (as today) by man and disaster.

Jesus was, in his youth, a carpenter. In the Bible there are many references to wood and trees. The fishing boat, the olive branch, the garden of Gethsemane, the Locust thorns, fronds from the palms, the cross. Judas hangs himself from a tree.

Christians celebrate Jesus's birth Dec. 25 and for the last few hundred years, a tree with decorations and gifts has been the symbol of the nativity. Christmas also honors the tree, usually a Balsam Fir which is native to North Eastern America. This tree is valuable for lumber, paper for Christmas cards,

for turpentine, medical products and is used in optical instruments. The cones for decoration.

We celebrate the beauty of all trees and the blessings they have eternally brought us. Where we sit in our homes of joist, beams, studs and rafters, at our table of wood holding the fruit of our trees. Cherries, apples, dates, olives, pecans, logs in the fireplace, the mantel festooned with holly, the windows and doors hung with pine and mistletoe, a scent of synthetic frankincense in the air.

Electricity comes to us at one time or another on tall wooden poles. Guests come on rubber tires made from

trees. Some old china or pottery may have been fired on a wood fired kiln, a glass could have been blown from a fire fed oven. An antique was brought on a sailing ship with wooden decks and tall wood masts maybe a hundred years ago. The list is endless.

Celebrate Jesus birthday and bless the tree. It became a sacrifice at years end in a different kind of celebration.

Artificial Christmas trees are amazing and almost as beautiful and indeed neater and cleaner and end up back in the box for next year. This is itself a blessing. So we have a number of blessings.



Live Nativity to feature animals, music and the Christmas Story

The annual Live Nativity at the First United Methodist Church in Elwood is planned from 3 to 6 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 25. The animals will parade from South B Street to the First United Methodist Church, the site of the church manger, beginning at 2:45 p.m. Continuous music will be played in the church sanctuary with the choir, bell choirs, and solos. The Christmas Story will be read every half hour also in the sanctuary. Refreshments will be served in the church basement and a display of nativity sets will be available for viewing in the church parlor. The church is located at 1500 North A Street.