

Christmas Heralds

[By Melburn Sibley, Pastor, First Baptist Church of Eagle Lake]

In the year 8 B.C. Augustus Caesar decreed that all the Roman world should be enrolled. This enrollment or census was to be made at the town of origin of each family. In two or three years people came on camels, donkeys, or on foot to the town or city where they were to be registered.

Among the families to make the journey was Joseph and Mary, who was with child. They came to Bethlehem because they were of the lineage of David. Upon arrival they found that there was no room for them in the inn. Shelter was provided for them in a shelter built for animals. It was here that Mary gave birth to Jesus. The Savior of the world was wrapped in swaddling clothes and placed with tender hands in a manger.

This wonderful event was announced by a delegation of angels from heaven. Angels were used on other occasions to make heavenly announcements.

The announcement did not come to the religious leaders of the day, but to the humble shepherds. In time the Christ-child would go to the neglected masses, the publicans and sinners, with a message of love. He went to the diseased with healing power, to the sinful offering forgiveness.

The shepherds had a natural fear of the heavenly messengers. To dispel this fear they were told that the announcement was one of "good tidings and great joy."

The announcement told that one had been born to be the Savior. He did not come as a national deliverer but as a personal Savior. "He came to seek and to save that which was lost."

Christ was announced as the anointed one. He is also Lord. His position in relation to man is one of authority and he is to hold within his power the authority of heaven and earth.

The angelic chorus sang "glory to God in the highest." He brings peace between God and man. He brings peace between men.

The shepherds left their flocks and went to see the babe whose birth had just been announced. They also told others about the announcement. Good news is to be shared!

The radiance of Christmas cannot reveal itself to us unless we are spiritually prepared for the celebration of this glorious event. May our hearts be alive with "joy to the world, the Lord is come!"

Participate in MS Book-a-thon



The following students at Eagle Lake Middle School received prizes and a certificate for participating in a book reading program to help in the fight against multiple sclerosis.

Mariol Salinas, top right, received a Jumbo Read-a-thon Pen for raising \$15 for reading 14 books; Jennifer Matthews, top center, received a Mystery Sleuth Belt Buckle and a certificate for raising \$35.00 by reading 11 books; and three others received a Backpack and a certificate as follows: Renee Balas, front right, raised \$60 for 22 books read; Dominique Isenhower, top left, raised \$50 for 12 books read; and Thomas Clay Hosman, front left, raised \$60 for 15 books read.

Altogether they read 74 books and raised \$218.00 to fight multiple sclerosis, reported Chris Nazar, Field Representative-ELMS Photo

Glad Tidings

Dashing your way with a sleigh full of good wishes for a merry Christmas.



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Allens Creek Hearings Halt; More Arguments Expected

Hearings on HL&P's proposed Allens Creek Nuclear Generating Station halted Wednesday evening, Dec. 9th after 21,000 pages of testimony. The nuclear power plant, slated for a location 13 miles west of Houston's suburban outer limits and on the banks of the Brazos River in Austin County, had been in

litigation since mid-January due to some 85 questions raised by 10 private citizens and a consumer group, Texas Public Interest Research Group.

The hearings are probably not over, however. Pending still is a motion by intervenor John Doherty of Houston, urging the NRC licensing

board for construction of the plant, to consider how HL&P will avoid the same errors in managing construction that it made at the South Texas Nuclear Project, that were reported in the Quadrex Report, a survey of that project done this year. Doherty maintains that while the report discusses the Brown & Root Company, which began construction of the South Texas Nuclear Project, and will not be involved in the Allens Creek plant, there will be the same problems, without manage-

ment changes. At the hearing, there were brief closing statements of discontent about the length of the proceedings from both HL&P and the NRC. The citizen intervenors, on the other hand, expressed their belief that the current rules did too little for unfunded persons such as themselves. The NRC board is expected to announce its decision in late spring or early summer of next year.

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Club Montezuma To Hold Gala New Year's Eve Dance

Members of Club Montezuma and guests are invited to make plans to attend the club's gala New Year's Eve Dance to be held in the Eagle Lake Community Center from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. on Thurs., Dec. 31st.

The musical group, "The Middle of the Fiddle" from

San Marcos will provide music for dancing and listening pleasure. Set-ups will be provided in the admission price.



The gift! The topmost ornament on a Christmas tree is called a gipfel.



Star of Bethlehem Has Made Wise Men Wonder For All These Years

"Star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright..."

Ever since the first Christmas, the star that led the Wise Men to where the Infant Jesus lay has been the object of conjecture and wonder.

Unfortunately, the only reference to the star in Matthew's Gospel offers no explanation for the phenomenon: "And behold, the star that they had seen in the East went before them, until it came and stood over the place where the child was."

Thus it is that scientists and biblical scholars alike have been free to speculate about various theories, ranging from the supernatural to logical explanations.

One theory is that the star was actually a comet; yet another asserts that the star was probably a supernova, a star that suddenly takes on spectacular brilliance.

There is still another theory that the star was actually a conjunction of planets. According to astronomical studies, there were three conjunctions of Jupiter and Saturn in the year 7 B.C. There were also major conjunctions of planets between 3 and 2 B.C., claim other studies. The 17th-century astronomer Kepler calculated that Mars, Saturn and Jupiter had been in conjunction around the time of Christ's birth.

One supernatural theo-

bolize the forbidden fruit eaten by Adam and Eve.

Trimming The Tree's A Tradition

Of all the preparations for Christmas, probably one of the most delightful is the trimming of the tree.

How did this charming custom begin? Some suggest that the tradition dates back to pre-Christian beliefs in the magical powers of evergreens. The ancient Romans, for instance, decorated their homes with greenery for the festival of Saturn, or Saturnalia. This important feast was celebrated during December.

The association of trees with Christmas became defined during the Middle Ages, when miracle plays were performed, often in church, to teach stories from the Bible.

In the miracle plays, an evergreen tree was used to depict the Garden of Eden, with apples hung from the boughs to sym-

bolize the forbidden fruit eaten by Adam and Eve. Although the miracle plays gradually fell into disuse, the evergreen tree remained as part of the holiday tradition in Europe. Cookies were added to the apples, and yet another form of decoration was borrowed from "pyramid trees" that were also popular during the sixteenth century: candles.

In the 18th century, sugarcakes, trees trimmed with sweet meats, were popular. These gilded nuts and fruits gradually evolved into Victorian glass shapes, precursors of today's ornaments.

It was Prince Albert, consort of Queen Victoria, who popularized the custom of the Christmas tree in England. However, America was introduced to the "Tannenbaum" by Hessian soldiers during the Revolution and by German settlers in the mid-eighteenth century.

Outlook Is Dim

World Rice Supplies Overflow, Depress Price

The world's rice bins have spilled over the bumper harvests and representatives of the industry meeting at Texas A&M University Dec. 9 agreed that bad weather

may bring relief from the economic squeeze before consumers eat their way out of the problem. "Record harvests which brought record supplies, lower exports, weaker prices

and larger ending stock sums up the situation in 20 words," commented Shelby Holder of the U.S. Department of Agriculture as he keynoted a "Rice Outlook Conference."

The economist could not

recall a prior year in which so many of the world's rice producing countries harvested a record crop, but also could not foresee two record crops "back to back."

Too much of crop production depends upon the weather, which is unpredictable, Holder said.

Farmers are feeling the crunch at the market place as prices dropped from \$12.10 per hundredweight at the beginning of harvest season in August to an average of

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\$9.83 in November.

Avg. \$13 Per Cwt. Price averaged \$13 per hundredweight for U.S. producers last year.

While the industry came into 1981 with the smallest carryover in several years - some 16.5 million hundred-

weight - the estimated carryover this year will be a record 60 million hundredweight.

"Any strength in domestic prices must come from foreign markets," Holder

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Merry Christmas



We hope Santa fills your fondest wishes this Christmas Season... and from all of us to all of you, we wish you the happiest of holiday seasons.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

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Eagle Lake, Texas

Throughout the land, the season spreads a feeling of warmth and good cheer. To all of you, we wish the very best of everything.

Our sincere thanks for your friendship and patronage during the past year.

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