

What in the world do leaping lords, French hens, swimming swans, and especially a partridge in a pear tree have to do with Christmas?

I don't know about you, but I have always found *The Twelve Days of Christmas* to be one of the most annoying songs of Christmas or any other holiday season. After all, it just goes on and on and on. And it never seems to make any sense. But it turns out that that *The Twelve Days of Christmas* really does have significant religious underpinnings and meanings.

From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics were not permitted to openly practice their faith in England. Sometime during this era *The Twelve Days of Christmas* was written to serve as a catechism song for teaching young people. Each line of the song actually has two meanings – surface meanings and meanings known only to the faithful – and each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality that the children could learn and remember. Here's what *The Twelve Days of Christmas* really means:

- * The partridge in a pear tree is Jesus Christ.
- * Two turtle doves are the Old and New Testaments.
- * Three French hens represent faith, hope and love.
- * The four calling birds are the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
- * The five golden rings recall the Torah, the first five books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy).
- * The six geese a-laying represent the six days of creation.
- * The seven swans a-swimming represent the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit: prophecy, serving, preaching, exhortation, contribution, leadership and mercy. [Note: remember that this list of gifts of the Holy Spirit is based upon Roman Catholic catechesis. Lutherans generally refer to nine gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12.]
- * The eight maids a-milking are the eight beatitudes listed in Matthew 5:3-10 (although Lutherans would include a ninth beatitude of Matthew 5:11).
- * Nine ladies dancing are the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).
- * The ten lords a-leaping are the Ten Commandments.
- * The eleven pipers piping are the eleven faithful disciples.
- * The twelve drummers drumming are the twelve apostles.

The next time that I hear *The Twelve Days of Christmas* I'll probably decide that it is still an annoying, never-ending song. But knowing that it was written to teach matters of faith, perhaps I'll feel just a little differently about it.

In Christ,

Pastor Terry O'Brien

Congratulations

... to all members of St. Paul Lutheran Church who are celebrating birthdays or wedding anniversaries during the month of January. Please send any additions or corrections to Barb Turner in the Church Office.



January Birthdays

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1 Andrew Karbach | 12 Mark Miller |
| 3 Madylyn Rowley | 13 Scott Loos |
| 5 Joseph England | 23 Cody Bilyeu |
| 8 Kimberlee England | 24 Tara Hicks |
| 9 Gene Craig | 25 Tim Karbach |
| 9 Jillian Schmitz | 25 Joann Leonard |
| 11 Goldie Beck | 29 Stacie Amling |
| 11 Tifenee Merrifield | |

January Anniversaries

- 18 Jason and Amy Simac (20th)
27 Ryan and Amanda Banning (5th)
29 Dick and MJ McGee (56th)
30 Jared and Kim Matthews (2nd)



Serving Our Lord in His House during January

Communion Assistant: Rob Amling
Elder on Duty: Tim Karbach

Altar Guild: Audrey Durbin, Mary
Ellen Kresin

Ushers:
Adam Cross, Head Usher
Jan. 1: Michael Chamberlain, Matt Schmitz
Jan. 8: Jason Simac, Jeff Bockewitz
Jan. 15: Larry Durbin, Bill Merrifield
Jan. 22: Mark Miller, Jerry Stone
Jan. 29: Dan Lees, John Livesay

Acolytes:
Jan. 1: Christa Bingaman
Jan. 8: Gabby Bingaman
Jan. 15: Josh Simac
Jan. 22: Christa Bingaman
Jan. 29: Gabby Bingaman

Greeters:
Jan. 1: Buck and Kay Miller
Jan. 8: Rich and Barb Amling
Jan. 15: Darrell and Tera Stremming
Jan. 22: Wayne and Joann Miller
Jan. 29: Jerry and Bev Stone

January 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10:15 Divine Service	2	3 6:30 Bible Class	4 9:00 Bible Class 5:30 Bell Choir Rehearsal 6:30 Choir Rehearsal	5	6	7 9:00 Remove Church Christmas decorations 11:00 to 1:00 Ladies Guild Epiphany Luncheon
8 9:00 Sunday School/Bible Class 10:15 Divine Service with Officer Installation 11:30 Junior Confirmation	9 6:30 Elders Meeting 7:30 Church Council	10 7:00 Voters Meeting	11 9:00 Bible Class 5:30 Bell Choir Rehearsal 6:30 Choir Rehearsal	12	13	14
15 9:00 Sunday School/Bible Class 10:15 Divine Service 11:30 Junior Confirmation	16	17 6:30 Bible Class	18 9:00 Bible Class 5:30 Bell Choir Rehearsal 6:30 Choir Rehearsal	19	20	21
22 9:00 Sunday School/Bible Class 10:15 Divine Service 11:30 Junior Confirmation	23	24 6:30 Bible Class	25 9:00 Bible Class 5:30 Bell Choir Rehearsal 6:30 Choir Rehearsal	26	27	28
29 9:00 Sunday School/Bible Class 10:15 Divine Service 11:30 Junior Confirmation	30	31 6:30 Bible Class				