

The Connection

Messages of Hope



HOPE
CHURCH | RALEIGH
WORSHIP. GROW. SERVE.

A Weekly Online Newsletter: Edition 814

December 18, 2024

“How is the birth of Jesus celebrated in...Central & South America?”

In Central and South America, the birth of Jesus is celebrated with a blend of religious devotion, family traditions, and local cultural expressions. ***The celebration is deeply rooted in both Catholic traditions and indigenous influences***, resulting in diverse practices across the region. Here's an overview of how the birth of Jesus is celebrated in different countries:

1. La Misa de Gallo (Midnight Mass)

In many Central and South American countries, **La Misa de Gallo**, or "Rooster's Mass," is an essential part of Christmas Eve celebrations. The mass, which takes place at midnight on December 24th, marks the official start of Christmas. It is a highly spiritual event, where families gather in churches to honor the birth of Jesus with hymns, prayers, and processions.

2. Posadas (Mexico and Central America)

In Mexico and several Central American countries, one of the most beloved Christmas traditions is **Las Posadas**. This reenactment of Mary and Joseph's search for a place to stay in Bethlehem takes place over the nine days leading up to Christmas Eve (December 16–24). People go door-to-door in their neighborhoods, singing carols and asking for shelter, just as Mary and Joseph did. Eventually, they are "let in," and the group celebrates with food, piñatas, and festive activities.

3. Nacimientos / Pesebres (Nativity Scenes)

The creation of elaborate **nacimientos** (nativity scenes) is a widespread tradition. Families often set up nativity scenes in their homes, some of which can be incredibly intricate, featuring not just the Holy Family but also animals, angels, shepherds, and scenes from everyday life. In places like **Guatemala**, it's common for people to create these nativity scenes using indigenous art and crafts, blending European and local traditions.

In **Bolivia**, people often include miniature figures of people from their own community or culture in the nativity scenes, emphasizing the idea that the birth of Jesus is part of everyone's story.

4. La Nochebuena (Christmas Eve) Dinner

On Christmas Eve, families gather for a large meal, often featuring traditional dishes such as **tamales**, **bacalao (salted cod)**, **pavo (turkey)**, and **pan dulce (sweet bread)**. In countries like **Venezuela**, **Colombia**, and **Peru**, families often enjoy a festive dinner together, followed by the exchange of gifts, and sometimes fireworks at midnight.

In **Argentina** and **Uruguay**, **asado** (barbecue) is a common feature of Christmas Eve dinner, as it aligns with the summer season in the Southern Hemisphere.

5. Fireworks and Celebrations

Fireworks are a major part of Christmas celebrations in many Central and South American countries. In **Nicaragua**, **Guatemala**, and **El Salvador**, fireworks light up the night sky on Christmas Eve as families celebrate the birth of Jesus. The practice of setting off fireworks is seen as a way to celebrate and ward off evil spirits.

6. Traditional Dances and Music

In many countries, the celebration of Christmas includes traditional music and dance. In **Colombia**, for example, **cumbia** and **vallenato** music are often played during Christmas parties, alongside the more common Christmas carols. In **Peru**, **misa criolla** is a form of music blending indigenous, African, and Spanish influences that is often performed during Christmas celebrations.

(Article concludes on page 3.)

HOPE Calendar

Wednesday, December 18
Wednesday Night Study
& Prayer @ 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 19
Worship Team Rehearsal @ 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 22
Worship Team Run Through
@ 8:00 a.m.
Worship @ 9:30 a.m.

Wednesday, December 25
MERRY CHRISTMAS
NO SUPPER, STUDY OR PRAYER

Thursday, December 26
Worship Team Rehearsal @ 7:00 p.m.

**Helping Hands for
DECEMBER 22, 2024**

ProPresenter
Dianne Reinoso
Soundboard
Jane Davis
Live Streaming
Diane Williams
Communion
Lynn Joyner
Greeter
Joan Rollinson

**Scripture Text and Sermon
This Coming Sunday**

ADVENT PERSPECTIVES:

John

Prophecies O.T.

Revealed.... N.T.

Dec 15 Rom 9:7
Dec 16 Gen 22:8
Dec 17 John 1:29
Dec 18 Gen 22:18
Dec 19 Gal 3:16
Dec. 20 Gen 26:2-5

GROW

Women of HOPE
Saturdays at 10a.m. at HOPE

1/11/25 - 10AM

**“Bring pics of your younger self...
what would you tell her today...”**

**Wednesday Night
Supper, Study, and Prayer**

Supper @ 6:00 p.m.

Bible Study @ 7:00 p.m.

Prayer Time @ 7:45 p.m.

**Menu: A Cup of Chicken Soup
w/ cold cut sliders, chips, and
dessert.**

**PLEASE LET ME KNOW
YOU ARE COMING.**

SERVE

“Food of the Month”
for the Raleigh Dream Center
Food Pantry
Canned Meats and Meals
We have a collection bin in the foyer

HOPE Meal Ministry
Take a meal from the freezer if
needed for you or someone else.

TLC Devotion
MONDAY, DECEMBER 23
@ 11:00 a.m.
5124 Departure Dr # 101, Raleigh

**CHRISTMAS EVE
CANDLE-LIGHT
SERVICE
DECEMBER 24, 2024
AT 5:00PM**

Prayer Requests:

Will Floyd's Fiancé's Mother: Jennifer, Jerry & Alice Kinard, Gene & Becky Hale, Dianne Reinoso, Janice Worthington, Cindy(Elizabeth), Dennis Grady, Nancy Hutchens (Positive Cancer), Ruth McNeill surgery, Leah Mack back issues, Barbara(81) Stroke, Joey(18) Crohn's, Ebo (Glioblastoma#3/4)-family has 4 children, Possible Colligate Ministry, Hurricane Relief Efforts, Youth Ministry, Kathy Jo and her family, Joan Rollinson, Ron Clifton, Donna Williams & Family, Peggy Karpenske, Claudia in Idaho (Kathy H), Patty Moyer's son Brandon, Dave & Dot Geil, Steve Duckett, Corbin Broome, Revill & Ramsey Mallory, Carol & Colin (Kathy H), Loretta (Sandi U), Joan Summers, Shelley Riggelman, Jordan (Lynn J.), Joey Lanphere (Lynn J.), Ellie Tappan, Carlyle and Cynthia Franklin,
Our Military, Police, Fire, and EMS, Missionaries.

**UPCOMING WOMEN OF
HOPE GATHERING AT THE
CHURCH**

1/25/25 - 10AM

**“Responding to Anger -
Learning to Answer Gently”**

Please remember that your
**Stewardship Commitment Cards for
2025 are due**

AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Please prayerfully consider your
financial and time
support for
Hope Church Raleigh.

**God's work is not for a few, but for all
who would follow Jesus.**

HOPE Church Raleigh
An Evangelical Presbyterian Church
4911 Green Rd
Raleigh, NC 27616
919-508-6827
Worship Time: 9:30 AM

www.HopeChurchRaleigh.org
www.facebook.com/HOPEChurchRaleigh
Twitter: @HopeChRaleigh
**YouTube.com (type “HOPE Church Raleigh”
in the search box)**

7. Festivities of the Virgin of Guadalupe (Mexico)

In Mexico, the **Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe** on December 12th is an important part of the Christmas season, especially for indigenous communities. This event commemorates the apparition of the Virgin Mary to the indigenous peasant Juan Diego in 1531. The Virgin of Guadalupe is often associated with Christmas, and her image is prominently displayed during Christmas celebrations.

8. Traditional Foods

- **Tamales** (corn dough filled with meats, vegetables, or chili and wrapped in corn husks) are an essential part of Christmas meals in many countries, especially in Mexico, Central America, and the Andean region.
- In **Peru** and **Ecuador**, families enjoy **panetón** (an Italian-style fruitcake) along with **chocolate caliente** (hot chocolate) on Christmas Eve.
- In **Chile**, **Pan de Pascua** (a fruitcake with nuts and candied fruits) is a popular treat.

9. Music and Carols (Villancicos)

Traditional **villancicos** (Christmas carols) are sung throughout the Christmas season. In many countries, these songs have both Spanish and indigenous influences, with lyrics recounting the story of Christ's birth or celebrating the season. In **Peru** and **Bolivia**, these carols often include local instruments like panpipes and charangos.

10. Santa Claus and Gifts

While many Central and South American countries retain strong religious and cultural traditions, the figure of **Santa Claus** (or **Papá Noel**) is also present in Christmas celebrations, especially in urban areas. Children often receive gifts either on Christmas Eve or Christmas morning, depending on the local customs.

11. Boxing Day and New Year's Celebrations

In some countries, **El Día de los Santos Inocentes** (December 28), akin to April Fool's Day in other cultures, is a day of pranks and jokes. On New Year's Eve, people often burn effigies of the old year, known as **Año Viejo**, as a symbolic way of letting go of the past and welcoming the new year.

Regional Variations

- **Chile and Argentina:** Christmas is celebrated in the summer, so many families enjoy outdoor meals and barbecues. The traditional Christmas foods and practices are similar to other Latin American countries but are adapted to the warmer climate.
- **Brazil:** While Brazil has a strong Catholic presence, Christmas in Brazil is marked by a combination of Portuguese and Afro-Brazilian traditions. The Brazilian celebration often includes **Ceia de Natal**, a festive dinner with dishes like **peru (turkey)** and **farofa (cassava flour)**. In some regions, **folias de Natal** (traditional carol singing) is also popular.

Conclusion

In Central and South America, Christmas is a time for family, faith, and festivity. While the specific customs vary between countries and regions, the core of the celebration is the religious observance of Jesus' birth, combined with vibrant cultural traditions and communal festivities. Whether through reenactments of the nativity, festive meals, fireworks, or joyful music and dance, the birth of Jesus is celebrated with warmth, unity, and gratitude.