

The Connection

Messages of Hope



HOPE
CHURCH | RALEIGH
WORSHIP. GROW. SERVE.

A Weekly Online Newsletter: Edition 812

December 4, 2024

“How is the birth of Jesus celebrated in...EUROPE?”

In Europe, the celebration of the birth of Jesus varies widely from country to country, with distinct customs, traditions, and cultural practices. Here's an overview of how different European countries mark the occasion:

1. Germany

- **Christmas Markets:** Germany is famous for its **Christkindlmarkt** (Christmas markets), where visitors can buy handmade ornaments, gingerbread cookies (Lebkuchen), and mulled wine (Glühwein).
- **Advent:** The tradition of the **Advent calendar** and **Advent wreath** (with four candles) is very popular.
- **Christmas Eve (Heiligabend):** The main Christmas celebration occurs on Christmas Eve, where families typically have a festive meal, exchange gifts, and attend a church service.
- **Nativity Scenes:** Many homes and churches display elaborate **nativity scenes** (Krippen) depicting the birth of Jesus.

2. Italy

- **La Vigilia (Christmas Eve):** Italians traditionally celebrate with a large family meal that often includes **fish** and **vegetarian dishes**, reflecting the tradition of fasting before Christmas Day.
- **Midnight Mass:** Many attend **Midnight Mass** at church, which is a key event.
- **Nativity Scenes:** The tradition of setting up **Presepi** (nativity scenes) is especially strong in southern Italy, particularly in Naples, where detailed, miniature scenes are displayed.
- **Feast of St. Stephen:** On December 26, Italians celebrate the Feast of St. Stephen with family gatherings and more food.

3. France

- **Réveillon:** On Christmas Eve, families enjoy a festive meal called **Réveillon**, which includes dishes like **oysters**, **foie gras**, and **roast meats**.

- **Midnight Mass:** Many attend **Midnight Mass**, and in the Provence region, it's common to create a **crèche** (nativity scene) with figurines representing not only the Holy Family but also the local community, such as shepherds, bakers, and farmers.
- **Christmas Day:** Christmas Day is typically quieter and often includes a large family meal.

4. Spain

- **Nochebuena (Christmas Eve):** Similar to Italy, **Nochebuena** is the big celebration. Families gather for a large meal that often includes **seafood**, **turkey**, and **turrón** (a type of nougat).
- **Midnight Mass:** Many Spaniards attend **Misa del Gallo** (Midnight Mass), followed by celebrations.
- **El Día de los Reyes (Epiphany):** The arrival of the **Three Kings** is a huge event in Spain. On the evening of January 5, there are parades (called **Cabalgatas**) in cities and towns across the country, and children leave their shoes out for the kings to leave gifts.
- **Christmas Lotteries:** The Spanish **Lotería de Navidad** is a national tradition, with one of the world's largest lottery draws held on December 22.

5. United Kingdom

- **Christmas Eve:** Families often gather for a festive meal, and children hang stockings for **Father Christmas** (Santa Claus) to fill with gifts.
- **Christmas Day:** On Christmas Day itself, families celebrate with a hearty **Christmas dinner**, which traditionally includes **roast turkey**, **stuffing**, **roast potatoes**, **Brussels sprouts**, and **mince pies**.
- **Caroling:** **Christmas caroling** is a popular tradition, where groups go door-to-door singing songs.
- **Boxing Day:** The day after Christmas, **Boxing Day**, is often marked with sporting events (like football and horse racing) and post-Christmas sales.

HOPE Calendar

Wednesday, December 4
Wednesday Night Study
& Prayer @ 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 5
Worship Team Rehearsal @ 7:00 p.m.

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

Wednesday, December 11
Wednesday Night Study
& Prayer @ 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 12
Worship Team Rehearsal @ 7:00 p.m.

**Helping Hands for
DECEMBER 8, 2024**

ProPresenter

Bill Joyner

Soundboard

Jane Davis

Live Streaming

Diane Williams

Communion

Donna Williams

Greeter

Joan Rollinson

**Scripture Text and Sermon
This Coming Sunday**

ADVENT PERSPECTIVES:

Mark 1: 1-8

Prophecies O.T.

Revealed....

N.T.

Dec 2	Luk 3:36
Dec 3	Gen 12:7
Dec 4	Gal 3:16
Dec 5	Gen 14:18
Dec 6	Heb 6:20
Dec 7	Gen 14:18

GROW

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

12/7

Brunch at HOPE
10am - 1pm

Wednesday Night
Supper, Study, and Prayer
Supper @ 6:00 p.m.

Please let me know you are coming

Bible Study @ 7:00 p.m.

Prayer Time @ 7:45 p.m.

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
4th Wednesday each month
@ 11:00 a.m.
5124 Departure Dr # 101, Raleigh

**! TOY DRIVE DROP-OFF BY
DECEMBER 10 IN YOUTH ROOM !**

**With the approach of 2025,
PLEASE begin to prayerfully
consider your financial &
time commitment to
HOPE CHURCH RALEIGH.**

Prayer Requests:

Toy Drive, Janice Worthington, Cindy(Elizabeth), Dennis Grady, Jerry & Alice Kinard, Dianne Reinoso, 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, Gene & Becky Hale, Kathy Jo and her family, Joan Rollinson, Ron Clifton, Donna Williams & Family, Peggy Karpenske, Will Floyd's Fiancé's Mother: Jennifer, 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 Riggleman, 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

1/11/25 - 10AM

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

Please remember that your
**Stewardship Commitment Cards for
2025 are due next Sunday,
December 15.**

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)**

6. Sweden

- **Julafton (Christmas Eve):** For Swedes, **Christmas Eve** is the highlight of the season. The day is marked by a festive meal, often featuring **ham**, **meatballs**, **pickled herring**, and **Jansson's Temptation** (a potato dish).
- **Smorgasbord:** Families enjoy a traditional **smorgasbord** (a buffet-style meal) and may exchange gifts.
- **Saint Lucia's Day:** On December 13, Sweden celebrates **St. Lucia's Day** with processions of children dressed as "Lucia brides" with candles, representing the light that overcomes the darkness of winter.

7. Poland

- **Wigilia (Christmas Eve):** **Wigilia**, the Christmas Eve dinner, is very significant in Poland. It typically includes **12 dishes** to represent the 12 apostles, including **fish** (often carp), **pierogi** (dumplings), and **barszcz** (beet soup).
- **Sharing of the Oplatek:** Before dinner, family members share a special wafer called **Oplatek** and wish each other well.
- **Midnight Mass:** Attending **Pasterka**, the Midnight Mass, is a central part of the celebrations.
- **Nativity Scenes:** Like many other European countries, Poles create **szopki** (nativity scenes), often elaborate and artistic, especially in Kraków.

8. Greece

- **Christmas Eve:** Many Greeks attend church services on Christmas Eve. The meal on this day often includes **lamb**, **pork**, and a special Christmas bread called **Christopsomo** (Christ's bread).
- **Vasilopita:** On New Year's Day, Greeks celebrate the **Feast of St. Basil** with a cake called **Vasilopita**, in which a coin is hidden. The person who finds the coin is said to have good luck for the year.
- **Carols:** Greek children traditionally sing Christmas carols, known as **kalanda**, going door-to-door.

9. Russia (and other Eastern Orthodox countries)

- **Christmas Eve (January 6):** Russian Orthodox Christians celebrate Christmas later than most Western countries, on **January 7**, according to the Julian calendar.
- **Sviatki (Christmas Season):** The Christmas season in Russia is part of a larger period of festivity, lasting from Christmas through to **Epiphany** (January 19). The eve of Christmas (January 6) is marked by a special meal of **12 dishes** representing the 12 apostles.
- **Attending Church:** The Russian Orthodox Church plays a central role in the celebrations, with **Midnight Mass** and other church services.

10. Finland

- **Jouluaatto (Christmas Eve):** Christmas Eve is the focal point of Finnish Christmas celebrations. Families have a festive meal, often featuring **ham**, **fish**, and **potato casserole**.
- **Sauna:** A traditional part of the holiday for many Finnish families is spending time in the **sauna** on Christmas Eve, as it is believed to purify the body and soul before the holiday.
- **Santa Claus:** Finland is said to be the home of **Santa Claus** (called **Joulupukki**), and on Christmas Eve, many Finns listen to the **Santa's radio** to hear stories about his journey.
- **Christmas Peace:** The city of **Turku** has a tradition of proclaiming a "Christmas Peace" on Christmas Eve.

11. Portugal

- **Consoada (Christmas Eve):** Christmas Eve is marked by a festive family meal known as **Consoada**, which often includes **salted cod** (bacalhau) and other seafood.
- **Midnight Mass:** After dinner, many attend **Missa do Galo**, the Midnight Mass, which is an important part of the celebration.
- **Feast of the Holy Innocents:** On December 28, Portugal celebrates the **Feast of the Holy Innocents**, similar to April Fool's Day, where people play pranks on each other.

Conclusion

In summary, Christmas in Europe is celebrated with a rich variety of customs, often blending religious observance with festive meals, music, and social gatherings. While the specific traditions vary, common elements include attending church services, enjoying special holiday foods, and spending time with family. Whether it's the **Christmas markets** of Germany, the **nativity scenes** of Italy and Spain, or the **Midnight Mass** in Poland and Greece, each country's way of celebrating reflects its unique culture and history.