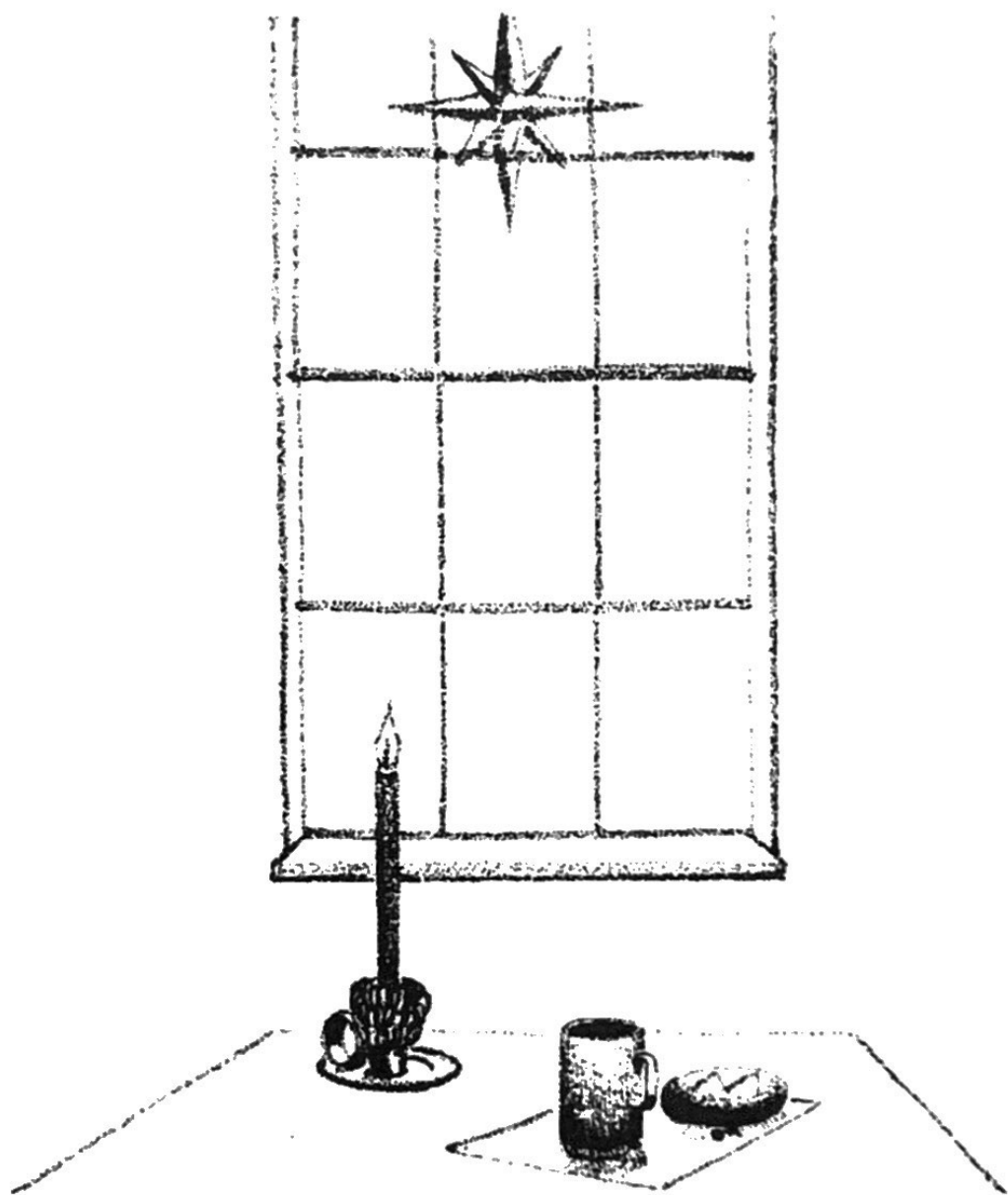




Bethania Moravian Church

Site for town selected
June 12, 1759

Congregation organized
April 13, 1760

Bethania, North Carolina

Christmas The Lobfeast

*Glory to God in the Highest and
on earth peace, good will toward men.*

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant 283
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem!
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels;
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation!
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest!
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning.
O Jesus, to Thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing.
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

PRAYER

SCRIPTURE

Joy to the world, the Lord is come; 294
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders of His love.

It came upon the midnight clear, 286
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold;
"Peace on the earth, good-will to men,
From heaven's all-gracious King;"
The earth in solemn stillness lay,
To hear the angels sing.

Angels we have heard on high 288
Singing sweetly through the night,
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their brave delight.
Ref. – Gloria in excelsis Deo,
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him Whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.
Ref. – Gloria in excelsis Deo,
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Hark, the herald angels sing, 295
"Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark, the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings.
Risen with healing in His wings.
Mild he lays His glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.
Hark, the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

BLESSING

*Come, Lord Jesus, our Guest to be,
And bless these gifts bestowed by thee.
Bless thy dear ones everywhere,
And keep them in thy loving care.*

ANTHEMS

Angels from the realms of glory, 293
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story,
Now proclaim Messiah's birth;
Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King.

Saints, before the altar bending,
Watching long in hope and fear,
Suddenly the Lord descending
In His temple shall appear;
Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King.

Softly the night is sleeping
On Bethlehem's peaceful hill;
Silent the shepherd's watching,
The gentle flocks are still.
But hark! the wondrous music
Falls from the opening sky;
Valley and cliff re-echo
"Glory to God on High!"
Ref. - Glory to God! Glory to God!
Glory to God, it rings again;
Peace on the earth! Good-will to men!

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie;
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

How silently, how silently,
The wondrous Gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still,
The dear Christ enters in.

Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child
Holy Infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night,
Darkness flies, all is light;
Shepherds hear the angels sing,
"Alleluia!, hail the King!"
Christ the Saviour is born,
Christ the Saviour is born.

Silent night, holy night,
Wondrous Star, lend thy light;
With the angels let us sing
Alleluia to our King!
Christ the Saviour is born,
Christ the Saviour is born.

OFFERING

ANTHEM

Christ the Lord, the Lord most glorious, 64
Now is born; O shout aloud!
Man by Him is made victorious;
Praise your Saviour, hail your God!

Praise the Lord, for on us shineth
Christ, the Sun of Righteousness;
He to us in love inclineth,
Cheers our souls with pardoning grace.

Praise the Lord, God our Salvation,
Praise Him who retrieved our loss;
Sing, with awe and love's sensation,
Hallelujah, God with us.

MEDITATION

CANDLE SERVICE

ANTHEM

*(The next hymn is sung antiphonally by the
congregation and choir, the congregation
singing the words in darker type.)*

Morning Star, O cheering sight! 281
Ere Thou cam'st how dark earth's night!
Morning Star, O cheering sight!
Ere Thou cam'st how dark earth's night!
Jesus mine, **In me shine;**
In me shine, **Jesus mine;**
Fill my heart with light divine.

Morning Star, Thy glory bright
Far excels the sun's clear light;
Morning Star, Thy glory bright
Far excels the sun's clear light;
Jesus be, **Constantly,**
Constantly, **Jesus be**
More than thousand suns to me.

Thy glad beams, Thou Morning Star,
Cheer the nations near and far,
Thy glad beams, Thou Morning Star,
Cheer the nations near and far,
Thee we own, **Lord alone,**
Lord alone, **Thee we own,**
Man's great Saviour, God's dear Son.

Morning Star, my soul's true Light,
Tarry not, dispel my night;
Morning Star, my soul's true Light,
Tarry not, dispel my night;
Jesus mine, **In me shine**
In me shine, **Jesus mine,**
Fill my heart with light divine.

MESSAGE OF THE CANDLE

Sing hallelujah, Christ doth live, 543
Our Light forevermore;
The Prince of Peace all glory give,
His blessed Name adore;
With kings of old, your homage pay
To him who in a manger lay;
With Judah's shepherds, bring again
The angels' song to men.

Sing hallelujah, praise the Lord!
Sing with a cheerful voice;
Exalt our God with one accord,
And in His Name rejoice.
Ne'er cease to sing, thou ransomed host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Until in realms of endless light
Your praises shall unite.

There we to all eternity
Shall join the angelic lays;
And sing in perfect harmony
To God our Saviour's praise;
He hath redeemed us by His blood,
And made us kings and priests to God;
For us, for us the Lamb was slain!
Praise ye the Lord! Amen.

BENEDICTION

The Moravian Lovefeasts

The early Christians met and broke bread together to signify their union, fellowship and love. In 1727, the Moravian Church revived this practice, and it has established the custom of celebrating the great church festivals by partaking together of a simple meal known as a "lovefeast". The first lovefeasts of the Moravian Church in North America were held in Savannah, Georgia, during the years 1735 to 1740. The first lovefeast in Wachovia was held on the evening of the arrival of the first Moravian colonists in North Carolina, November 17, 1753, at Bethabara.

The Christmas Eve Lovefeast, with its lighted candles, is one of the most beautiful services of the Moravian Church. The custom originated on the European continent at Marienborn in the year 1747, and spread throughout the Moravian world. The first Christmas Eve Lovefeast held at Bethabara was in 1753, and at Bethania in 1760. On that Christmas Eve in Bethania, the first lovefeast was held for the 24 children there. "At the close of the service each received a pretty Christmas verse and a ginger cake, the first they had ever seen." A second lovefeast was held for the congregation. In North Carolina, the candles were used for the first time in the children's lovefeast of Bethabara and Bethania in 1762. Every person is given a lighted beeswax candle as a reminder that Christ said, "I am the light of the world," and "You are the light of the world - let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

