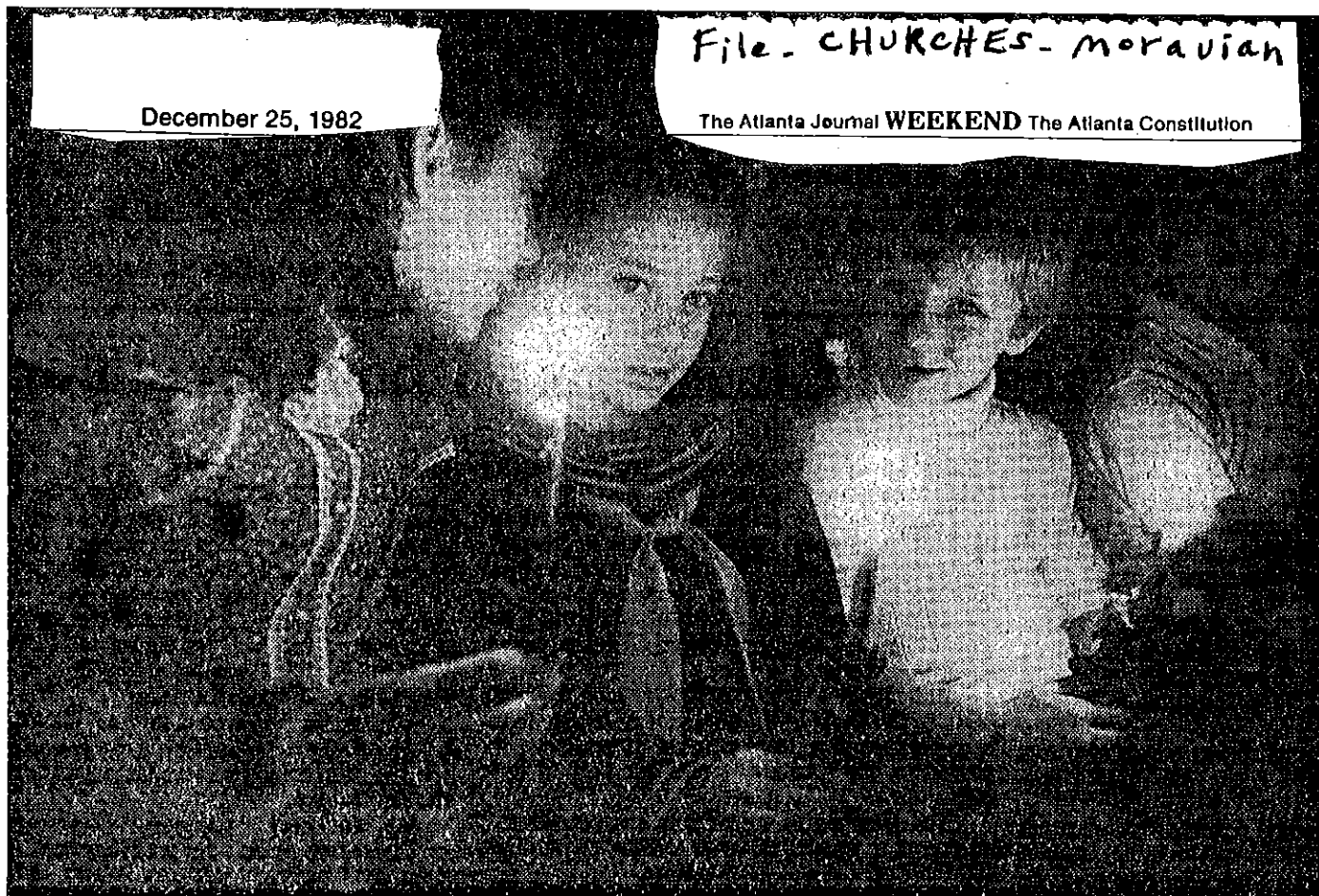


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File. CHURCHES - Moravian

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KENNETH WALKER/Staff

Amy Smith (from left), Abby Smith and Peter Viaden at Moravian Love Feast in Stone Mountain

# Love feast

## *Moravian Christmas observance a festival of senses*

By Billie Cheney Speed  
Staff Writer

The Moravian Church in Stone Mountain does not have a Christmas service. Instead, its members and others come together for a Moravian Love Feast on Christmas Eve.

The Rev. Jack Vaiden, pastor of the Moravian Church, described the annual love feast as one that involves the five senses in an act of worship and praise.

"It appeals to the sense of taste, smell, sight, hearing and touch," Vaiden said, "and those who attend the service never go away disappointed."

Traditionally, the service is a hymn fest of favorite Christmas carols, with the congregation and the choirs accompanied by a brass ensemble.

The people share a simple meal of a love feast bun, which is potato yeast bread flavored with nutmeg, mace, lemon and orange. The buns, made by the women of the congregation, are served with hot coffee with cream and sugar served in tall white mugs.

Each person also receives a handmade beeswax candle, decorated with red fringe on the bottom. It is used in the candlelight portion of the service.

The sanctuary is decorated with greenery, an advent wreath and large Moravian stars that hang from the ceiling.

"Take all these things in consideration and you can see how it would affect the senses," said Vaiden, who added one other appeal to the sense of touch. "We included in our service a time when the people greet each other with the right hand of friendship."

Most of the traditions used by the Moravians have special significance.

The beeswax used in the candles burns with a bright unflickering flame.

"It is very fragrant, and it reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world," Vaiden said. "It is also a sweet offering to atone for the sins of the world."

The red fringe on the bottom of the candle symbolizes the blood of Christ.

"We cannot separate the birth of the babe in Bethlehem from the savior who died on the cross," Vaiden said.

Vaiden said the 26-point, geometrical Moravian star testifies to the greatness of the Creator, who made the stars and also is a reminder of the star that led the wise men to the Christ child.

"Jesus is also referred to in the book of Revelation as the bright and morning star," Vaiden said. "Jesus is seen as the light of the world, equally illuminating all those who are a part of his body, the church, despite their diversity."

The Moravian Church in Stone Mountain, with 175 members, is the only one in Georgia.

Vaiden said people who have a Moravian background attend, but some have joined other churches because there was no Moravian church in the area for many years.

"We want these people to continue their ties with the churches to which they belong, but we urge them to come and celebrate the festival occasions of the church with us, and they do."

The Moravian Church, with 50,000 members in the United States, dates back to 1467 and preceded Martin Luther's Reformation by 60 years.

The Moravians came to Savannah in 1735 to evangelize the Indians but left in 1749 and founded Bethlehem, Pa. They later moved across the Shenandoah Valley to found Salem, which is the present-day Winston-Salem, N.C.

## **9A First Moravian Church Celebrating 15th Birthday With Original Liturgy**

*18th. Century Sun 3/21/90*

The First Moravian Church of Georgia invites you to share in the celebrations of the Church's 15th anniversary on Sunday, March 25, at 4950 Hugh Howell Road, Stone Mountain.

On Sunday morning at 11:00, a special worship celebration will be held. The congregation itself has prepared an original liturgy of praise and thanksgiving for this event.

First Moravian Church is the only Moravian Church in Georgia. It began in a living room, moved to a shed, grew to fill a barn, and now occupies a spacious but cozy sanctuary about ½ mile west of the intersection of Hugh Howell Road and Mountain Industrial Boulevard.

The Moravian Church is the oldest Protestant denomination in the world. The Church's history dates back to 1415, to the martyrdom of John Hus in what is now known as Czechoslovakia. Hus was burned at the stake for his beliefs, and his death invoked an intense spiritual revival which resulted in the formation of the "Unitas Fra-

trum," or the Unity of the Brethren, a name by which the Moravians are identified even today.

The Unity of the Brethren organized and spread throughout the world, advocating direct communion with God and the priesthood of each individual, as well as an emphasis on education and practical demonstration of Christian love towards all people. Later, they greatly influenced the life and work of John Wesley, founder of the Methodist church, and the Moravians were the first Protestant missionaries to the slaves in the New World.

World-wide, Moravians number about 500,000 strong. They believe in the Trinity and the baptism of believers. Moravians are located all over the United States; there are large concentrations in Winston-Salem, N.C.; Bethlehem, Pa.; throughout the state of New York, and in several states in the mid-West, including Ohio, Wisconsin and Minnesota.

The Church invites everyone to share in the worship service at 11 a.m. on Sunday, March 25.

Oct 26, 1983 DeKalb Religion Newspaper

NEIGHBOR WANT ADS/ 427-9431

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### Church Prepares For Bazaar

The Women's Fellowship of First Moravian Church of Georgia will hold a bazaar Nov. 4 from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. and Nov. 5 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. in the church's fellowship hall, 4950 Hugh Howell Road, Stone Mountain. In photo at right, Anne Badenhop of Dunwoody prepares a sugar cake for the bazaar. In photo above, Jeanette Wingate, Tucker; Ms. Badenhop; Helen Bader and Evelyn Hane, both of Stone Mountain, all work on various crafts for the festivities. Profits from the bazaar will go to a fund to erect additional educational facilities. Complimentary coffee and Moravian love feast buns will be served to shoppers.

