

Sand Creek, Wis., Christmas 1943

God Rest Ye, One and All:

"For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro in the whole earth, to show himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him!" II Chronicles 16:9.

As the Festival of Christ's Nativity again approaches we take this opportunity and employ this manner of greeting you and expressing our wishes for a Christmas with God's benediction over it. May each of your homes---be it a humble hut or modern mansion, whether in city or country---be a little Bethlehem in which the true Light of Christmas shines; may each of you be angel-inspired shepherds and star-led wisemen who find Christ as the rhyme and reason, the beauty and truth, the form and content of Christmas; may each of your hearts be as the lowly manger in which the Savior lies.

Christmas at home is earth's nearest picture of heaven. No other season or place can compare to it in giving us a foretaste of what God has in store for His people. There will be no peace in the world other than that which the Christchild gives; there will never be any joy or contentment on this sin-cursed earth apart from the joy which is in Christ. But into the Christian home Christ comes at Christmastime with peace and joy to young and old; the children take to Christmas, because it is theirs by a Child's right; of older folks it can be said that unless they become as little children they can in no wise enter into the spirit of Christmas.

We must say that God has been good to us also during this past year. He has given health and strength to all of us to bear the burdens that each day has brought us. Aside from the common afflictions to which this mortal coil is heir---colds and the like---and two or three additional incidents, we have been well. Mrs. Olson had the misfortune of sustaining a minor fracture of her right leg in slipping on an icy stairway last March; it was not so very long, however, before she was able to be around and about her duties again. Magne found it necessary to submit to a tonsilectomy last July; that left him indisposed for a while, but his well-being since then has more than compensated him already for the inconvenience of the time. Jeanette inadvertently stepped on a broken pop bottle at the Sunday School Picnic, and cut a gash in her heel that required several stitches; however, it did not prevent her from leaving next day to spend a week at the Bible Camp. Soon she was completely well---and so have we all been since then.

We are including herewith a little picture of the family to give you an idea of our present appearance. It was prepared for inclusion in the 75th Anniversary Booklet for the Zion Lutheran Church last June. We shall not appologize for this picture, since that will merely serve to aggravate its faults and imperfections. The children give this characterization of each: Merlin is like a king upon his throne; Inez looks as if she is seeing stars; Jeanette is afraid she might miss out on something; Magne is the cat who has just swallowed the canary; mother might be a brooding hen; and father thinks he is lord of all.

The war is still raging with increasing tempo for us and with unabated fury. We had hoped that this would be the year of victory and a just peace, but it was not so to be; now it behooves us to hope and pray that 1944 will bring these blessings to the world. From our two churches here some over forty men and women are in the Service, and more are being called right along. It makes one lonesome to see them go, but so it must be. We know it is the same all over our country. Those of us who are left shall have to keep the home-fires burning; we are called upon to buy bonds, donate blood, build morale, comfort the sorrowing and the lonely with the words of the everlasting Gospel, and to give a word of Life and hope to those who shall in 1944 go through the valley of death.

May the Lord lift His countenance upon us in 1944.

Sincerely
Rev. Iver Olson and family