



# Sagalee Abdii

A Periodic Newsletter of  
*Our Redeemer Oromo Evangelical Church of Minnesota*

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## Editorial Note

By Admasu Simeso

*“Those who shall be of you shall build the old waste places; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorers of path of dwell in. (Please see Sagalee Abdii Issue No VIII).*

It was a year ago that our church was given the above ‘theme’ that 2014 would be a year of rebuilding and repairing the broken and the neglected. Even though it may be difficult to quantify what we have rebuilt we are thankful to the Almighty God for some of the positive developments that are taking places in the life of our church and its members, the continuous blessings and growth we are witnessing at this special time of the year.

This time of the year is the time full of hope and looking forward. Our number is growing; we see new faces every week. People in the various ministries of the church are committed and fulfilling their responsibilities despite their personal busy schedules. We all feel strong

sense of belonging as one community of believers. We thank God that we have peace and stability!

We, the editorial team of Sagalee Abdii, would like to commend our Pastor for his commitment and leadership. The strong sense of belonging we have, the peace and stability our church is enjoying, after the work of the Triune God, in greater part is because of his leadership; his wisdom and patient in the face of many challenges, his commitment to our church and our community welcoming to his home a number of people which he does quietly. We all pray that God bless him and his family. However, when we say this we are in no way diminishing the dedication of so many members involved in the various ministries of this church: the Women Group who carry most of the burden of hard work,, the Children and Youth leadership, members of Nehemiah Choir, Ushers, Hospitality, the Media Team, the Men's Group, Prayer Group, Gamtaa, Audit Team, Building & Maintenance, last but not least Justice & Advocacy Committee and those who quietly work behind the scene, etc. The church is always busy throughout the week with meetings, practices and repairing what needs to be repaired a sign of living church. We should rejoice and thank God.

Our church is also blessed with many more Pastors and lay people who preach the Word on various church programs, sharing with us the Scripture which is helping our members to mature and understand their Christian faith in depth. Where there is maturity and depth in faith there is stability and peace. (Of'irratti hin'beeknu, hin hubannu malee Waaqayyo Gooftaan karaa baayyee nu'eebbisaa jira.) We are abundantly blessed in every aspect.

As the time is a time of Good Will and Best Wishes we send our Christmas Greetings and best wishes to all the members of the Union of Oromo Evangelical Churches, UOEC and all Christian churches committed to spreading the Good News of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus the Christ. We hope and continue to pray earnestly that the coming New Year will be the year of true building, fixing the broken relationships. We also hope that the coming year will be a year of further outreach building new contact especially with our churches back in our homeland.

As we are eagerly waiting for the coming of the Messiah, the Prince of Peace we as Christians should strive to set good example by strengthening our unity of purpose as the followers of the Lord of peace hope to remedy the strife we daily witness going on in various parts of our world.

Gallanni Waaqayyoof hataa waaqa irratti, lafa irrattis nagaan, namootaafis fedhii gaariin. (Luq 2:14). "Glory to God in the Highest, on earth peace and goodwill towards all people", Luke 2:14.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2015!

## CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR



### By Pastor Melkamu Negara

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Christmas is one of the most important holidays Christians celebrate every year. It is the time when we come together and rejoice in the love of God that came down from our caring Father in heaven to all mankind. Our Bible tells us that He “loved the world” (John 3:16). You are included in that eternal love despite of who you are and whatever your life condition might be. I want to salute and welcome you to this priceless love and joy and enjoy celebrating this love during Christmas.

Dear friends in Christ, do you remember how many Christmas you have celebrated? Probably, some of us might have started while we were very young, while others might have joined this heavenly celebration not as early as some of us did. Whatever the records of years tells us, it is not the main issue with our father in heaven. Even if we are thankful for all those years, the many years we might have celebrated Christmas may not qualify us much by itself.

I want to remind all of us about the parable Jesus told His listeners of those days in the book of Matthew 20: 1-16. The parable tells us that the landowner hired people at different time of the day for his work to be done. The ones who were hired early in the morning (v.1) assumed that they will be paid more than the ones who were hired late in the day (v.9). And have

complained to the land owner when he paid them equal (11). But the owner of the land told them that he was not unfair to any of them (v.13).

Brothers and sisters, our heavenly father is far from being unfair to any one of us. What matters most is how sincere and honest we were after we joined celebrating this wonderful event (Christmas). His main concern is your life of today and how you are walking with this wonderful fair-to all God.

While we celebrate Christmas, I encourage all of us to remember the glorious day that we are waiting for (His second coming) and also to remember the unfortunate ones by our generousities. Our people back home are in a desperate need of our support. Let us not assume that everyone is celebrating with abundance as we do (that is far from the reality). There are many who are not sure where their next meal comes from. Let us support that others too may be able to celebrate by the way of our God-given gifts.

And this generosity should not be only during the Christmas season. Our Christian life should be able to radiate to our people (mainly) throughout the year. The real Christian life is the life of sharing and caring.

May this season of the year, specially the Christmas and the New Year, be the time of sharing and remembering our people who are in a desperate situation. “But the angel said to them, do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people...today ...a savior has been born to you, he is Christ the Lord...”(Luke. 2: 10ff). Yes, it is the time of hearing and sharing the great joy that will be for all people.”  
May God bless you!

## THE ADVENT

By Pastor Melkamu Negeri

### INTRODUCTION

Christmas is an event known and celebrated among many communities, mainly Christians of all denominations. It is an event celebrated even among “non-Christians.” The atmosphere of Christmas event attracts believers and none believers to celebrate all together. Probably, for “non-Christians,” it is the context within which Christmas is celebrated before and during the Christmas that invites them to be part of the excitement of Christmas. When we celebrate some events such as Christmas, it is always good to know or remind ourselves about what we do and why we do the things we do related to those events. This said, it is only within the framework of the historical background of those events that we can clearly understand our present practice.

### THE MEANING OF ADVENT

What is advent? These days, the true meaning of advent season has been blurred by retailers who use the season for commercial purposes. The word “advent” comes from the Latin word “adventus,” which is the translation of a Greek word “parousia,” commonly used to refer to the second coming of Christ. This shows that the word “advent” refers to the coming (present and future) of a notable person. This word is used to denote both the pre-Christmas events and the second coming of Christ.

Therefore, for Christians, the season of Advent anticipates the coming of Christ from two different perspectives. On the one hand, it is

about remembering the historical event that has happened in Bethlehem. On the other hand, it is a reminder about the second coming of Christ—the Messiah. It is the four Sundays proceeding the Christmas which is known among many Christian denominations as the advent season. Therefore, despite of so many advertisements to commercialize the advent weeks over media, it is worth understanding its meaning while celebrating the event at the church and in our homes. Understanding the event gives more meaning to the way we celebrate in our homes with our family, neighbors, and friends. Yes, listening to advent season Christmas choruses or music and receiving gifts may put us in the mood of that big event. But is that all we expect to happen during advent and Christmas?

### WHAT IS THE TRUE ADVENT?

It is known that the time before Christmas (advent season) is a busy time for many people. People are busy preparing gifts for Christmas day, while many are also busy with mailing their gifts to their far-off friends or relatives. But is that the way how the advent season or the Christmas day needs to be celebrated or remembered?

The time of advent should be spent in preparation—preparation to experience the true historical meaning of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem while also reminding ourselves and each other about the second coming of Jesus in His glory (which is the most important part of advent).

The event of Christmas celebration is well known with all people mainly with Christians. We know that some people even celebrate

Christmas even if they are not Christians. The atmosphere of Christmas event attracts believers and none believers to celebrate all together. Probably, for none Christians, the external issues that happen before and during the Christmas invites them to be part of the excitement of Christmas. When we celebrate some events, it is always good to know why we do things related to those events. If we know the historical background of what they were doing, it would give us more meaning.

What are we supposed to do during advent/Christmas? Giving and receiving gifts are all good things to do. But yet we should remember that “the wise men from the east-the magi” gave gifts to the baby child Christ who was laid in the manger wrapped with cloths (Lk.2:7). They gave very important gifts (gold, incense-frankincense and myrrh-). We do not read anywhere that they gave gifts for other people or each other not even for the king whom they have encountered (king Herod). The gifts were only meant for Jesus. Because, the gifts represent Jesus’ ministry, death, and resurrection

Frankincense: Frankincense comes from a tree of unusual hardness--to the point where they have a reputation of growing out of solid rock. The hardness of the tree signifies the times of the life of Jesus that they will be difficult, riotous times and yet that Jesus will grow roots and flourish. Furthermore, the spice from the tree is used for incense, signifying his priestly role on earth.

Myrrh: Myrrh was a perfume and a burial spice used in ancient Egypt. This represented his death that he would have to endure. Gold: It is the metal of kings. This signifies his kingdom that is established after his death. Furthermore, gold is a metal that does not rust or fade, signifying that his kingdom would be eternal.

The fact that this is the only gift of the three that is a metal signifies that the other two were temporary in nature (his life and his death) while the gold (his kingdom) was eternal in nature.

#### DURING ADVENT/CHRISTMAS:

Make more commitment to Jesus; visit the sick and lonely, make peace with others, give for the needy and your church more importantly, look forward for the son of God Jesus Christ who is coming in glory.

### **Christmas: Joy to Those Who Mourn**

By Samuel Deressa

Now that the time has come to celebrate Christmas, it is not a surprise to see Christians around the world decorating their homes, worship places, and streets to show their joy to the world. Choirs sing “joy to the World,” and preachers (parents to their children as well) tell stories of Mary, the mother of Jesus wondering around with this idea of giving birth to a child named Emanuel (God with us). Business centers and malls also make the best use of such celebrations in making profits. I would imagine that it has also become a tradition among many families and communities to come together and share food and drink this time of the year.

However, I wonder if anybody asks what these sounds of joy would mean to someone who is going through throbbing experience due to critical health condition, dire poverty, or loss of his/her beloved ones? What has the message of Christmas to do with people who are in such kinds of situations? Is it not true that Christmas, most of the time, is time of a year when we discern conflicting of voices—a voice of those

who shout for joy and a voice of those who, when we take a closer look at the biblical texts referring to the birth of Jesus, the main message they declare has three main components to it: peace, justice, and righteousness. Some thousand years back, prophet Isaiah declared: “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever” (Isiah 9:6-7).

A child is born to bring peace, justice, and righteousness. Those who are in need of peace, justice, and righteousness are mainly those who mourn because of injustice, lack of peace, and different kinds of suffering they are going through each day. Martin Luther explains the experience of these people using a Latin word *tentatio*, which can be translated as tribulation. For Luther, *tentatio* is a “touchstone which teaches you not only to know and understand but also to experience how right, how true, how sweet, how lovely, how mighty, how comforting God’s word is”—because Christ is born for those experiencing *tentatio*.<sup>1</sup>

Our brothers and sisters in Ethiopia have been going through such experience for decades. They have mourned for too long because they are in desperate need of peace, justice, and righteousness. As a congregation, and as part and parcel of the Oromo community back home, we also mourn with our people. We have assigned one Sunday and one Friday evening each month to remember them, and pray for

them. As we mourn, it is also vital to remember the message of Christmas that gives us hope of peace, justice, and righteousness.

## HUNGER FOR HIS SPIRIT:

By Asfaw Benti Silga<sup>1</sup>

Probably one may think that I might try to say something about my tenure in the council for the last two terms, four years altogether. I can say in short it was an opportunity to serve the Lord and His people. By His grace the impossible is possible, the darkness turns to light, the zigzag becomes straight. Where God guides He provides! He provides the necessary wisdom by His far-reaching grace.

Thanks be to His glorious name. The grace that helped me through is helping my colleagues, has helped those before me and will continue helping those coming in to the service. This much suffices about the past. I have no doubt in the presence of the Holy Spirit in our worships, various services, and meetings for which I am happy and thankful to God. However, Jesus at a certain point taught in plain language to ask for more. Therefore, I am not be mistaken if I long for the best, to seek for the manifestation of the power and glory of Jesus in our midst. The best is yet to come!

As Christians we need not be satisfied by what we see or attained rather should hunger to get the most available through Christ by striving to live the life we are expected according to the Word; in persistence we are required to do more to see the glory of the Lord, the free movement and flow of His mighty power, the salvation of souls, to see believers are regenerated and revived in order to live a victorious Christian life,

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Luther’s Word 34:287.

in order to be salt and light! It is simple if we could commit and surrender. If we eat the word, make an effort to live by, and ask the Lord, He is ready to pour His spirit that could bring super joy to our life. The visitation of the Holy Spirit brings us peace, unity, love, healing, multiplication, and strength to serve. It needs us to focus on what really pleases the Lord, our most high, in order to be fruitful. Jesus has something special for us in store. But to get to it, it demand us to be more intentional than emotional, a path full of process and preparation, a task that needs planning and bringing all aboard to dream together, work together, sustain and finish together. By doing so we could attract and grow, we could live and pass a legacy of faith to the next generation.

In order to be effective here, as a community church, or think further growth, let us all seek, pray, dream and envision the glory of the most high to dwell and rest among us. This brings the joy of the Lord; and the joy of the Lord is our strength, Nehemiah 8:10. If we get the strength we can do much better, satisfy the spiritual hunger and thirst of all of us. We need revival, restoration, to seek the face of the Lord, to grow into His likeness, to strengthen a process that could salvage a church in this era of spiritual crises. And it is not impossible! The grace enables and empowers, let us rededicate ourselves to the Lord! The gardener/vine/branches relationship and interdependence is an all-time reminder to make us focus on the basics, John15:1-17. God never imposed on us in any way things that we cannot do. His commandments are bearable by his grace. Let us make it a resolution of the year to PLEASE our Lord in any way we can, to see Him glorified, to feel the mighty wind moving, to serve Him more effectively, to bear much fruit, and to be a blessing in our action and

interaction, to feel and see the joy of the Lord, to ensure our strength. The Lord said: "if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. 2 Chronicles 7:14. This is what we should continually seek and vision for in order to revive, survive and strive as a believer and as a church. May the birth of Jesus brings us back into a born-again relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, today and in the years to come. Amen.

Wishing you all a Wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year!

## NEWS FROM OROECM

By Admasu Simeso

Since our last issue of Sagalee Abdii a number of events have taken places in and around our church. We note down few of them below.

### Election of New Council Members:



The election of two new OROECM Council members to take the place of the two outgoing members, who completed their four year service on the Church Council, the Vice President Obbo Asfaw Benti Silga and Obbo Gamachu Geleta was conducted on Sunday, 07 December 2014. Accordingly Obbo Yadesa Birri was elected Vice President and Obbo Daniel Petros as a member.

On behalf of all our members we at Sagalee Abdii extend our sincere gratefulness to the outgoing members for their commitment and dedicated services to their church over the last four years. We also welcome the new Council members to this important call of their church to provide leadership in fulfilling its ministries in various areas.

### Baptism:

Seven children were baptized and became part of the children of our church.

### Peace and Advocacy Workshop:

On December 13 2014 the OROECM Peace and Advocacy Committee conducted a workshop and discussions what as Christians our role should be in promoting peace as well as speaking against all forms of injustices wherever it occurs, primarily with the situation of our people.



Justice and Advocacy Committee from Left to right” Habtamu Awetu, Anne Atomsa and Ephraim Olani.

## Marriage:

A member of our church Obbo Hundee Errenaa and Aadde Bashatu Lamuu got married. Sagalee Abdii wishes them a happy marriage of many years to come.



Aadde Bashatu Lamuu and Obbo Hundee Errenaa

Aadde Leemanee Warqineh who is also a member of our church who serves in Nehemiah Choir and Obbo Gugsaa Jetu got married in our church on 12/20/2014, the last marriage of 2014 in our church. We wish them the Lord's blessings of their marriage.



Aadde Leemanee Warqineh and Obbo Gugsaa Jetu

## Memorial service for Aadde Tsehay Tolasaa.

On Sunday 23 November 2014 a memorial occasion was held at our church in Aster Gannoo Hall honoring the life of Aadde Tsehay Tolasaa the wife of the late Rev Gudina Tumsa of EECMY.



Aadde Tsehay Tolasaa the wife of the late Rev Gudina Tumsa of EECMY

## Youth and Children:

As usual Obbo Jote Batal is taking his volunteering commitment to the Youth and Children Ministry of our church seriously and looking after them and organizing activities for them. Without Jote's commitment we do not know what would have happened to this important ministry of our church. Sagalee Abdii says our church should take this ministry seriously and support Jote and also sincerely say God bless him and his family.



## Articles from the Youth:

### Youth and Children Ministry:<sup>2</sup>

By Sololiya Baisa



*"Get the word out. Teach all these things. And don't let anyone put you down because you're young. Teach believers with your life: by word, by demeanor, by love, by faith, by integrity. Stay at your post reading Scripture, giving counsel, teaching. And that special gift of ministry you were given when the leaders of the church laid hands on you and prayed—keep that dusted off and in use." -1 Timothy 4:11-14*

The Youth and Children's Ministry of Our Redeemer Oromo Evangelical Church has been around for over a decade now. This program was formed to create a spiritual and cultural foundation for the children and even the future of our church. As a ministry we have grown and overcome many obstacles together. We are currently in the process of re-vitalizing and strengthening our connection with each other and God. While we are trying to become active

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<sup>2</sup> It is wonderful and we rejoice in the Lord that the House of the Lord is full of Youth and Children. We are also thankful that 3 youth members contributed to the following articles.

within our church community and creating this amazing environment for our youth to grow, we are also in the process of figuring out how to go further and take the Lord's word and put it into action outside of our church. We have accomplished many things within the past two years such as; Vacation Day Bible School, Fundraising events, Children's Field Trips and Youth Retreats, but we could not have done any of these things without the assistance of the members of the church and for that we are grateful. There are still many things that we have yet to do in order to accomplish our goal of being a strong and unified youth group, but with the grace of God we hope to achieve them soon.

### **Origin of the Christmas tree**

By Hundara Joottee Dinqaa



Long before Jesus was born evergreen plants played an important part in people's lives, which they regarded as a symbols of everlasting life. The evergreen tree was an ancient symbol of life in the midst of winter. Romans decorated their houses with evergreen branches during the New Year. Others also cut down evergreen

trees and used them for decoration during the winter months.

The main reason was to celebrate the winter solstice – the time of year that had the shortest daylight hours, and the longest nights of the year. As the days appeared shorter due to lack of sunlight, many feared that the sun would disappear forever leading to everyone freezing and living in darkness.

Due to the fact that evergreen trees survived during the winter months unlike many other deciduous trees and bushes, the people of those days believed that the trees had special powers that helped them withstand the cold. Nowadays, the usage of coniferous trees during the celebration of Christmas has been adopted by almost all Christians worldwide, including the Oromo people living in Oromia as well as in Diaspora.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

### **When was our Lord Jesus Christ born?**

By Yaadaa Qannoo



The biblical account of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ presented in Luke 2:1-11 is partially paraphrased as follows: Caesar

Augustus ordered a census of his citizens to be taken. Hence, every person living in the entire Roman world had to go to his/her own respective town to register.

Thus, Joseph belonging to the line of David, also went to Bethlehem to be registered. He took with him his wife, Mary who was in her ninth month of pregnancy. Due to the on-going census, hotels in the town were totally over booked. As a consequence, Joseph and Mary had nowhere to stay. Their only choice was to overnight

That was where Mary gave birth to a baby boy. After his birth, Mary wrapped up the baby in cloths and placed him in a manger or trough, from which cows ate their feed. During this time, there were in the same country shepherds who were tending to their flock. An angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds and announced that the Savior had been born in the town of David.

Suddenly a great host of heavenly beings appeared with the angels and began singing praises to God. As the angelic beings departed, the shepherds decided to travel to Bethlehem and see the Christ child.

### **Water for our Health: The Seven Wonders of Water.**

(Adopted from WebMD)

By Dr. Qannoo Baanjaaw Dhowaa

#### **1. STAY SLIMMER BY DRINKING WATER**

Instead of consuming alcohol or beverages of high calorie contents, drink a glass of water before a meal so that you feel fuller and hence will eat less. If the water you intake is icy cold, your body will work more to warm it up and thus burn a few extra calories in the process.

Similarly, you may eat food items with high water content such as fruits, vegetables, soups, oatmeal, etc. to experience the same effect of feeling full.

#### **2. WATER WILL BOOST YOUR ENERGY**

If you are feeling dehydrated and depleted, drink pure water. Dehydration makes you feel tired, while the right amount of water will make your heart pump your blood more effectively. This will help your blood to transport oxygen and other essential nutrients to your cells to produce more energy.

#### **3. LOWER STRESS BY DRINKING WATER**

About 70% to 80% of your brain tissue contains water. If you are dehydrated or worse if you feel thirsty, your body and mind are stressed. Therefore, to keep stress levels down drink plenty of water.

#### **4. KEEP HEALTHY MUSCLE TONE with WATER**

Your skin contains a large amount of water. Drinking water helps prevent muscle cramping and also lubricates joints in the body. When you are well hydrated, you can exercise better and feel stronger.

#### **5. NOURISH YOUR SKIN**

Fine lines and wrinkles are deeper when you are dehydrated. Water is nature's own beauty cream. Drinking water hydrates skin cells and plumps them up, making your face look younger (Have you observed wilted leaves?).

#### **6. STAY Regular with WATER**

Along with fiber, water is important for good digestion. Water helps dissolve waste particles and passes them smoothly through your

digestive tract. If you are dehydrated, your body absorbs all the water, leaving your colon dry and making it more difficult to pass waste. This can cause constipation.

## 7. WATER REDUCES KIDNEY STONES

Water dilutes the salts and minerals in your urine that form the solid crystals known as kidney stones. Kidney stones can't form in diluted urine. Therefore, keep away kidney stones by drinking plenty of water!

## Upcoming Events:

Three important events are scheduled to take place in our church before the end of the current year 2014. 1) Christmas eve worship and celebration at the church, 2) the annual end of the year spiritual conference from 26-28 December 2014 in our church and 3) New Year eve Celebration at the church to say goodbye to the 2014 and welcome 2015.



Sagalee Abdii on behalf of OROECM would like to acknowledge the very essential technical support provided freely by the Yadesa brothers and Dawit. Thank you and God bless you!

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Chali Yadesa for the design of the new Sagalee Abdii logo and Gamachiise for the formatting and layout of the publication and all the technical input and Dawit for web posting design. Without their help it would have cost our church a substantial amount. Waaqayyo isaan ha'eebbisu!

Sagalee Abdii

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