



What is Yule Feast all about?

MPC's Yule Feast began in the early 1970's and celebrates the Epiphany, the time when we remember the Magi or the Three Wise Men who brought gifts to the Christ child, and in doing do "reveal" him to the world as God's son. We trace many of our feast traditions to mid-winter Christian festivals of medieval Britain. And many of those traditions date further back to solstice celebrations such as the Roman Saturnalia, the Anglo-Saxon Modraniht (Mother Night), and the Norse Juul. These mid-winter celebrations were characterized by feasting, drinking, and general merrymaking marking a shift to longer days and the return of the sun.

As Christian beliefs overtook pagan customs in Europe, Christmas and the Epiphany were laid atop these earlier winter festivals and incorporated many of the ancient traditions. Yule and Christmas became synonymous.

The Yule Log is one of the oldest traditions dating back to the Scandinavian Juul, a 12-day festival celebrating the rebirth of the sun. In more modern times, a large log was placed in the hearth and burned for twelve days from Christmas to Epiphany. Our Yule Child riding atop the Yule Log is a nod to the early traditions and reminds us of the warmth of the family fireside.

The modern Boar's Head festival dates back to 1340, in Oxford, England but has roots in ancient times when boar was the most feared beast of the forest. Boar was a staple at medieval feasts and the boar's head was served to the head table with an apple in its mouth. Christians adapted the presentation of a boar's head at Christmas to symbolize the triumph of the Christ child over sin.

Wassail, from the Olde English "was hal" meaning "be you healthy" includes many drinking and singing traditions as well as a pre-Christian apple orchard blessing ritual. Revelers sprinkled wassail-soaked bread onto tree trunks and made noise to awaken the trees for the new growing season. The wassail bread or "toast" is thought to be the origin of modern day toasting to one's health!

The candles lighting our sanctuary remind us of the return of light after a long winter, and the evergreens the rebirth of the green, growing season. Our Yule Feast, with its interplay of drama and delight forges ties between past and present and brings the MPC family together at Christmas to remember the baby and God's gifts of light and life.

This will be MPC's 35th Yule Feast celebration! Make sure you are there!
Join us on January 6, 2018 beginning at 5 pm!