

Augustana Endowment Society
Historical Reflections from Dec. 2023
by Janet Moline

Christmas at Augustana

This week the Augustana Historical Society released a book entitled: "Feasts and Festivals: The Story of Winter Traditions at Augustana College." This book is free to those who belong to the Augustana Historical Society. Edited by History Professor Brian Leech, it is a compilation done by his students in the Spring 2018 oral history course. The librarians and staff at the college's Special Collections found photos and documents to include in the book. Other alumni, staff, faculty and administration contributed, too.

Once again, Covid stymied the project. To become a book required some serendipity. The English Department Brett Biebel taught a Book Publishing Course in Spring 2023 and needed a topic. And so the short book was produced.

Topics include chapters entitled: Swedish Roots, Christmas Concerts, Celebrating Sankta Lucia, A Smörgåsbord of Fun, A Campus Kwanzaa, The Joy of Christmas, A Hillel Hanukkah, A Season of Light and Giving, Developing Dia De La Virgen, Students' winter Entertainment, Making Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, and Home Away from Home. Each chapter ends with a holiday poem by Dr. Dorothy Parkander.

I wondered if some of the activities were on the Augustana Calendar this December. Some of you attended the Christmas at Augustana concert this weekend and perhaps attended the Dance Company's fall dance performance on Saturday. The Julbord Dinner open to the public was on Monday night at Gävle, followed by the Festival of Sankta Lucia at Ascension Chapel. Tonight at 7:30 is the Joy of Christmas with its candlelight procession to sing carols in the Jenny Lind Chapel. The guest preacher is Dr. Alex Jones, professor of communication sciences and disorders. Then the attendees return to Augustana Lutheran Church, a short walk away, for cookies and hot chocolate. As in the past buses transport Augie students to Andover.

Tomorrow at 4:00 is the Lighting of the Christmas Tree, a conifer behind Old Main, by President Talentino. With treats and other festivities, of course.

Friday night at 7:30 is the Jazz Ensemble Concert, entitled "Swingin' Christmas at Augustana" at Gävle.

And starting on Saturday through Friday the 15th is the Season of Light at the John Deere Planetarium, 2:00 on the weekend and 7:00 during the week. It's free but reservations are needed due to space.

So what's next Sunday, you ask? It's the Lessons and Carols at Ascension with the Chamber Singers and Ascension Ringers offered at 3:00 and 5:00.

Finally, the January event mentioned in the book continues on Monday Jan. 15 at Gävle with the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. commemoration celebration called "Called to Love."

Not mentioned in the book but happening since 1895 is the December meeting here today of the Augustana Endowment Society with Christmas music and table decorations. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas!