

## What is Martinmas?

Martinmas Feast is a traditional feast that has been held for centuries in parts of Europe on November 11<sup>th</sup>, the feast day of St. Martin of Tours. As a young man, St. Martin was a Roman soldier who was a kind man who led a quiet and simple life. The most famous legend of his life is that while on horseback as a soldier, he met a starving man begging alms at the city gates. Moved by deep compassion, he tore his red, woolen cloak in two with his sword and gave half to the beggar. The next night, he had a dream in which he saw Jesus wearing the half of the cloak he'd given away, surrounded by angels. In the dream, Our Lord asked him to look at it and to see if he recognized it. He did, of course, and realized that he must convert and devote his life to Christ. He spent years preaching the Gospel and his popularity grew to such an extent that when their bishop died, the town elected him as the new bishop. St. Martin is the patron of beggars, vintners, equestrians, soldiers, tailors, innkeepers, alcoholics, and geese. He is usually depicted in art on horseback, handing half of his cloak to a beggar.

Martinmas is also considered the first day of winter for all practical purposes. The Feast coincides with the harvesting of the crops, the time when newly-produced wine is ready for drinking, and the end of winter preparations, including the butchering of animals. Martinmas Feast is much like our American Thanksgiving, a celebration of the earth's bounty. Because it also comes before the penitential season of Advent, it is also seen as a Fall-season "carnivale" with all its festivities.

The day is celebrated in the evening in parts of Flanders and some parts of the Netherlands and most areas of Germany and Austria. Children go through the neighborhood with paper lanterns and candles, and sing songs about St. Martin in return for a treat. Often, a man dressed as St. Martin rides on a horse in front of the procession.

St. Luke's Martinmas Feast is held near the date of St. Martin's feast day and during Stewardship's annual pledge appeal. It is held in thanksgiving for all the blessings God has bestowed upon our community, and in the spirit of St. Martin, our willingness to share what has been given to us. Stewardship teaches us that all that we have, and all that we are, are gifts from God. We are therefore, stewards of God's gifts during our lifetime.

A Silent and Live Auction is held during the Martinmas Feast to highlight and support the many ministries here at St. Luke's. These ministries include moveable feast, children's and adult formation, the choir program, and the Isaiah projects, just to name a few, which not only support our parish but also the local and global community.

Besides an opportunity to raise much needed funds, Martinmas Feast is also a fantastic evening of fellowship and fun which includes not only the auction but also dinner and entertainment. Martinmas Feast was such a success last year that we hope to make it an annual event.

This year we also hope that you will invite friends and family who have never been to St. Luke's, or who do not visit us that often, so that these special guests can come to know who we are and what we do as a community.

**We hope that you and your guests can join us on November 15<sup>th</sup>!**

If you have any questions or need further information regarding Martinmas please feel free to ask Rosemary Bayzer or Chris Roberts.