

MORAVIAN MOMENT #93

The Chief Elder Festival

The Moravian Church is a liturgical church, meaning we observe the festivals of the worldwide Christian Church with appropriate services, starting with the beginning of the church year, the first Sunday of Advent. In addition, we observe Memorial Days that are of special significance to the history and spiritual life of the Moravian Church. This week, we celebrate the Chief Elder Festival which proclaims Jesus Christ as the Head of the Moravian Church.

Leonard Dober, one of the first two Moravian Missionaries was head of the Moravian Church, but it became too difficult for him and he thought of giving it up. He determined that at the Synod in London in September 1741, that he would relinquish that position. After prayerful consideration at the London Synod, Jesus Christ was unanimously declared as Chief Elder of the Moravian Church on September 16, 1741. The Synod knew that it would take a considerable amount of time to circulate the information throughout the Moravian World and so it was agreed that November 13 was appointed as the day to celebrate the Chief Elder Festival. This celebration declares that Jesus Christ is large and in charge in the Moravian Church. He is Master, Head, Leader, Chief Elder and the Lamb that has conquered and so we will follow Him.

September 16 the day on which the decision was made, is observed as Covenant Day of Ministers and Church Workers of the Moravian Church.

The anniversary of this announcement to the congregations in the Moravian World has become one of the great festivals of the Moravian Church. The festival is celebrated in different ways in the Moravian Church World Wide. The purpose of celebrating the historical event with services, including the Love feasts, Cup of Covenant or Holy Communion is to offer to every member the opportunity to realize that Jesus Christ is Head and Chief Elder of the Moravian Church. No human person could or can be Chief Elder in the Moravian Church. This position is only reserved for Jesus Christ. He is also Head of each individual believer, and on this day members should consciously renew their pledge of loyalty and confirm in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper their personal fellowship with the Saviour. May this 267th Chief Elder Festival find us acknowledging Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords of our lives. Our Lamb has conquered, let us follow Him.

November 09, 2008