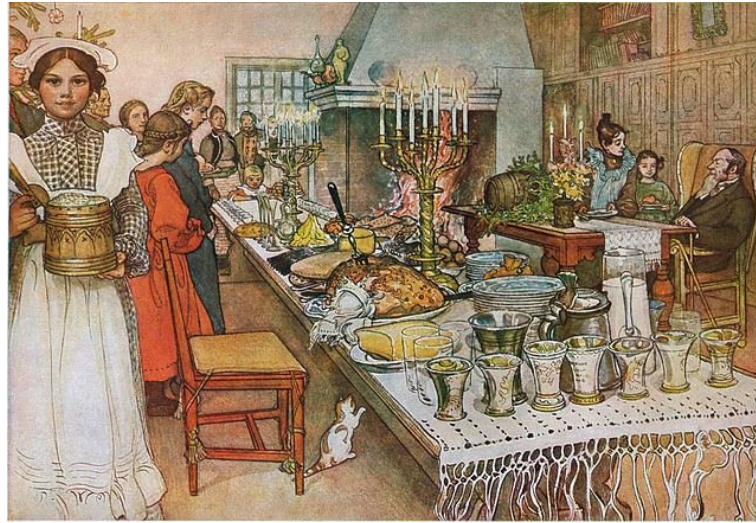


EXPECTATIONS OF LIGHT AHEAD



This painting by Swedish painter Carl Larsson, dated 1904, depicts a Christmas Eve gathering. Family members present are not giddy but quietly enjoying the prospect of the feast they will share, set out before them. Snow falls outside in the growing dark as candle and fire light fills the space within. The picture is illuminated as well by the serving girl's soft smile – she and what she bears, created by human hands, are as important and warming as the light within the room.

Tonight in my household we are making Swedish cookies from a recipe left to us by a departed family member. We laugh over happy memories we shared with them, and now make new memories over this messy communion flavored with cinnamon, sugar, and too much butter. The fun and memories are as important as the cookies themselves; they create the foundation for decades of holidays yet to come.

I hope you are also someplace warm and happy tonight, enjoying pleasant memories and making more. Do something joyful, whether for yourself or others, even if you are alone. Embrace the expectation of increasing light in the days ahead.

And I wish Marcy and Mr. Wheel, Jim, bmaz, Ed,

their families, and all the rest of the
Emptywheel crew and community a very happy and
peaceful Christmas.