



Sankta Lucia Festival

*'This hour her vigil,
and her eve, since this
Both the year's and the
day's deep midnight is.'*

—JOHN DONNE

BY MARIANNE MONSON

During the dark winters of Scandinavia, where a polar night can stretch as long as eighteen hours, you may chance to hear a song that translates:

“Night walks with a heavy step
Round yard and hearth,
As the sun departs from earth,
Shadows are brooding.”

If you are there near the winter solstice, you may get lucky and see a woman wearing a crown of greenery and a circle of flickering candles, wending her way through town as the candlelight she carries reflects from mounds of glistening snow. Accompanied by magi bearing staffs of stars, this is the annual festival of Saint Lucy, or Sankta Lucia, as she is known in Sweden.

On our northern Oregon Coast, this yearly Scandinavian tradition is celebrated the day after Thanksgiving to dispel the dark and cold of winter and to herald the light of the Christmas Season.

At 7 p.m. Friday at Astoria High School, the Sankta Lucia Bride represented by Isabel Talley (Miss Denmark 2019) will enter the auditorium wearing her crown of candles and accompanied by her court attendants and star boys. The legend of Lucia will be read and ChrisLynn Taylor will lead a singing of holiday carols. Brandy Larsen and Faith Swanson will sing the Lucia song. Viking Nordic Scandia dancers will perform, and the 2020 Scandinavian Midsummer Festival court will be introduced.

After the Lucia ceremony, Astoria's accordion band, “The Polka Dots,” will play music for dancing around the



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Isabel Talley, the 2019 Sankta Lucia Bride.