

South of the Border: Biblical Times Relived in Rock Hill

From July 31 through August 4, from 6 to 8 p.m. each evening, about 200 members of St. John's United Methodist Church on Oakland Avenue in Rock Hill, S.C. donned early Jewish garb, ate Jewish food and performed religious rituals and generally practiced Jewish tribal traditions as people did 2,000 years ago.

The event, called Marketplace, 29 A.D., was sponsored by the Bible school group.

"We wanted to experience life as it was when Jesus lived so we could have a feel for the Jewish family, their ritual, their worship and their responsibilities," said Janet Wilson, Marketplace chairwoman.

Each family joined one of the 12 tribes of Israel for the week. Participants dressed by wrapping themselves in sheets and other cloth held together with rope; they also wore sandals. Each night they first

gathered in the synagogue tent, after which the tribes met in 12 tents for dinner, performed daily duties and religious rituals and then moved to the marketplace to learn crafts. Even a brick well was constructed, as the well was considered the "center of life" during Biblical days. Around the well there were shops where skills were taught and demonstrated: kitemaking, ropemaking, metalworking, basket weaving, cloth weav-

ing, pottery making, baking, carpentry, stonemaking, candymaking (from honey, dates and nuts) and brickmaking (local clay, straw and water). There was also a money-maker, who demonstrated how to pound steel flat and imprint it with a symbol.

Occasionally they stopped their apprenticeships at the marketplace at the sound of the ram's horn to watch a drama, hear a storyteller or

participate in a dance.

Just as Civil and Revolutionary War reenactment groups engage in recent living history, St. John members participated in age-old living history.

Editor's Note: Thanks go again to Ruth Silverberg of Rock Hill who sent articles to me on this exciting story from the *York Observer* and *The Rock Hill Herald*.

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