

## FOR CHILDREN

### *Why the Evergreen Trees Never Lose Their Leaves*

**W**INTER WAS COMING, and the birds had flown far to the south, where the air was warm and they could find berries to eat. One little bird had broken its wing and could not fly with the others. It was alone in the cold world of frost and snow. The forest looked warm, and it made its way to the trees as well as it could, to ask for help.

First it came to a birch tree. "Beautiful birch tree," it said, "my wing is broken, and my friends have flown away. May I live among your branches till they come back to me?"

"No, indeed," answered the birch tree, drawing her fair green leaves away. "We of the great forest have our own birds to help. I can do nothing for you."

"The birch is not very strong," said the little bird to itself, "and it might be that she could not hold me easily. I will ask the oak."

So the bird said: "Great oak tree, you are so strong, will you not let me live on your boughs till my friends come back in the springtime?"

"In the springtime!" cried the oak. "That is a

*Parents who read this story to their children may be interested in knowing that its author, Florence Holbrook, also wrote "A Prayer," which caught the attention of the young Max Heindel when he was living in Liverpool, England in the mid-1880s. He writes in the Rosicrucian Christianity Lectures, pg 278: "The following lines appeared in London Light a number of years ago and have been treasured by the writer as AN IDEAL PRAYER." The "lines" comprise what Heindel retitled "The Rosicrucian Fellowship Prayer," which is reprinted on the next page in its original version.*



Photo Craig Solter

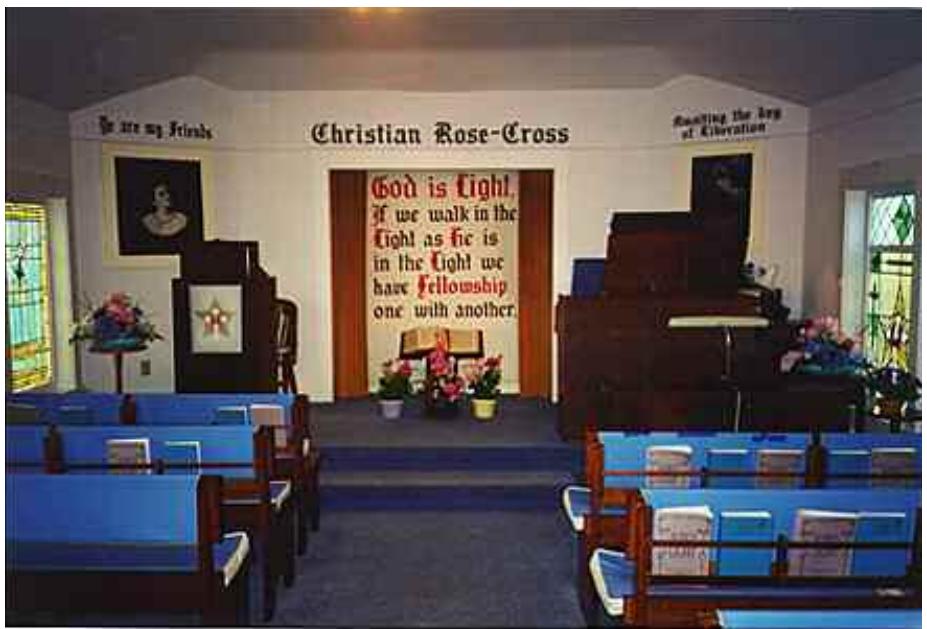
long way off. How do I know what you might do in all that time? Birds are always looking for something to eat, and you might even eat up some of my acorns."

"It may be that the willow will be kind to me," thought the bird, and it said: "Gentle willow, my wing is broken, and I could not fly to the south with the other birds. May I live on your branches till the springtime?"

The willow did not look gentle then, for she drew herself up proudly and said: "Indeed, I do not know you, and we willows never talk to people whom we do not know. Very likely there are trees somewhere that will take in strange birds. Leave me at once."

The poor little bird did not know what to do. Its wing was not yet strong, but it began to fly away as well as it could. Before it had gone far a voice was heard. "Little bird," it said, "where are you going?"

"Indeed, I do not know," answered the bird



*West-facing view of the Chapel or Pro-Ecclesia, where (Holbrook's) "The Rosicrucian Fellowship Prayer" is read each Sunday near the conclusion of the eleven o'clock service.*

sadly. "I am very cold."

"Come right here, then," said the friendly spruce tree, for it was her voice that had called.

"You shall live on my warmest branch all winter if you choose."

"Will you really let me?" asked the little bird eagerly.

"Indeed, I will," answered the kind-hearted spruce tree. "If your friends have flown away, it is time for the trees to help you. Here is the branch where my leaves are thickest and softest."

"My branches are not very thick," said the friendly pine tree, "but I am big and strong, and I can keep the North Wind from you and the spruce."

"I can help, too," said a little juniper tree. "I can give you berries all winter long, and every bird knows that juniper berries are good."

So the spruce gave the lonely little bird a home; the pine kept the cold North Wind away from it; and the juniper gave it berries to eat.

The other trees looked on and talked together wisely.

"I would not have strange birds on my boughs," said the birch.

"I shall not give my acorns away for any one," said the oak.

"I never have anything to do with strangers,"

said the willow, and the three trees drew their leaves closely about them.

In the morning all those shining, green leaves lay on the ground, for a cold North Wind had come in the night, and every leaf that it touched fell from the tree.

"May I touch every leaf in the forest?" asked the wind in its frolic.

"No," said the Frost King. "The trees that have been kind to the little bird with the broken wing may keep their leaves."

This is why the leaves of the spruce, the pine, and the juniper are always green. □

## A Prayer

Not more of light I ask, O God,  
But eyes to see what is:  
Not sweeter songs, but ears to hear  
The present melodies:  
Not more of strength, but how to use  
The power that I possess:  
Not more of love, but skill to turn  
A frown to a caress:  
Not more of joy, but how to feel  
Its kindling presence near,  
To give to others all I have  
Of courage and of cheer.  
No other gifts, dear God, I ask,  
But only sense to see  
How best these precious gifts to use  
Thou hast bestowed on me.  
Give me all fears to dominate,  
All holy joys to know;  
To be the friend I wish to be,  
To speak the truth I know.  
To love the pure, to seek the good,  
To lift with all my might  
All souls to dwell in harmony,  
In freedom's perfect light.