

Coming Events at Abiding Grace:

Ongoing Weekly Activities

Sundays at 8am	Worship
Sundays at 9:15am	Sunday School and Adult Bible Study
Sundays at 10:30am	Worship
Sundays at 12:00 noon	Choir Practice
Sundays at 12:00 noon	Confirmation Class
Mon., Wed., Fri. 9-12am	Preschool (when Newton County Schools are in session)
Tuesdays at 7 pm	Bible Information Class
Wednesdays at 7pm	Kids Club (0-10 year olds)
Wednesdays at 7pm	Youth Group (Middle Schoolers and High Schoolers)
Wednesdays at 7pm	Adult Bible Study
Fridays at 9am	Building on the Rock (for developmentally disabled)

Upcoming Special Events

Sun. Jan. 14 th 8& 10:30	Commitment Sunday / New Member Welcome Banquet
Feb. 2-4 (Money due by next Sunday)	Youth Ski Trip Weekend – Gatlinburg, TN
June 26-29 th (Sign up NOW)	International Youth Rally for High Schoolers
July 23 rd -28 th (Sign up NOW)	Camp S.O.U.T.H. (for 4 th -8 th graders)

Chair Committee – Help us get New Chairs for the Sanctuary!!!

On January 14th, after the New Member Welcome, a new committee will meet for the first time. In our Plan of Ministry, we agreed to put together a plan for purchasing new matching, comfortable chairs for our Newton County Sanctuary. We'd like interested people who are willing to help do some research and put together a proposal for our net Voters Meeting come together and make a plan! Let Pastor Scharf or Brian Patrick know if you are willing to serve in this way!

Abiding Grace Contact Information:

Church Office: 770-385-7691
Website: www.abidinggrace.com



A SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

ABIDING GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Covington, Georgia

December 31st
In the year of our Lord 2017

OPENING HYMN

Once in Royal David's City (vv. 1-4)
Christian Worship #50

EXHORTATION AND PRAYER

SPOKEN BY PRESIDENT PETER SAHLSTROM & ELDER JOE HERMAN

L(iturgist): Beloved in Christ: In this Christmas season it is our duty and delight to hear again the message of the angels and, in heart and mind, to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us, the Christ-child, lying in a manger.

Let us read and learn in Holy Scripture the story of the loving purposes of God from the first days after our fall into sin to the glorious redemption brought to us by this Holy Child.

But first, let us pray for people all over the world, who would delight with us to know the good news of Jesus Christ and who would join with us in singing his praises. Let us pray for the people of Atlanta and for all those in our own congregation.

And because this would please our Lord, let us remember, in his name, the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry, and the oppressed; the sick and those who are sad, the lonely and the unloved, the elderly and the little children. We especially remember all those who do not know the Lord Jesus, or who do not love him, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Finally, let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us in heaven, who live in greater light than we, that multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, who died in faith, and who live before the throne of God and praise him each day in his temple. We confess that we are united with them as we are united with one another.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven in the words Christ himself taught us:

C(ongregation): **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

Joy to the World
Christian Worship #62

Welcome! *It is wonderful to have all of you here with us today to worship our amazing God. Please stick around after worship to meet and get to know better your brothers and sisters in Christ.*

If the Spirit has worked through His Word today and moved you to want to find out more or to get involved – please speak to Pastor Scharf, Vicar Saatkamp, or any of the members after worship. You can also get a hold of Pastor Scharf using the contact information found on the back page. If you have any questions or comments about anything that went on here or what was taught, again - please speak to Pastor Scharf or any of the members after worship. And come again next week as we join together to worship our newborn King. See the announcements and calendar following for other Bible Study, fellowship, and service opportunities.

Through Your Bible in a Year: Check out the back table for some schedules to help you read through all of God's Word in an organized way in 2018. Several different options are available. You could choose to read it chronologically, straight through, or through readings from various sections each day. Schedules are available for each. God bless your study!

Grow closer to your Savior in 2017 – New Bible Information Class starting in January

As you remember today how important your Savior is to you – commit to growing in your relationship with Him this next year. One great way to do that is through Bible Information Class. It's a commitment of 12 sessions, about an hour each. Each week, we'll go through one key teaching of Scripture and let God's Word answer our questions and help us understand him more. This also serves as our new member class. We'll provide everything you need, even child-care, if you sign up in advance. Classes will be set based on a time that works for all who are interested. Sign up on the sheet in the gathering area and come grow with us!

Commitment Sunday – Jan. 14th, 8 & 10:30am - As we begin another year, let's think about what commitments would be good for our spiritual health. Come to this special Sunday (also our new member welcome) where we'll focus on what God has to say to us about committing to him. Following the 10:30 service there will be a pot luck meal and some presentations on some of the ways to get involved at Abiding Grace.

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Sincere thanks go to the many members who participated in this service of Lessons and Carols—the choir and musicians, as well as to our Congregational Leaders (Councilmen and Elders) for sharing God's Word in the readings. Please keep them all in your prayers all year long.

NINTH LESSON

READ BY ELDER JASON PERTOSO

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God--children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- *John 1:1-14*

CHOIR ANTHEM: WERE YOU THERE ON THAT CHRISTMAS NIGHT *by Natalie Sleeth*

PRAYER

SPOKEN BY ELDER GREGG BURKHALTER

- L: O God, who makes us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of your only Son, Jesus Christ, grant that as we joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him when he shall come to be our Judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C: Amen.

THE BLESSING

- L: May he who by his incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill us with such joy that comes with the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life. And the blessing of God Almighty: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you always.
- C: Amen.

PART I: *THE PROPHECY*

FIRST LESSON

READ BY TREASURER BRIAN PATRICK

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" The man said, "The woman you put here with me--she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, 'Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.'" - *Genesis 3:8-15*

- *Genesis 3:8-15*

THE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

- L: Adam and Eve had sinned and brought sin on our race. We have joined right in with our sins of thought, word and action. We do not deserve to be in God's presence. But God comes to us with the same promise we heard him make to Adam and Eve. So as we come into his presence today, let us confess our sins to God our Father, trusting His promise of the One who crushed sin and Satan's head:
- C: **Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful, and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.**
- L: God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

HYMN

From Heaven Above to Earth I Come (vv. 1-3, 13 & 15)
Christian Worship #38

SECOND LESSON

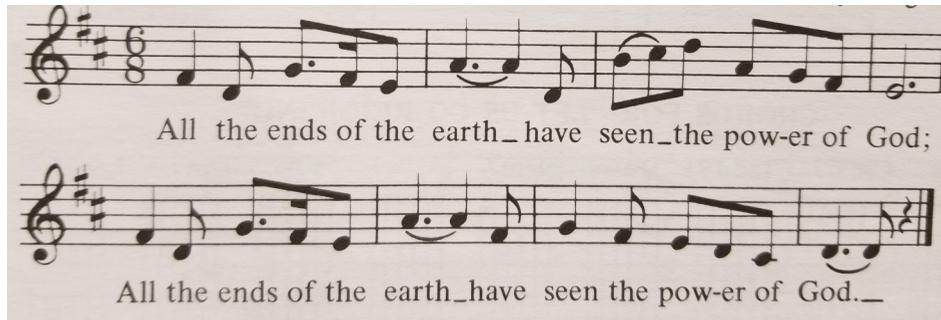
READ BY ELDER MITCH DIETZEL

The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore...and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed."

Judah, your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons will bow down to you. You are a lion's cub, O Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness — who dares to rouse him? The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his.

- Genesis 22:15-18 and 49:8-10

CHOIR: PSALM 98 *All The Ends of the Earth* by David Haas & Marty Haugen
The Congregation is invited to join in on the refrain.



*Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done wondrous deeds;
 his right hand has won the vict'ry for him, his holy arm.*

*The Lord has made his salvation known, his justice revealed to all.
 Remembered his kindness and faithfulness to Israel.*

*All of the ends of earth have seen salvation by our God.
 Joyfully sing out all you lands, break forth in song.*

*Sing to the Lord with harp and song, with trumpet and with horn.
 Sing in your joy before the king, the king our Lord.*

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written: "'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.'"

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him." After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

- Matthew 2:1-12

THE OFFERING

*The members of Abiding Grace Lutheran Congregation have joined together to do the Lord's work in this community and around the world. Visitors need not feel obligated to participate in this offering which supports our ministry. During the offering please take a moment to fill in the **friendship register** that is being handed down your aisle. After everyone has signed it, it may be placed on the floor beneath the chair at the end of the row.*

THE OFFERTORY

SEVENTH LESSON

READ BY ELDER JEFF FARRIES

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.
- Luke 2:8-20

HYMN: Angels, We Have Heard on High
Christian Worship #63



THIRD LESSON

READ BY ELDER BILL KING

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

- Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 and 7:14

HYMN: Where Shepherds Lately Knelt
Christian Worship #54

FOURTH LESSON

READ BY DIRECTOR OF OUTREACH JOSEPH LIGHTSEY

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor gives birth and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites. He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.
- Micah 5:2-4

HYMN: O Little Town of Bethlehem (vv. 1-2,4)
Christian Worship #65

FIFTH LESSON

READ BY ELDER ALAN EMERY

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

Luke 1:26-35, 38

THE MAGNIFICAT

Arr. James Chepponis

(Cantors introduce the refrain once; congregation joins in the second time and for each subsequent refrain.)

Refrain:

Musical notation for the first line of the Magnificat refrain: Pro - claim the great-ness of God; re -

Musical notation for the second line of the Magnificat refrain: joice in God, my Sav - ior! Re -

Musical notation for the third line of the Magnificat refrain: joice in God my Sav - ior!

Verses:

For he has favored his lowly one, and all shall call me blessed. The Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. Refrain.

He favors those who fear his name, in ev'ry generation. He has shown the might and strength of his arm, and scattered the proud of heart. Refrain.

He has cast the mighty from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with all good gifts, and sent the rich away. Refrain.

He has helped his servant Israel, remembering his mercy. He promised his mercy to Abraham and his children for evermore. Refrain.

PART II: THE FULFILLMENT

SIXTH LESSON

READ BY ELDER GREG PORTER

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

- Luke 2:1-7

THE CHOIR ANTHEM: MINUET NOEL

by Jean Anne Schafferman

The first Noel the angel did say was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay; In fields where they lay keeping their sheep on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Then did the angel say, "Born to you on this day in Bethlehem a Child, tender meek and mild, Lord of all." So with great joy they ran quickly to Bethlehem, led by the star so bright, shining through the night, Noel! Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel!

And by the light of that same star three wise men came from country far; To see the star was their intent, and to follow the star where'er it went! Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel!