



peace for the
BROKEN

The **FESTIVAL** *of the* **NATIVITY**
of our **LORD**

Christmas Eve
In the Year of our Lord
2017



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CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Welcome! Thank you for joining us for worship at this celebration of Christ's birth. In our service we gather to marvel at our God who loved us enough to pay a debt he didn't owe because we owed a debt we couldn't pay. We gather to worship and praise him, even as we strengthen ourselves through the study of God's holy and powerful word. Here are some things that might be helpful for you as we worship:

- ✠ **The Bulletin and Hymnal:** This bulletin you're holding has the entire order of service printed out for you. You'll need the hymnal only for the singing of the hymns listed in this bulletin. You can also scan the many resources for prayers, songs and other information in the hymnal as you take some time to meditate here in God's house.
- ✠ **Restrooms:** You'll find them down the hall behind you on your left.
- ✠ **Babies and other young ones:** Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them." It is important that our children get into the habit of being in church with the family. And as a result, sometimes we get to hear their spontaneous "joyful noises". If, however, you feel that your child is growing overly disruptive, feel free to make use of our staffed nursery where you can drop your child off with the volunteer and return to the sanctuary or watch the service from there with your child.
- ✠ **The Ushers:** If you have any questions, please ask the men standing in the back of the room.
- ✠ **The Singing of Carols:** Before the service begins, we'll take a few minutes to sing some classic Christmas carols to place our focus on the beautiful message of God becoming a child for us so that we could be His children forever.

OUR THEME FOR THIS NIGHT

Peace for the Broken. From broken hearts to broken bones to broken budgets or broken dreams, we all know what it means to live in a world that is so often broken. We know what it means to feel that brokenness in our lives. That's why Christmas happened. God became man – with a heart and body that could be broken, so that he could heal us. Tonight, God's Word will help us see how Jesus brings us **Peace for the Broken**. May God bless our worship to that end.

THE SEASON OF CHRISTMAS

For over a thousand years the Christian world has marked the passing of time from the year of Jesus' birth. Recognizing his coming into the world as the central event in the story of humankind, Christians count the years before his birth as B.C. (*Before Christ*) and the years after his birth as A.D. (*Anno Domini*, the *Year of Our Lord*).

An event so important wasn't just celebrated for a day or two. Early Christians would celebrate Christmas for twelve days. (You are perhaps familiar with the song *The Twelve Days of Christmas*.) Our celebration of Christ's birth will follow that ancient pattern. Here are other opportunities to worship in this Christmas season.

- *Monday, December 25 at 10:30AM* — **Christmas Day Worship** — In our celebration of the Incarnation, we'll gather again in the morning to celebrate with Word and song Jesus' birth. We'll consider the historic Christmas Day Gospel – John 1, as we see God's grace brightly.
- *Sunday, December 31st at 8 & 10:30AM* — **Service of 9 Lessons & Carols** — Our celebration continues as we use this historic service to remember the promises that Christmas makes. We'll have special music by the choir and plenty of chances to sing our favorite Christmas hymns interspersed among the 9 Lessons.
- *Sunday, January 7th at 8 & 10:30AM* – **The Festival of the Epiphany - *Wise Men Seek Him*** — Christmas ends on the day known as Epiphany, “the Gentile Christmas.” While it actually falls on the 6th, we celebrate it on Sunday. On this day we commemorate the way God guided Gentiles to their salvation with a special star.

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Kyrie & Gloria from Jesus, Compassion of God by David Haas, © 1999 by GLA

Were You There on that Christmas Night by Natalie Sleeth © 1976 by Hope Publishing

Christmas Eve Carol Singing

HYMN #42, v. 1-3, & 5 – *Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising*

HYMN #35, v. 1-3 – *Of the Father's Love Begotten*

HYMN #46, v. 1-3 – *Your Little Ones, Dear Lord, Are We*

HYMN: *Mortals, Now Be Still and Ponder.*

Tune of hymn 361CW. Text by Laurie Biedenbender. Copyright 2002. Printed by permission.

Mortals, now be still and ponder Mysteries beyond our sight.
Word that was with God in darkness, Calling forth the first day's light -
Word takes flesh and dwells among us, Virgin-born in Beth'lem's night.

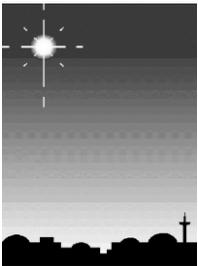
Mortals, now be still and ponder Rhapsodies transcending earth.
Angels sing the glory-wonder: Christ descends to such a birth.
Depth of love we cannot fathom - God declares we have such worth.

Mortals, now be still and ponder Prophecies Isaiah sings:
Son of God becomes the servant, Crushed and bent to sufferings.
Born to die in Calv'ry's darkness, Light and life to us He brings.

HYMN #56, v. 1-3 – *Gentle Mary Laid Her Child*

HYMN #53, v. 1-4 – *To Shepherds as They Watched by Night*

HYMN #41, v. 1-4 – *Let All Together Praise Our God*



A Prayer before worship:

*Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child, prepare a bed, soft, undefiled,
Within my heart, that it may be a quiet chamber kept for Thee.
My heart for very joy does leap. My lips no more can silence keep.
I too must sing, with joyful tongue that sweetest ancient cradle song.
Glory to God in highest heaven, who unto us His Son has given!
While angels sing with pious mirth a glad new year to all the earth! Amen.*

- Martin Luther

ORDER OF SERVICE

THE BELLS: *As the bells call us to worship, our eyes are drawn to the acolyte lighting the candles on the Advent wreath reminding us that the light of the world has come to us here on earth. We also see the processional cross entering the sanctuary, reminding us that Christ's work on the cross is the reason he came first to the stable. May God bless our time in His house here tonight!*

THE WELCOME BY THE PASTOR:

PASTOR SCHARF

THE CALL TO WORSHIP

P(astor): In the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C(ongregation): Amen.

P: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

C: The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. (John 1:5)

P: Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.

C: We have seen the glory of the Christ, the glory of the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

P: For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given. (Isaiah 9:6)

C: In him was life, and that life was the light of men. (John 1:4)

P: O Loving God, you once caused this holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light. Turn our thoughts toward Bethlehem and the Christ-child, God's greatest gift for us. May the words of Scripture we hear tonight remind us again that the old story is ever so new. May the hymns and carols we sing tonight reveal to us again the mystery of his birth. May all who have known that Light on earth come to the full measure of its joys in heaven.

C: Help us, O Lord, in our worship this night. Amen.

THE OPENING HYMN: #45 – Oh, Rejoice, All Christians, Loudly

CONFESSION OF SINS AND ABSOLUTION

L(iturgist): Since we come before God bearing our burdens of sin and sorrow, guilt and shame, let us confess our sins in the presence of God and of one another because He has dealt with those sins already.

C: **Holy and gracious God, I confess that I have sinned against you. Some of my sins I know – the thoughts and words and deeds that I am ashamed of – but some are known only to you. In the name of Jesus Christ I ask for your forgiveness.**

L: God has sent His Son to win that forgiveness. He was born to live and die and live again for us. 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.

C: Amen.

L: In the peace of forgiveness, let us pray to the Lord.

Kyrie Eleison: (*sung by the cantor and congregation*) *by David Haas*
The title of this ancient song, Kyrie Eleison, means "Lord, have mercy."

Lord Jesus, you raise us to new life:
Kyrie eleison, eleison, Kyrie. **Kyrie eleison, eleison, Kyrie.**

Lord Jesus, you forgive us our sins:
Christe eleison, eleison, Criste. **Christe eleison, eleison, Christe.**

Lord Jesus, you feed us with your body & blood:
Kyrie eleison, eleison, Kyrie. **Kyrie eleison, eleison, Kyrie.**



Gloria: (sung by the choir and **congregation**)

by David Haas

The title of this ancient song, *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*, means "Glory to God in the highest."

Glo-ry to God in the high - est!

Glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God! Glo-ry to God

Last time to Coda ♪

in the high - est! Peace to his peo - ple on earth!

♪ Coda

Peace on earth!

*Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,
We worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. (refrain)*

*Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world:
Have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father; receive our prayer. (refrain)*

*For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
With the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. (refrain- 2 times)*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: Let us pray.

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true light. Grant that as we have known on earth the wonder of that light, we may also behold him in all glory in the life to come; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

THE WORD OF GOD

THE FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 9:2-7

² 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.

³You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as men rejoice when dividing the plunder. ⁴For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. ⁵ Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire.

⁶For 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. ⁷ 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.



THE CHILDREN'S SERMON

The children are invited to come forward for a message directed especially toward them.

THE SECOND LESSON: Titus 2:11-14

¹¹For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. ¹² It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope-- the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.



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

*Were you there, were you there on that Christmas night, when the world was filled with a holy light?
Were you there to behold, when the wonder fore-told came to earth?*

*Did you see, did you see how they hailed Him King, with the gifts so rare that they chose to bring?
Did you see how they bowed, as they praised Him aloud at His birth?*

*Did you hear how the choirs of angels sang, at the glory of the sight?
Did you hear how the bells of heaven rang, all through the night?
Did you know, did you know it was God's own Son, the salvation of the world begun?
Did you know it was love that was sent from above to the earth?*

THE GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 2:1-20

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to his own town to register.

⁴ 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. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ 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.

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

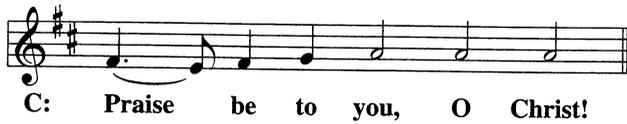
¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

¹⁵ 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." ¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

THE RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL:

L: This is the Gospel of our Lord.



THE HYMN OF THE DAY: #54 – *Where Shepherds Lately Knelt*

THE SERMON:

Isaiah 9:2-7

Peace for the Broken



THANKSGIVING

THE OFFERING:

*The members of Abiding Grace Lutheran Congregation have joined together to do the Lord's work in this community and 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

HYMN: #62 – *Joy to the World* (The Choir will sing verse 2. The Congregation is encouraged to sing verses 1 & 3-4.)

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH:

- P: Oh gracious and almighty Father, we praise you that you kept your ancient promises by sending your everlasting Son in human flesh,
- C: On this holy night, receive our thanks and devotion, our songs and prayers.**
- P: You sent Jesus as the Savior of the world to deliver all from the curse of sin, the power of death, and the torment of hell. He took our place. He was born under the law to set us free. He became the innocent lamb of sacrifice. He came to die and rise again in order that we might live eternally. Firmly implant this good news in our hearts, and fill us with an eager desire to spread the Word concerning what we have heard tonight.
- C: May all who hear the message, in every nation under heaven, be amazed and believe what is told them about this child.**
- P: You sent Jesus as the light of the world to drive out all darkness that would rob us of the full life that you intend for us. May the “joy that will be for all people” be our joy. May the “peace on earth to all on whom his favor rests” be our peace. May the treasure that Mary pondered in her heart be our treasure.
- C: For today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to us. He is Christ, the Lord. Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

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.

THE LORD'S BLESSING

P: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another.

Serve the Lord with gladness.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

C: Amen.

THE CLOSING HYMN #60, *Silent Night! Holy Night!*

During the introduction, the acolytes will light your candles from the flame of the Christ candle on the Advent wreath. Please tip the unlit candle to the flame of the person next to you as you pass the flame down the aisle, so as not to drip wax from the lit candles. May God grant us always the peace His birth has won for us.



*After the Service...please stick around and greet one another on this most special day. There are refreshments available in the room adjacent to this one, as well as all sorts of information about Abiding Grace, and opportunities to get involved. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak with Pastor Scharf or Vicar Saatkamp after the service. And please join us again here for **Christmas Day worship tomorrow** at 10:30am. Bible Study and Sunday School is at 9:15 on Sundays, worship at 8 & 10:30.*

Living the Peace God gives: Read Your Bible in a Year!

Time in God's Word fills us with the peace of his promises. There are a lot of great ways to take time in God's Word every day. Please do it! You won't regret it. If you are interested in trying to read through the Bible in its entirety in 2018, check out the table in the gathering area with schedules that can help you. These will be attached to the member email this Wednesday as well if you prefer a digital copy. If you don't get those emails, sign up at the links below 😊

Receive Daily Devotions and Church Updates in Your Email

If you're not already getting daily devotions and church updates in your email, go to the links below and sign up!

- Daily Devotions: http://eepurl.com/bA_6dL
- Weekly Sermons: <http://eepurl.com/cy7DA>
- Invitations and Upcoming Events: <http://eepurl.com/dJ-EA>
- Weekly Bulletin Announcements: <http://eepurl.com/dSY19>

Opportunities in the Word for the Whole Family

BIBLE INFORMATION CLASS (BIC)

Come join us for this class designed to answer your questions and strengthen your relationship with God. We'll cover the basics of what Christianity is all about and answer your questions about God's Word and all the different teachings out there. BIC serves as our new member class, but everyone is welcome, whether you are considering membership or not. Childcare is available. All materials will be provided. Come grow with us! You can either jump in to the current class which is a little over half-way through or sign up for the new class starting in January!

Current Class - Tuesdays at 7pm (on Lesson 7)

Upcoming Class – Beginning in January Sign up now and you can have input on day of week and time of class. I'll check with everyone on the list to try to get a time that works for all!

Wednesdays in the Word

Beginning again in January, join us each Wednesday for a great opportunity for the whole family to grow in God's Word! With Bible studies and activities for every age group, it's a wonderful mid-week pick-me-up!

Adult Bible Study – 7pm

Youth Group (Middle & High Schoolers) – 7pm

Kids Club (1-10 year olds) – 7pm

SUNDAY SCHOOL!!! – SUNDAYS AT 9:15AM

Do you want your kids to know their Savior? God says we learn to know him through His Word. Don't miss this great opportunity to get your kids into the habit of getting to know the One who will give them peace throughout their lives. Make a commitment in the New Year to have your children in Sunday School (and you can grow in the Word at Adult Bible Study at the same time). There are classes for each age group to learn at their level.

PRESCHOOL!

Same goes for our preschool program! There are still spots available in our 3&4 year old class for this year, and for both the 2-year old and 3-4 year old classes for the 2018-2019 school year. Register early to ensure your space and this great quality Christian Education for your child.

Upcoming Youth Activities – SIGN UP NOW!

Teen Ski Weekend!

Are you still looking for a great present for your kids (\$125 or \$165 depending on if you tube or ski)? How about an awesome weekend of skiing and fellowship with other teens from all over the Southeast! February 2nd-4th is this year's WELS Teen Ski Weekend. It will be in the mountains of Gatlinburg, TN. Activities begin Friday night and go through Sunday afternoon. Check out the signup sheet in back for all the details, sign up there, and then **register online today!**

WELS International Youth Rally – June 26th-29th

Sign up now since registration fills up fast and we will want to get a jump start on the fundraising for this amazing trip. Last time, there were around 2000 youths coming together to grow in God's grace in Colorado. This year, we'll travel to the campus of Bowling Green University for this week of worship and workshops and activities and friendship and fellowship and a whole lot of fun. The cost is \$345/participant if we register early enough.

Camp S.O.U.T.H. – July 23rd-27th

This AMAZING event is right in our backyard at the FFA camp in Covington. Sign up now so we can make plans to have a great group involved. More information coming, but last year was \$275 per participant for the whole week.

Announcements

Commitment Sunday / New Member Welcome – Jan. 14th

Join us on Jan. 14th to welcome all our new members from the previous year. (New Members – make sure you mark your calendars to be here!!!) We'll have a great meal after the 10:30 service with a program welcoming new members and letting everyone know about a bunch of the opportunities to get involved here at Abiding Grace. This Sunday is also our "Commitment Sunday". We'll be encouraging all those who have been *thinking about* getting involved in a church to come and make a change in 2018! And each of us will have the opportunity to consider what time and talents we want to commit to God's work here in 2018.

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 next Voters Meeting come together and make a plan! Let Pastor Scharf or Brian Patrick know if you are willing to serve in this way!

Coming Events at Abiding Grace:

Ongoing Weekly Activities

Sundays at 8am	Worship (except next Sunday 12/31 – Unity Sunday)
Sundays at 9:15am	Sunday School and Adult Bible Study
Sundays at 10:30am	Worship
Sundays at 12:00 noon	Choir Practice
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

Mon. Dec. 25 th , 10:30am	Christmas Day Worship
Sun. Dec. 31 st , 10:30am	Service of 9 Lessons and Carols – Unity Sunday (No 8am service)
Sat. Jan. 13 th , 8am	Men’s Bible Study (Henry County Campus)
Sat. Jan. 13 th , 11am	Canvassing (Come help us invite our neighbors)
Sun. Jan. 14 th , 8 & 10:30	Commitment Sunday / New Member Welcome Banquet
Feb. 2-4	Youth Ski Trip Weekend – Gatlinburg, TN
Sat. Feb. 10 th , 8am	Canvassing (Come help us invite our neighbors)
Wed. Feb. 14 th , 7pm	Ash Wednesday Worship
Sat. Mar. 24 th , 10am-2pm	Easter4Kids (3-10 yr. olds) e4k.abidinggrace.com
Thur. Mar. 29 th , 7:30pm	Holy Thursday Service
Fri. Mar. 30 th , 7:30pm	Good Friday Service
Sun. Apr. 1 st , 7am	Easter Sunrise Service
Sun. Apr. 1 st , 10:30am	Easter Festival Service followed by Easter Egg Hunt
June 26-29 th (Sign up NOW)	International Youth Rally for High Schoolers
July 23 rd -27 th (Sign up NOW)	Camp S.O.U.T.H. (for 4 th -8 th graders)

Merry Christmas!