



The Good Shepherd Lays Down His Life for the Sheep

Abiding Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
Covington, GA

... where families connect



ABIDING GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH



Prayer before worship

Lord God,
thank you for
bringing me
here this
morning to
worship you
and to be fed
by your Word.
Open my
heart and my
mind to hear
your Word.
Give me
comfort
knowing that
you shepherd
me through
all of life's
dangers. Help
me always
listen to your
voice.

In Jesus name,
Amen.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

APRIL 22, 2018

Welcome to Worship! Thank you for joining us for worship this morning. We're glad you are here and pray that God bless our time together in the Word. We are in the season of Easter, a time when we see our risen Savior Jesus who won the victory over sin, death, and the devil. Today God's Word comforts us with the picture of Jesus as our Good Shepherd, who loves his sheep, protecting us from every enemy. Today we also celebrate the blessing of Holy Communion. Questions for personal preparation are on page 156 in the front of the hymnal. If you haven't received the Lord's Supper here before, please speak to Pastor Scharf before doing so, due to the warnings God's Word attaches to it. Here are some things that may help 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. Specifically, today, the "Easter" section might be helpful, hymns 141-168.
- **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. As a result, sometimes we get to hear their spontaneous "joyful noises." If, however, you feel that your child is growing overly disruptive, there is a room down the hall on your right where you can watch the service on our closed circuit TV. Volunteers will stay with your child if you would like to return to the sanctuary for worship.
- **The Ushers:** If you have any questions, please ask the men standing in the back of the room. They will be happy to assist you as much as possible.

THE ORDER OF SERVICE

PASCHAL GREETING

L(iturgist): Christ is Risen!
C(ongregation): **He is Risen indeed!**

WELCOME BY THE PASTOR

L(iturgist): In the name of the Father, and of the Son †, and of the Holy Spirit.
C(ongregation): **Amen.**

OPENING HYMN 541

LORD JESUS CHRIST, WITH US ABIDE

CONFESSION OF SINS

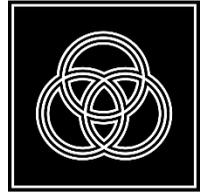
L: God invites us to come into his presence and worship him with humble and penitent hearts. Therefore, let us acknowledge our sinfulness and ask him to forgive us.

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.**

ABSOLUTION

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.

C: **Amen.**



Greeting

The *Paschal Greeting* is one of the oldest and most widespread traditions in the Christian Church. Throughout the weeks of the Easter Season, whenever the minister says “*Christ is risen!*” the people respond “*He is risen indeed!*”



PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: Let us pray.

O Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Good Shepherd who laid down your life for the sheep. Lead us now to the still waters of your life-giving Word that we may abide in your Father's house forevermore; for you live and reign with him and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

THE WORD OF GOD

FIRST LESSON

ACTS 20:28-32

²⁸ Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. ²⁹ I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. ³⁰ Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. ³¹ So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

³² "Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

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



**Dignus est
Agnus**

The *Dignus est Agnus* is an ancient song of praise that the church often sings in place of the *Gloria* during the Easter Season. It shows up in our hymnal as hymn 265, "This is the Feast of Victory."

PSALM OF THE DAY: PSALM 23 *(read responsively)*

L: The LORD is my shepherd,

C: I shall not be in want.

L: He makes me lie down in green pastures;

C: he leads me beside quiet waters.

L: He restores my soul;

C: he guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

L: Even though I walk through the valley
of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,

C: for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

L: You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

C: You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

L: Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,

C: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son

And to the Holy Spirit,

As it was in the beginning,

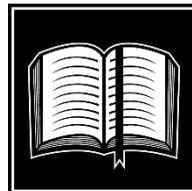
Is now, and will be forever. Amen.

SECOND LESSON

1 JOHN 4:1-6

¹ Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³ but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

⁴ You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. ⁵ They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶ We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.



Scripture Readings

God's Word has been at the center of Christian worship since the time of the Apostles (Acts 2:42). The readings are thematically tied to the Gospel of the Day.



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Cantor sings:



Congregation echoes the cantor:



Cantor:



Congregation:



Cantor:



Congregation:



L: "Alleluia. I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me. Alleluia." (John 10:14)

GOSPEL OF THE DAY

JOHN 10:11-18

Please stand.

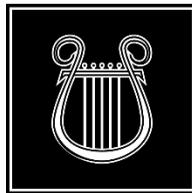
¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. ¹³ The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

¹⁴ "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. ¹⁷ The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

L: This is the Gospel of our Lord.



C: Praise be to you, O Christ!

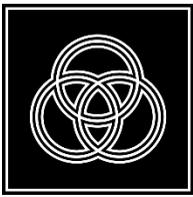


Test the Spirits

• THE GOOD •
shepherd
• LAYS DOWN •
his Life
• FOR THE •
sheep

Hymn of the Day

This hymn is chosen for its rich content and its connection to the Gospel of the Day.



CONFESSION OF FAITH

NICENE CREED

Please stand.

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father.**

Through him all things were made.

**For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,
and became fully human.**

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.

He suffered death and was buried.

**On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven**

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and
glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

**We look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Nicene Creed

Public confession is faith's response to God's saving Word. The Nicene Creed has been confessed by Christians since the 4th century as a proclamation of the true Christian faith in the one, true, Triune God, emphasizing the deity of Jesus. This creed is still confessed by Christians all over the world to tell others what they believe, and to confess their faith together in worship.

OFFERING

The members of Abiding Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church have joined together to do the Lord's work in this community and throughout the world. 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, you may place it on the floor beneath the chair at the end of the row.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

As the prayer is spoken, each time the minister says, "Lord, in your mercy..." the congregation is invited to respond, "**Hear our prayer.**"

THE LORD'S PRAYER

spoken by the congregation

**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 Prayer

The Lord's Prayer was taught by our Savior Jesus himself in response to the disciples' request, "Lord, teach us to pray" (see Luke 11:1-4).



SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Because of the warnings God's Word gives about this powerful meal, and because of the unity it confesses, Abiding Grace practices member communion. Please contact Pastor Scharf to discuss this practice and God's Word and the love that motivates it.

Preface

The opening words of the Communion liturgy mark the beginning of the Sacrament section of the service and lift the worshippers' hearts in praise. The opening sentences are among the oldest in the Christian liturgy.

Sanctus

The word *sanctus* means "holy." Used possibly as early as the second century, this canticle was in wide use among Christians in worship by the fourteenth century.

PREFACE

L: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

L: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up to the Lord

L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

L: Praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In love he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. He raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms and placed all things under his feet for the benefit of the Church. Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ. To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and thanks and honor and glory forever and ever.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY – Sanctus

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er,
God of might: heav'n and earth are full of your glo -
ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless -
ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san -
na in the high - est. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

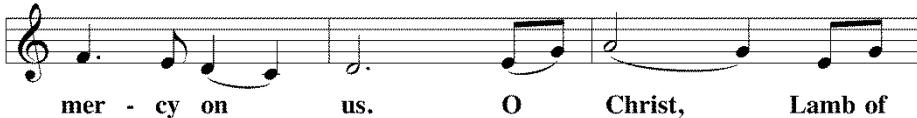
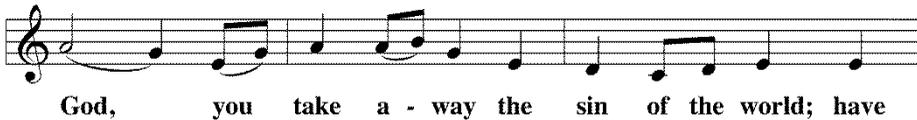
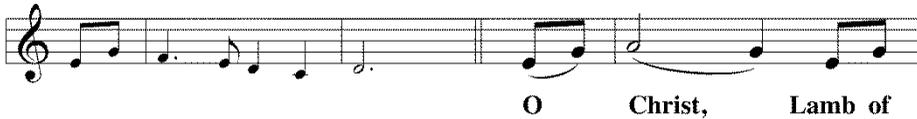
L: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples saying, "Take and eat, this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them saying, "Drink from it all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this whenever you drink it in remembrance of me."

L: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

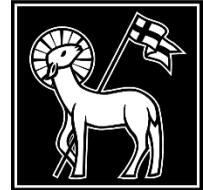
C: Amen

LAMB OF GOD – *Agnus Dei*



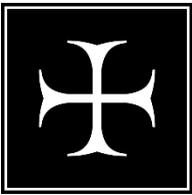
Words of Institution

In the Words of Institution the liturgist both proclaims the words of Jesus to the congregation and sets apart the bread and wine for the Lord's use.



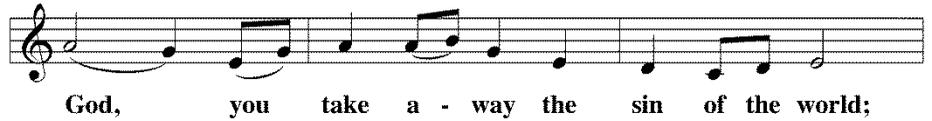
Agnus Dei

Jesus is God's lamb—*Agnus Dei*—who was offered as a sacrifice for sin once for all.



Song of Simeon

Because we have seen our Savior in Word and Sacrament, we sing knowing that we are at peace with God. Just as Simeon was ready to depart, so are we.



DISTRIBUTION

Please follow the directions of the ushers. During the 10:30 service, we'll sing **Hymn 360 The Lord's My Shepherd; I'll Not Want** during the distribution. Following the distribution, the congregation joins to sing *The Song of Simeon*.

THE SONG OF SIMEON

G In peace, Lord, in peace you let your ser - vant now de -
part ac - cord - ing to your word. For my eyes have seen your sal -
va - tion, which you have pre - pared for ev - 'ry peo - ple, a
light to light - en the Gen - tiles and the glo - ry of your peo - ple
Is - ra - el. In peace, in peace.

L: Hear the prayer of your people, O Lord, that the lips which have praised you here may glorify you in the world, that the eyes which have seen the coming of your Son may long for his coming again, and that all who have received in his true body and blood the pledge of your forgiveness may be restored to live a new and holy life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

THE LORD'S BLESSING

L: 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 432

I AM JESUS' LITTLE LAMB

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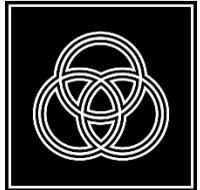
Cell: (414) 828-9991

Email: vicar@abidinggrace.com

Church Offices

Newton County: (770) 385-7691

Henry County: (770) 707-2144



Aaronic Blessing

The blessing of Aaron has been spoken over God's people for over 3,500 years.



Prayer after worship

Almighty God, grant that the Word which I have heard this day may through your grace be so planted in my heart that I may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

WELCOME AND THANK YOU FOR WORSHIPING WITH US

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 or the other ministry staff at Abiding Grace using the contact information on p. 13. 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 Jesus, revealed clearly as our risen Savior. See the announcements and calendar following for other Bible Study, fellowship, and service opportunities.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW BIBLE INFORMATION CLASS (BIC) – Sundays at Noon and Tuesdays at 7pm

The new session continues today at noon. We will also offer a make-up class on Tuesdays at 7pm for those that can't make it on Sunday. This class is designed to 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. Join this study today!! Childcare and all materials will be provided.

Graduate Recognition Sunday – May 27th, Both Services

Come join us to recognize all the special young men and women who are celebrating graduations this year. Since we are blessed to have people graduating from so many different schools at so many different times, we come together to recognize them all at once at this special service. We'll have a special prayer for them and have them come up to be recognized as we continue to pray for God to bless them in all their endeavors. If you'd like your graduate recognized in the bulletin please fill out a form on the information table and give it to Pastor or Vicar. Then join us on May 28th. ALL are welcome, whether members or guests or friends or relatives.

Abiding Grace Preschool Graduation – Thursday May 17th, 6:00pm

Everyone is invited to celebrate the growth in God's Word that our preschool students have experienced throughout the year. This special service will give glory to God for these gifts. Come join us and meet the preschool families as well.

Canvassing: A FRESH Approach

Canvassing season is upon us (that's when we go door to door and invite people to come join us). We've shaken up the schedule a bit to see if we make it possible for more of us to get involved in it. In previous years we've gone early (5:30) each Wednesday. We've heard that it is tough to get here by that time and our attendance has dwindled. So this year, we are going once a month on Saturday and every other Wednesday at 6:30pm. So, everyone gets the choice between canvassing and Bible study on those Wednesdays. Wednesdays in the Word will still go on! Here's what the schedule looks like for April.

Today at Noon (with Confirmation Students), **Wednesday Apr. 25th, 6:30pm** Come join us to get the Word out!!!

Relay for Life! The Newton County Relay is on April 27th If you are interested in participating or helping with our Abiding Grace booth, please talk with Cindy McCrae or Pastor Scharf.

A New Opportunity to Serve Our Community West Newton Elementary School (where we used to worship) has reached out and asked if some of our members would be willing to help read to some of their students. This could be one-on-one or to groups. Please speak to Pastor Scharf if you are willing to serve our community in this way.

Hosting Volunteers: This summer there will be volunteers coming for Soccer Camp, and 2 young men as SMA students as well. If you'd be willing to open your house for a week for some college volunteers, that would be greatly appreciated. Please speak with Pastor Scharf and let him know.

Cinco de Mayo Party - at Henry County Campus

Come enjoy food, fun, and fellowship with each other on Saturday, May 5th at 4:30pm when we'll have our Cinco de Mayo party. The party will be held at the Henry County campus (3376 Hwy 20 W, Hampton, GA). We'd love for all members and guests to come and you're greatly encouraged to invite a friend and bring them along. The main course will be provided, but there's a sign-up sheet in the secretary's office for attendees to bring condiments and sides. Please RSVP before Monday, April 30. Dinner will be at 5:00pm. In the spirit of the event, consider wearing some bright clothing. Don't miss it and, again, please do feel encouraged to bring a friend.

Nominations for Abiding Grace Church Council

Our elections for positions on our church council are coming up soon! Thanks to everyone who nominated individuals. Here are the nominees who have agreed to run: **President:** Peter Sahlstrom, **Secretary:** Richard Terry, **Director of Member Ministry:** Bob Finch and Greg Porter, **Director of Elders:** Joe Herman.

Get Ready for Summer!!

Vacation Bible School: Splash Canyon

Plunge in to VBS 2018! At *Splash Canyon* VBS, your children learn God keeps His promises on life's wild ride! They'll look into the Bible, God's Holy Word, and explore five Bible accounts where our faithful God keeps His promises to be with us and gives us life and hope through Jesus, our Savior. Registration is open for ages 3-10 who will attend VBS from June 25th to June 29th, from 9am-12pm. Come along with us as we sing fun songs, do crazy crafts, eat yummy snacks, play awesome games, and more. Plus, learn that all God's promises are Yes in Jesus! Can't wait to see you there! To register, sign up online at vbs.abidinggrace.com or sign up on the information table in the back. If you have any questions talk with Vicar or call 770-385-7691.

Soccer Camp 2018 – July 9-13, 9am-Noon

Your kids will not want to miss Soccer Camp 2018. All children ages 6-14 are invited to this week of fun learning the game of soccer and having fun growing in their knowledge of God's Word. Once again this year, we are bringing in coaches from Wisconsin Lutheran College Soccer to teach the soccer skills and we here at Abiding Grace will take care of all the rest. If you'd like to help (it takes about 40 volunteers to make this thing go!) please sign up on the information table. And register your children now at soccer.abidinggrace.com. You can also use paper registration here at church if you prefer.



South Atlantic District Youth Camps: Our South Atlantic District is excited to offer two youth camps this summer: Camp SOUTH (here in Covington, July 23rd -27th) for youth entering 4th through 9th grade; and The "Never Alone" International Youth Rally (in Bowling Green, Ohio June 26th-29th) for teens entering 9th through finishing 12th grade. These camps are a great opportunity for youth to grow in their faith and meet Christian friends from across the country. If you want to attend either of these camps, add your name to the sign-up sheets in the gathering space AND register online and pay the registration fee by April 30th.

COMING EVENTS



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 (Middle School students)
Sundays at 12:00 noon	NEW Bible Information Class
Mon. Wed. Fri. 9-12am	Preschool (when Newton County Schools are in session)
Tuesdays at 7pm	New Bible Information Class
Wednesdays at 11am	Bible Information Class
Wednesdays at 7pm	Kids Club (0-10 year olds)
Wednesdays at 7pm	Youth Group (High Schoolers and Middle Schoolers)
Wednesdays at 7pm	Adult Bible Study
Thursdays at 7:00pm	Bible Information Class (until April 26 th)
Fridays at 9am	Building on the Rock (for developmentally disabled)

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

Wed. April 25 th 6:30pm	Canvassing (help us invite our neighbors)
Fri. April 27	Relay for Life Event (see info table)
Sat. May 5 th 4:30pm	Cinco de Mayo Party (at our Henry Co. Campus)
Sat. May 12 th 8am	Men's Bible Study (at our Henry Co. Campus)
Sun. May 13 th 8 & 10:30am	Mother's Day Service
Thurs. May 17 th 6pm	Abiding Grace Preschool Graduation
Sun. May 20 th	Confirmation Sunday
Sun. May 20 th 6pm	Ladies Bible Study
Thurs. May 24 th 11am	Vicar Call Day
Sun. May 27 th 8 & 10:30am	Graduate Recognition Sunday
June 25-29	Vacation Bible School: <i>Splash Canyon</i> (sign up now)
June 26-29	"Never Alone" teen camp (Bowling Green) (sign up now)
July 9-13	Soccer Camp 2018 (sign up now)
July 23-27	Camp S.O.U.T.H. (4 th -8 th Graders in Covington) (sign up now)