

Fourth Sunday of Advent ~ December 24, 2023

Abiding Hope Lutheran Church

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God keeps the promise made to David to give him an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David's throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel's greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, "Count me in." We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, "Count us in."

PRELUDE

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

Please Stand

CONFESSION and FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation.

Amen.

God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance. Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

Everlasting God,

you love justice and you hate wrongdoing.

We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness that make us reluctant to work against oppression.

We are complicit in systems of exploitation.

We choose comfort over courage.

We are careless with creation's bounty.

Look upon us with mercy. Turn our hearts again to you.

Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways for the sake of our waiting world. Amen.

Hear these words of assurance: God clothes you with garments of salvation and covers you with robes of righteousness. In the tender compassion of ☩ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. God's covenant is eternal, and God's blessing rests upon us all. **Amen.**

GATHERING SONG ~ ELW 251 (red book)

My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness v.1,2,4

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

KYRIE

In peace, let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,

and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,

let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. A - men.

ADVENT READING and CANDLE LIGHTING

We have lit three candles—for hope, for peace, and for joy. Today we light the fourth candle—the candle of love. With this flame we signify the love of God that surrounds and fills us at all times, but that we recognize in a special way in the Christmas story. There is no greater power than love. It is stronger than rulers and empires, stronger than grief or despair, stronger even than death. We love, because God loves us.

All: Loving God, we open ourselves to you this Christmas season.

As these candles are lit, light our lives with your imagination.

Show us the creative power of hope.

Teach us the peace that comes from justice.

Fill us with the kind of joy that cannot be contained, but must be shared.

Magnify your love within us.

Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you,

That we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen.

LIGHTING of the ADVENT CANDLE ~ WOV 630 (blue book)

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah v.1-4



- 1 Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 2 Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 4 Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.



He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra - el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.
He shall feed the flock like a shep-herd, gent - ly lead them home-ward.
Lift your heads and lift high the gate-way for the King of glo - ry.
He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!

PRAYER of the DAY

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** Let's Pray Together.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Please be seated.

FIRST READING: 2 Samuel 7:1-11,16

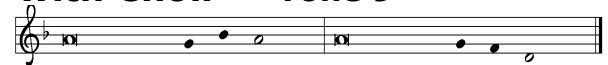
¹Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ²the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." ³Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you." ⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: ⁵Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. ⁷Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" ⁸Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: 89:1-4,19-26

Sung Responsively with Choir

Tone 9



¹Your love, O LORD, forever I will I sing;
from age to age my mouth will pro- I claim your faithfulness.

**²For I am persuaded that your steadfast love is estab- I lished
forever; you have set your faithfulness firmly I in the heavens.**

³"I have made a covenant with my I chosen one;
I have sworn an oath to Da- I vid my servant:

**⁴I will establish your I line forever,
and preserve your throne for all I generations.'"**

¹⁹You spoke once in a vision and said to your ¹ faithful people:
"I have set the crown upon a warrior and have exalted one
chosen out ¹ of the people.

²⁰**I have found Da- ¹ vid my servant;
with my holy oil have I a- ¹ nointed him.**

²¹My hand will ¹ hold him fast
and my arm will ¹ make him strong.

²²**No enemy ¹ shall deceive him,
nor shall the wicked ¹ bring him down.**

²³I will crush his ¹ foes before him
and strike down ¹ those who hate him.

²⁴**My faithfulness and steadfast ¹ love are with him,
and he shall be victorious ¹ through my name.**

²⁵I will set his hand ¹ on the sea,
and his right hand ¹ on the rivers.

²⁶**He will say to me, 'You ¹ are my father,
my God, and the rock of ¹ my salvation.'**

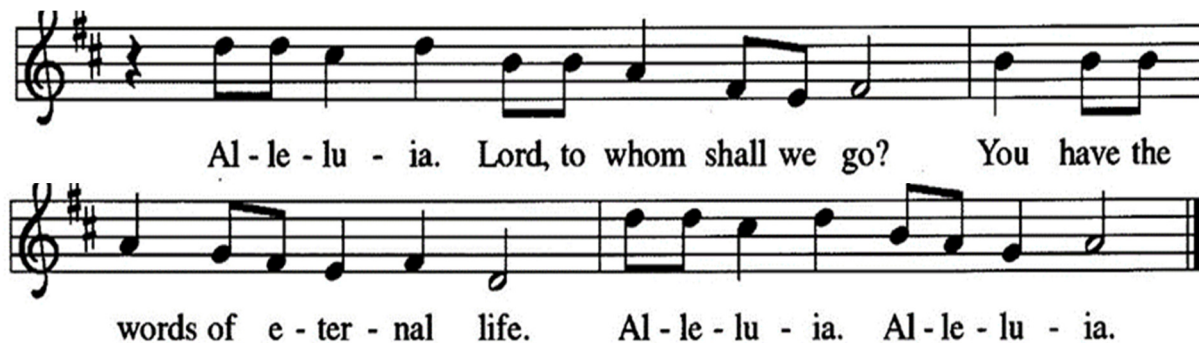
SECOND READING: Romans 16:25-27

²⁵Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—²⁷to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Please Stand

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

GOSPEL: Luke 1:26-38

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke Chapter 1. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' "as the prophet Isaiah said. ²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Please be seated

SERMON

HYMN of the DAY ~ ELW 265 (red book)

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

NICENE CREED

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 truly 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 with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic 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.

PRAYERS of INTERCESSION

With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration. *A brief silence.*

You promise mercy to Abraham and Sarah and their descendants forever. Bring your church into thoughtful, caring, and collaborative relationship with those of other faiths. Strengthen our shared values, that we work together in caring for our world. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

As fields and crops lie dormant, bless them with holy rest. Prepare them to thrive, that they provide abundant food in due season. Protect animals who hibernate and provide for all who scavenge for food in the lean season.

Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

You raise up the lowly and cast down the arrogant. Teach humility to all in positions of authority. Break down systems of oppression, especially systems that perpetuate inequity and exclusion. Do not allow wealth, power, or pride to become idols that obscure your call to justice. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Look with favor upon all who cry out to you. Accompany with tenderness all who are afraid or ill, especially: Kayla, Dave, Jerry & Karen, Aahron & Becky, Pat, Damian, Tammy, Kathy, Harry, Esther, Evelyn. Rescue all who experience abuse or who live under threat of violence, especially refugees, immigrants, and asylum-seekers in search of a safe and stable home.

Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

You are pleased to make your home among us. Make our homecomings joyful as we gather with friends, families, and chosen families in celebration. Grant safety to all who travel. Sustain the work of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services and other ministries that assist in setting up new homes. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Blessed are you for Mary and all your servants in every generation who lived according to your promise of mercy. Strengthen us by their example until the revelation of your glory is made known. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy. **Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Please stand.

OFFERING and PRESENTATION of GIFTS

OFFERING ~ Choir *Promises of Isaiah*

OFFERTORY ~ Emmanuel

Em-man - u - el, _____ Em-man - u - el, _____ His name is
called _____ Em - man - u - el: _____ God with us, _____
_____ re - vealed in us! _____ His name is
called _____ Em - man - u - el.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray together. **God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



THANKSGIVING at the TABLE

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:

Blessed are you for the birth of creation.

Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.

Blessed are you for your promise to your people.

Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.

Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.

Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

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

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

Come, Holy Spirit.

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to the banquet, for all is now ready.

At Abiding Hope all believers are welcome to share Holy Communion at the table of the Lord. After receiving the bread, (gluten free) you may receive wine from the chalice poured into individual glasses or you may choose pre-poured grape juice (in center of tray) as an alternative.

Please be seated

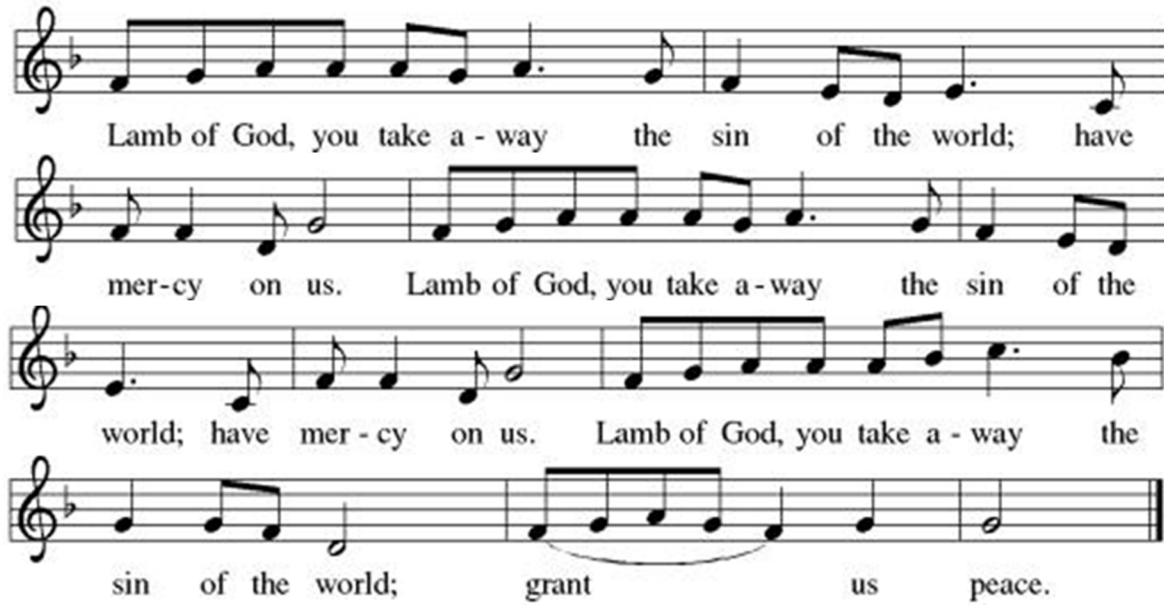
COMMUNION

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen.

LAMB of GOD



COMMUNION HYMNS ~ ELW 254 (red book)

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

ELW 293 (red book) *That Boy Child of Mary*

ELW 263 (red book) *Savior of the Nations Come*

PASTORAL BLESSING

May the body and blood of our ☩ Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray. **God for whom we wait, in this meal you give us a foretaste of that day when the hungry will be fed with good things. Send us forth to make known your deeds and to proclaim the greatness of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN ~ *Ready the Way* pg.12

Ready the Way

Refrain



Read-y the way, read-y the way, read-y the way



of the Lord. of the Lord.

Verse 1



1. Make straight the road, raise the val - leys, and



1. moun-tains make low. Turn-ing from sin, let the bro-ken be whole,



1. and read-y the way of the Lord. to Refrain

Verses 2, 3



2. As we wait for you, give us the strength to walk
3. Let us see your face; in our hearts we pre -



2. in your truth, so we may love more like you
3. - pare a place. Come bring this world your mer - cy and grace



2. and } read-y the way for you, Lord. to Refrain
3. as we }

Dismissal

Go in peace. Remember the poor.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

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PARISH NOTES ~ December 24, 2023

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Seasonal Music ~ 3:30p

Please come early and get in the Holiday Spirit!

Worship ~ 4:00pm

Merry and Blessed Christmas

Flower arrangements today are given to the Glory of God,

In Memory of

Loved ones who celebrate Christmas with us

in our Hearts and Memories

from Jacque and John Holmberg

Altar Candles are given to the Glory of God,

In memory of Gordon and Mark Wunch, from Carol Wunch

Please pray for: Dave Parsh, Kayla Miller, Jerry & Karen Penna, Aahron & Becky Maury, Pat Kerr, Damian Santabene, Tammy Sharp McIntyre, Harry Speakman, and, Esther Klakamp, Evelyn Senger.

Sunday, December 31: *Festival of Lessons and Carols, 9:30a*

Saturday, January 6, 2024: **Outdoor Burning of the Greens and Eucharist @ 6:00 p.m. at Faith Lutheran Church, 5414 East Lake Road, Erie "Arise, shine, for your light has come!"** The congregations of the Erie Lutheran Conference will celebrate the Epiphany of our Lord together with a candlelight Eucharist with Pastor Jay Mitchell (Luther Memorial) preaching, followed by an outdoor burning of the Christmas greens.

The Little Free Library "Pantry Shelf" Donations: Ideas of small food items, are: individual packages of cold or instant hot cereals, granola/fruit bars, dry meal mixes featuring grains such as rice/risotto/macaroni, instant ramen noodles, small boxes of raisins/dried fruits, nuts and instant cups of soup. Also, personal products are welcome: bath tissue, kleenex, toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap. You may either place your items on the top shelf of the pantry (if space is available) or in the **in the Heritage Room**. All donations appreciated!

Narthex TV monitor: Watch for announcements of upcoming events/items of Interest @ AHLC. If have any current photos of AHLC events or older photos of AHLC, Zion, or Our Savior, please email Ed Whitbred @ ejwhitbred@verizon.net. If possible, please identify those in photos.

Bethany Outreach: Please remember the **collection of used clothing and household items** is ongoing as well as pairs of shoes in good condition for **Chosen**. Drop off in the Heritage Room. Thank you! Analee Cree.

Are you on Facebook..do you Google? On Facebook, be sure to “friend” Abiding Hope and when you see an AHLC post, LIKE and SHARE the post to help promote events at AHLC. *Google* **Abiding Hope Lutheran Church**, and write a review.

Office Hours Christmas week: Closed Monday, 12/25 & Tuesday, 12/26. Open Wednesday & Thursday 9:30a-3:30p. For **immediate pastoral assistance, call Pastor Karen, 814-881-3266.**

KAFP Project Dignity: December–Dental Products, Basket in the “quiet room.”
Altar Flowers: Anyone who wishes to **donate flowers** for Sunday worship, weekly sign-up and request forms are on the table in narthex. Arrangements- **\$20.00 each.** Place the **completed form and payment** in the offering plate, or to the office at least one week, prior to your chosen Sunday.

Capital Funds Campaign:

Council approved funds in the amount of **\$8,100** for a **Sound System** upgrade. The **Up-to-date system** to **improve sound** for the sanctuary, F.H. and auxiliary rooms has been installed. **Many thanks** to those who have helped to **reach more than half** of the goal amount, but we still need help. Contribute what you can to **Extra Mile Giving** noting the gift as **“Sound System”**. See the chart in the narthex for our progress.

CURRENT FUND REPORT

November income	\$10,424.50	Year to Date income	\$125,932.69
November expenses	\$14,481.94	Year to Date expenses	\$125,958.52
Novemer Difference	\$-4,057.44	Year to Date difference	\$-25.83
Year to date Budget		\$118,359.53	

Worship Leaders ~ December 24, 2023

Videographer	Penny Gresh	
Greeter/Coffee	Analee Cree	
Lector/Prayers	Jeanne Tropper	
Assisting Min/Acolyte	Penny Gresh	
Comm. Assist/cups	Carol Korn	
Communion tray	Mary Randall	
Presenter	Carolyn Hayes	
Presenter	Connie Kerr-Vogt	
Usher	Rick Penn	
Usher	Andy Saska	
Counters	Penny Gresh & Analee Cree	