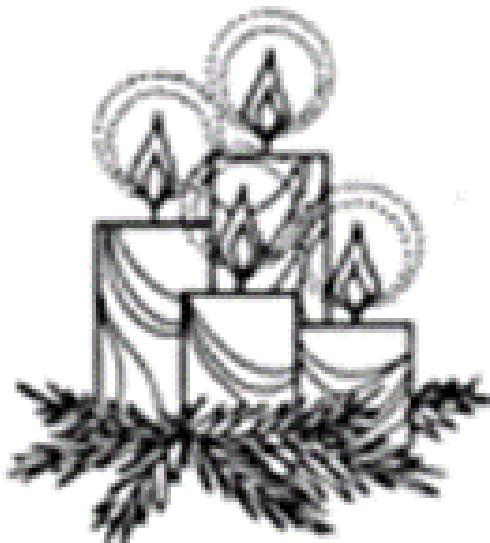


*Fourth Sunday of Advent ~ December 21, 2025*

Abiding Hope Lutheran Church

Rev. Karen Parsh, Pastor

Sheryl Williams, Coordinator of Music



*Advent is about the "coming days." God's people have always lived in great expectation, but that expectation finds specific, repeated enunciation in the texts appointed for these four weeks. The ancients anticipated a "righteous Branch to spring up for David." The Thessalonians awaited "the coming of our Lord Jesus with all the saints." Jesus' contemporaries hoped for the time "to stand before the Son of Man." With them we eagerly await the coming days: another Christmas celebration, a second coming, and the advent of Christ in word and supper.*

## **WELCOME**

**"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens."**

**Sunday service is a time for worship.**

**Please socialize before and after service.**

**We invite you to quietly prepare your hearts and minds for worship.**

**(Please turn off your cell phone)**

*Thank you to Howard and Maria Lyon, Paul Sontheimer,  
Cindi Reid and Paul Mirone for providing Special Music for today's service!*

**PRELUDE ~ Choir: Advent Kyrie Parker/Lantz**

**GATHERING**

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

*Please stand*

**CONFSSION and FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity,  $\dagger$  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  $\dagger$  Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. God's covenant is eternal, and God's blessing rests upon us all. **Amen.**

**GATHERING HYMN ~ ELW 259 *Fling Wide the Door***

**GREETING**

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

**And also with you.**



## KYRIE

### ***Advent Reading and Candle Lighting***

Last Sunday we lit the candle of Hope Joy, remembering the hope which comes in Christ, the candle of Peace, remembering God's dream of a peaceful world, and the candle of Joy, remembering the Spirit within us who brings joy. Today we light the fourth candle of Advent, the candle of Love.

Scripture tells us "There is no fear in love, for perfect love casts out fear." (1 John 4:18). God created this world in love and this world will end in the love of God. God's love pervades all aspects of this life. From birth to death, pain to delight, strangers to lovers, God's love is there.

We light this candle in Love. **On this day we remember God is Love.**

*Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah pg.4*

## 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

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

**A brief silence. Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

*Please be seated*

## FIRST READING: Isaiah 7:10-16

<sup>10</sup>The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, <sup>11</sup>"Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." <sup>12</sup>But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." <sup>13</sup>Then Isaiah said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup>Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. <sup>15</sup>He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup>For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**



**PSALM: 80:1-7, 17-19 Sung Responsively**  **Tone 9**

<sup>1</sup> Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock;  
    shine forth, you that are enthroned up- on the cherubim.

<sup>2</sup> **In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,  
    stir up your strength and I come to help us.**

<sup>3</sup> Restore us, O God; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

<sup>4</sup> **O LORD I God of hosts,  
    how long will your anger fume when your people pray?**

<sup>5</sup> You have fed them with the bread of tears;  
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

<sup>6</sup> **You have made us the derision of our neighbors,  
    and our enemies laugh us to scorn.**

<sup>7</sup> Restore us, O God of hosts;  
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

<sup>17</sup> **Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,  
    the one you have made so strong for yourself.**

<sup>18</sup> And so will we never turn a way from you;  
give us life, that we may call up on your name.

<sup>19</sup> **Restore us, O LORD I God of hosts;  
    let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.**

**SECOND READING: Romans 1:1-7**

<sup>1</sup> Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup> which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, <sup>3</sup> the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh <sup>4</sup> and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, <sup>5</sup> through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name, <sup>6</sup> including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, <sup>7</sup> To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

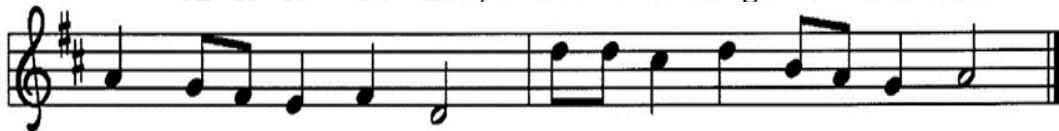
Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

*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: Matthew 1:18-25**

The holy gospel according to St. Matthew Chapter 1. **Glory to you, O Lord**  
<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup> But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: <sup>23</sup> "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." <sup>24</sup> When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife <sup>25</sup> but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

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

*Please be seated*

**SERMON** ~ Pastor Karen Parsh

*Please stand*

**HYMN of the DAY ~ ELW 293** *That Boy-Child of Mary*

### **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**

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation. In the anticipation of these days, prepare our hearts for your arrival. Stir our spirits through the gifts of artists, musicians, poets, and preachers, as together we proclaim your advent among us. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

The earth breaks forth in singing as it heralds the Messiah's coming. Fill our hearts with wonder as we join heaven and nature in announcing this holy birth. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You send your saving grace and peace to the nations. Lead us in work for justice and care for the common good. May we meet the Christ-child we seek in the faces of our neighbors. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

When tears of grief, exhaustion, or loneliness come, or physical or emotional hurt overwhelms us, come to our aid. Uphold all who are anxious, who know the challenges of depression, or who are ill. We pray especially for: Mike, Patrick, Judi, Carl, Jackie S, Harry & Susan, Ed W., Dick & Diana, Ed & Jeanne, Candy & Arch, Leslie & Michele & Sue, Gail, Karen, Dan & Peggy, Bob, Kathi, Maury & Linda, Damian & Marcia, Don & Donna, and Little Library requests. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Surround expectant parents and those suffering from infant loss with communities of support. Bless young children and new parents. Guide us in ways that provide safety for all children and those who care for them.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for all who have treasured the gospel and lived in faithful service. Strengthen our earthly journeys until, at the last, your face shines upon us and we are held in your love. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. **Amen.**

## **PEACE**

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

*Please be seated*

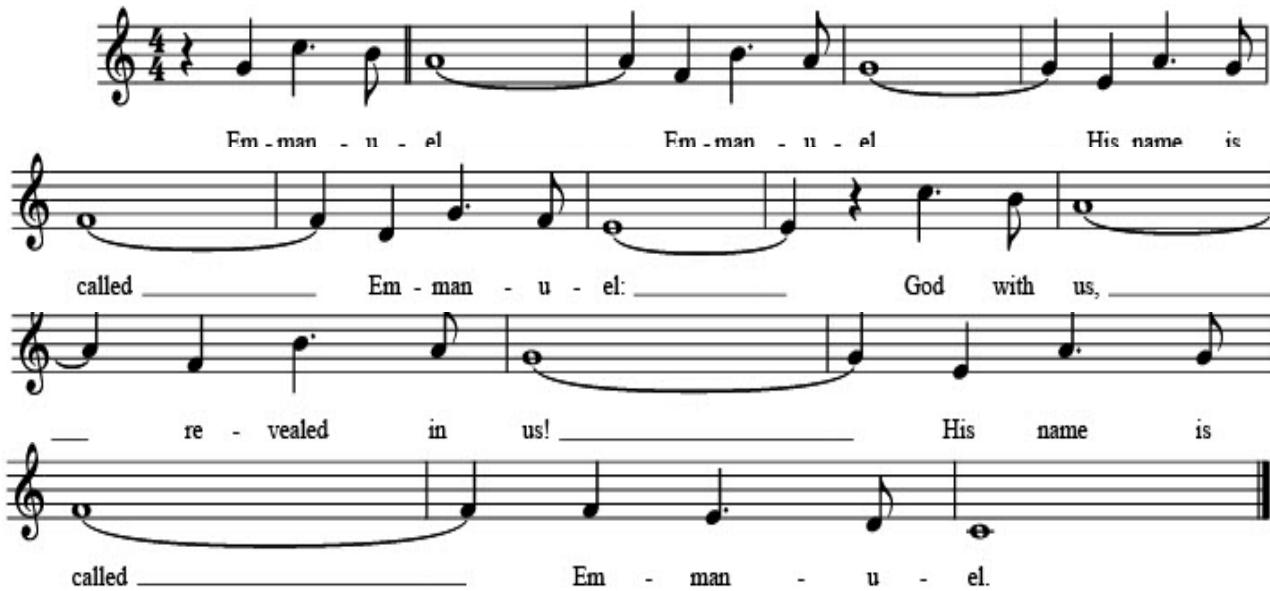
## **MEAL**

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ*

## **OFFERING and PRESENTATION of GIFTS**

**OFFERING ~ O Come, O Come Emmanuel/Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence**  
arr. S. DeCesare

## OFFERTORY HYMN ~ *Emmanuel*



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. **God of hope, you fill the hungry with good things. Give us hopeful hearts and open hands to receive your love and share our abundance, that all may be fed. In the name of the one who sustains all life, Jesus Christ, our love. Amen.**

## GREAT THANKSGIVING

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

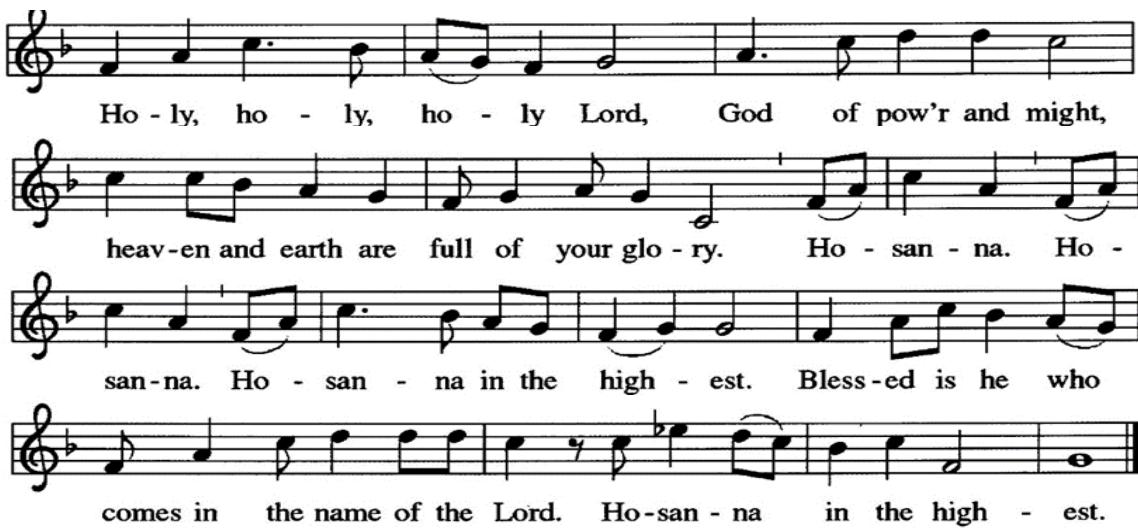
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

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:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,  
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -  
san - na. 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.

## **EUCARISTIC PRAYER**

Holy God, the one who was and is and is to come, we praise you, we bless you, we thank you for your presence among us in your Son Jesus, the bringer of peace. Hear us when we cry. Make all things new. Heal the nations. Widen and deepen the imagination of our hearts. Give us rest in you.

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.

Place in our hearts the thrill of hope, O God, you who are Alpha and Omega, beginning and end, that we may all know your restoration and love in this world and the next, now and forever. Amen.

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

Therefore, O God, with this bread and cup we remember the life our Lord offered for us. And, believing the witness of his resurrection, we await his coming in power to share with us the great and promised feast.

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Send now, we pray, your Holy Spirit, that we who share in Christ's body and blood may live to the praise of your glory and receive our inheritance with all your saints in light.

**Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.**

Join our prayers with those of your servants of every time and every place, and unite them with the ceaseless petitions of our great high priest until he comes as victorious Lord of all. **Amen.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, ..... Amen.**

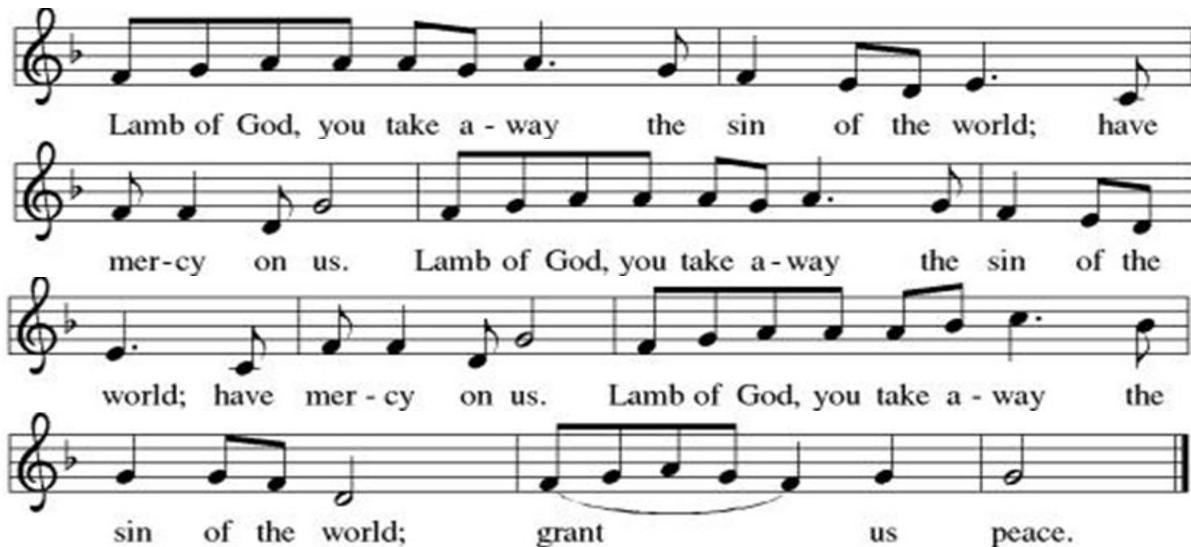
*Please be seated*

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

God feeds us with tender mercy. Come to the table.



## LAMB of GOD



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have  
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the  
world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the  
sin of the world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the  
sin of the world; grant us peace.

## COMMUNION

The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you. **Amen.**

**COMMUNION HYMNS** ~ Instrumental Meditation ~ *In the Bleak Midwinter*  
G. Hoist/arr. T. Wilson

### *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*



1. Oh, come, oh, come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive  
2. Oh, come, oh, come, great Lord of might, who to your tribes on  
3. Oh, come, strong Branch of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan's  
4. Oh, come, blest Day-spring, come and cheer our spir - its by your  
5. Oh, come, O Key of Da - vid, come, and o - pen wide our  
  
Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here  
Si - nai's height in an - cient times once gave the law  
tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your peo - ple save  
ad - vent here; dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night,  
heav'n - ly home; make safe the way that leads on high,  
  
Refrain  
  
un - til the Son of God ap - pear.  
in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe.  
and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave. Re - joice! Re - joice!  
and death's dark shad - ows put to flight.  
and close the path to mis - er - y.  
  
Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

*Please stand*

## **PASTORAL BLESSING**

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

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray: **Holy one, you have blessed us with your very self. Make us one body in you, living into the mystery of your goodness and mercy, now and forever. Amen.**

## **Announcements ~**

## **BLESSING**

May the God of hope guide you, may the way of peace sustain you, may the warmth of joy gather you, in the name of the one who creates, redeems, and sustains us. **Amen.**

## **SENDING HYMN ~ ELW 267 *Joy to the World***

## **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Live in hope. **Thanks be to God**

## **POSTLUDE ~ *Good King Wenceslas* Traditional English Carol**

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## **PARISH NOTES ~ December 21, 2025**

Rev. Karen Parsh ~ 814-881-3266

814-868-8685 ~ [ahadministrator@hotmail.com](mailto:ahadministrator@hotmail.com)

FB: [abidinghopelutheranchurch](http://abidinghopelutheranchurch) [www.abidinghopeerie.org](http://www.abidinghopeerie.org)

**Please keep in your prayers:** Mike Zlotnicki, Patrick Short, Judi Pacileo, Carl Larese, Jackie Seib, Ed Whitbred, Dick & Diana Stoker, Harry & Susan Speakman, Gail Boyce, Leslie Gallagher-Kelly & Michele Rion & Sue, Karen Shick, Ed & Jeanne Tropper, Candy & Arch Watkins Dan & Peggy Kaeberlein, Bob McDaniel, Kathy Sinnott, Maury & Linda Allen, Damian & Marcia Santabene, Don & Donna Holder and Little Library requests.

## ***Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship ~ 4:00pm***

**Wednesday, December 24: Choir Rehearsal ~ 3:30p**

**Sunday, December 28: Festival of Lessons and Carols ~ 9:30a**

**Pastor's Sabbath Day: Rev. Parsh is not available on Fridays to answer or return phone calls...read or reply to emails.** Pastoral emergencies, please contact **Rick Penn @ 814-737-9974**

**KAFP ADVENT GIVING 2025: Today, is the LAST DAY for donations.  
Information and Container in the narthex.**

**Friday December 26:** All are invited to join in the **Second Annual Caroling** at **BrewErie**, Union Station 14<sup>th</sup>/Peach, **5:30pm-8:00pm**. Sponsored by the Erie Conference of Lutheran Churches.

**Tuesday, January 6:** *Celebrate the Epiphany of our Lord, Faith Lutheran Church, East Lake Rd, 7pm.* Service of Holy Communion followed by the "Burning of the Greens.

**Sunday, January 11: Read Through the Bible Together @ 7pm.** This on-going gathering **by ZOOM** will be on the **2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month**. If interested in joining the group, **your name/email address is required to access the Zoom meeting. Form in the narthex** with additional information and **to sign-up.**

**Little Library/Pantry:** No canned goods during the cold weather. Donations of **gloves/scarfs** for adults & children are welcome.

**Office Hours:** Mon, Tues, 930a-330p .. Wed. 930a-1230p. For Pastoral emergencies when office is closed, please **contact Pastor Karen @ 814-881-3266.**

***WORSHIP LEADERS ~ December 21, 2025 ~ 9:30a***

Videographer	Penny Gresh
Greeter/Coffee	June Morey
Assisting Minister/Acol	Penny Gresh
Lector/Prayers	Jeanne Tropper
Communion Cups	Carol Korn
Communion Tray	Diana Stoker
Presenter	Connie Kerr-Vogt
Presenter	Lois Kuhns
Usher	Andy Saska
Usher	Volunteer
Counters	Rich .. Volunteer

***Worship Leaders ~ December 24, 2025 ~ 4:00pm***

Videographer	Andy Saska
Greeter/Coffee	Cindy Filson
Assisting Minister/Acolyte	Damian Santabene
Lector/Prayers	Analee Cree
Communion Cups	Penny Gresh
Communion Tray	Michele Rion
Presenter	Carlolyn Hayes
Presenter	Diana Stoker
Usher	Rich Filson
Usher	Andy Saska