



*December 24, 2023
Christmas Eve Candlelight ~ 4:00p
Abiding Hope Lutheran Church
Rev. Karen Parsh, Pastor
Sheryl Williams, Minister of Music*

A very Merry Christmas to all who come to worship the Christ Child.

Our liturgy this evening is the special Eucharist from which comes the word Christmas. It is the Christ Mass, the incarnation of our Lord and Savior: in a manger in Bethlehem, in the Word of proclamation, in the sacrament of Holy Communion, and in our hearts as we take him into the world.

Ancient chants and ancient scripture combine with candles, carols, and bright array to tell the story of the Christ Child's birth in the quiet of this special night. Let us meditate by the manger, and in awe adore him as the infant God and King.

Hush

Shhhh...

Can you hear it?

An expectant silence,
a hushed anticipation,
as if the very galaxy
is holding its breath.

There are some truths
even the stars know,
like darkness,
like loneliness

and how the night
can be a living thing.

And how once, long ago,
the night waited in wonder
along with the darkness
and the loneliness,
for the sound of a baby's cry,
for the miraculous

to come down
to all those in need of hope and joy
here on Earth.

Prelude – Seasonal Music Selections

Vocal Solo ~ *Gesu Bambino* P. Yon

Flute Solo ~ *I Wonder as I Wander* arr. J. Schrader

Violin Solo ~ *Brahms' Lullaby* arr. K. Bestor

Vocal Solo ~ *Panis Angelicus* C. Franck

Flute Solo ~ *Mary Did You Know* arr. J. Raney

Abiding Hope Choir ~ *Come and Worship* arr. B. Greer

GATHERING

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

Unto us a child is born. Unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be on his shoulder; and his name shall be called wonderful, mighty counsellor, the Prince of peace. O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he has done marvelous things. Glory be to the father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Please stand.

Entrance Hymn ~ ELW 283 (red book) *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

Blessed are you, O Christ, Son of God, you existed before time began and came into the world to save us.

Blessed are you, Sun of Righteousness, you shine with the Father's love and illumine the whole universe

Blessed are you, Son of Mary; born a child, you shared our humanity.

Let heaven and earth ring out their praise.

O Mystery of the Word made flesh, with all the voices of heaven, we celebrate your coming as our Savior.

Let men and women and angels sing of your glory.

O Splendor of the Father's Light, with all the creatures on earth, we sing and dance at your birth.

Praise and honor and glory to you, O Incarnate Word.

This night the Christ is born. This night a Savior has appeared. On earth, Angels are singing, archangels rejoicing, and the righteous exult and say, Glory to God in the highest. Alleluia.

HYMN ~ ELW 270 (red book) *Hark the Herald Angels Sing* v. 1

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.

HYMN of PRAISE ~ ELW 289 (red book)

Angels We Have Heard on High v. 1

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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

Let us pray together.

**Thank you, God, for giving yourself to the world,
Not in the powerful and extraordinary, But in weakness and the
familiar: In a baby; in bread and wine.**

**Thank you for offering, at journey's end, a new beginning;
for setting, in the poverty of a stable, the richest jewel of your love,
the light for all nations.**

**Thank you for bringing us to Bethlehem, House of Bread,
Where the empty are filled, and the filled are emptied;
Where the poor find riches, and the rich recognize their poverty;
Where all who kneel and hold out their hands are abundantly fed.
Amen.**

Please be seated.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:2-7

²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. ³You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

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

Whom do you behold, O shepherds? Tell us. Declare to us the tidings, on earth who has appeared? We saw the newborn Infant, and the choir of Angels, praising the Lord together. Alleluia, alleluia.

Hymn ~ ELW 277 (red book) *Away in a Manger* v.1,2

Please Stand.

GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-20

The Holy Gospel according to Luke, Chapter 2. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

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

Hymn ~ ELW 277 (red book) *Away in a Manger* v.3

Sermon ~ Pastor Karen Parsh

Hymn of the Day ~ **ELW 282 (red book)**

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear v.1,4

PRAYERS for the CHRIST MASS

I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, forever.

I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.

To us you have brought abundant joy.

Before you we rejoice and sing.

We come to adore you, precious Child. On bended knee, with hopeful heart, and eyes stretched wide with wonder and awe. The gentleness of your gaze draws us into the mystery of all that lies beyond, and in that place of falling into joy we yield all that we are to you.

Let us pray for those who are broken, Those with trembling hands and rumbling tummies, Those who suffer broken spirits and troubled lives. Those who cling to hope for a better life, and those whose hearts yearn for love. Lord in your love,

Hear our prayers

We pray for all those who are ill or lost or lonely this night... especially those who are dear to us, especially: Kayla, Dave, Jerry & Karen, Aahron & Becky, Pat, Damian, Tammy, Kathy, Harry, Esther, Evelyn. Give them hope and joy and peace at the promise of your coming. Lord in your love,

Hear our prayers

Bless us, O Lord, whom we adore, and turn our faces ever toward you. For love, for mercy, for the sake of all that is holy. We come to adore you, O Christ. Thanks be to God.

Almighty God, you wonderfully created and yet more wonderfully restored the dignity of human nature. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of Jesus Christ who came to share our humanity, and who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

All share the Peace of the Lord with one another.

Please be seated.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Please stand.

OFFERING and PRESENTATION of GIFTS

OFFERING ~ Choir *Deo Gloria* arr. B. Bacon

OFFERTORY HYMN ~ ELW 296 (red book) *What Child Is This*

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Lord of Christmas,

We are mindful of the supreme gift that you gave us in a manger at Bethlehem. Humbly we offer our gifts of service and possessions in joyful thanksgiving for the love you have shown us. Accept these gifts for the sake of your Son who was born to us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

GREAT PRAYER of THANKSGIVING

May the God of silent nights be with you!

May the God of herald angels be with you!

Open your hearts to the One born in the little town of Bethlehem.

May Emmanuel come to abide in our hearts.

Join all believers in singing of our joy this night.

May our voices blend with those of the angels and shepherds.

You spoke life into chaos so long ago, as you spoke your word into life:
You gathered up the dust, shaping us in your image and your Spirit
breathed life into us.

All the gifts of creation were for us, but we slammed the door of our hearts, saying there was no room for you in our lives. Prophets came time and again, to speak your wisdom into our souls but we would not listen. When you saw we could not understand the Mystery of your love without your help, you sent Jesus, to reveal everything to us.

Leaving your side, God of holiness, your Child came to walk with us through the cold streets of our lives. Born in poverty's shadows, he is the light which illumines your heart to make us one with you. Placed in a rude feeding trough layered with our fears and doubts, he breathes in your hopes and lives your will, until he is placed in death's cold embrace, where he breathes in resurrection's breath, and brings forth life for all who follow.

On this night, when we sing of the baby in the manger,
as the shadow of the cross is cast by the stars, we proclaim the mystery of incarnation:

Christ is our light,

and we will join the angels in singing the good news;

**Christ is our life,
and we will join the disciples in telling the Story;
Christ is our promise,
and we wait for the joy of his return.**

Here in the silence and the singing, we gather around the Table of joy, as you pour out your Spirit upon these most precious gifts of bread and cup.

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.

Pour out your Holy Spirit, that by this Holy Communion we may know the unity we share with all your people in the body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.

LORD'S PRAYER

And now as our Savior taught us, we are bold to say:

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.

COMMUNION HYMNS ~

Vocal Solo *Mary Sweet Mary*

Choir *And Love Was Born*

ELW 279 (red book) *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

ELW 276 (red book) *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly*

ELW 300 (red book) *The First Noel*

ELW 290 (red book) *Go Tell it On the Mountain*

Please stand.

PASTORAL BLESSING

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

CANDLE LIGHTING

As the acolytes pass the light to members of the congregation, pass it to the person next to you. DO NOT TIP a lighted candle.

Assisting Minister:

Lesson of Light: St. John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. In him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.

Song of Simeon: St. Luke 2:29-32

Lord, now let your servant go in peace; your word has been fulfilled. My own eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared in the sight of every people: a light to lighten the nations and the glory of your people Israel. Glory 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

HYMN ~ *Silent Night*

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright Round yon virgin mother and child. Holy Infant, so tender and mild, Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight; Glories stream from heaven afar, Heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia! Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light Radiant beams from your holy face, With the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

SENDING PRAYER and BENEDICTION

Let us pray. Almighty God and Father of light, a child is born for us and a son is given to us. Your eternal Word leaped down from heaven in the silent watches of the night, and now your Church is filled with wonder and light at the nearness of our God. Open our hearts to receive his life and increase our vision with the rising of the dawn, that our lives may be filled with his glory and his peace; who lives and reigns forever and ever. **Amen**

The Almighty and Incarnate God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever. **Amen**

Please extinguish your candle.

SENDING HYMN ~ ELW 267 (red book) *Joy to the World*

POSTLUDE

A special thank you to our musicians this evening!
Abiding Hope Choir, Brian Gresh, Paul Mirone, Janet Getson,
Howard Lyon, Christina Murnock, Pastor Karen, Sheryl Williams.

2023
Christmas Poinsettias

In Memory:

James, Jim Jim , Joseph Pacileo
from Judi Pacileo

Richard & Florence Vogt
from Jerry & Connie Kerr Vogt

Norma Henderson
from Evelyn Senger

Cheri Greene
from Mady Davis

Edward C Kerr
Ruth M Kerr
from Pat Kerr, Jerry Vogt
Connie Kerr Vogt

Anthony & Bernice Pokosh
Delona Pokosh Kozlowski
Milton & Colleen Luke
Neal & Bette Moffett, Dean Moffett
from denise

In Celebration:

Five Great Grandchildren
from Evenly Senger

In Honor:

Pastor Karen, Sheryl,
Denise & Kayla
from Dave & Nancy Cunning

Bill and Chrissie Gordon
Judi Pacileo

All of Our "J's"
Skip and Don Kleckner
from Jacque & John Holmberg

Thankful for my Abiding Hope Family
from Analee Cree



KAFP Donations

In Memory:

Evelyn & Matt Zill
Olive and Jay Pifer
from Matt & Sally Zill

LeRoy & Charlotte Doehrel
from Analee Cree

In Honor:

Trudy Henderson, Mike Wertz
from Cindy & Rich Filson

My husband, Bob
My parents, Rev.Paul & Theresa Porath
from Marian Wygant

John, Charles David, Karen,
Charles Nathan Englert
from Shirley Englert & family

