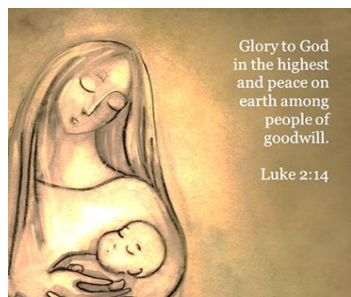


Festival of Lessons and Carol ~ December 28, 2025

Abiding Hope Lutheran Church

Rev. Karen Parsh, Pastor

Sheryl Williams, Music Coordinator



The Festival of Lessons and Carols has been a service of [worship](#) celebrating the New Year that tells the full story of the Messiah... starting with Mankind's need for a savior, the promise of the [Messiah](#), and the birth of Jesus, as told in short [Bible](#) readings from Genesis, the prophetic books and the Gospels, interspersed with the singing

WELCOME

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

(Please turn off your cell phone)

Thank you to Rick Penn for leading worship today as our Lay Minister and Patrick Rose for providing music.

PRELUDE

Welcome one and all...This morning, we say goodbye to the old year and look with hope and anticipation into the new year. Though the darkness is deep, the Light of the World guides our way. Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, the Word made flesh, our life and our salvation. **Amen.**

Trusting the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior, let us confess our sin. God of life,

you promise good news of great joy for all people, and call us to be messengers of your peace.

We confess that too often we hoard our joy, our resources, and our security. We nurture conflict and build barriers.

We neglect the needs of our neighbors and ignore the groaning of creation. Have mercy on us.

Where we are self-centered, open our hearts.

Where we are reluctant, give us courage.

Where we are cynical, restore our trust.

Renew us with your grace and give us again the hope of eternal life in you. Amen.

Hear the good news: We are children of God and heirs of God's promises through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In ☩ Jesus we are forgiven and redeemed. Sing with joy, for all the ends of the earth shall know the salvation of God. **Amen.**

ELW 275 *Angels, from the Realms of Glory* v.1,4

1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
2 Shep - herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your flocks by night,
3 Sa - ges, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, bright - er vi - sions beam a - far;
4 All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God, the Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son,

once you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
God with us is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant light.
seek the great de - sire of na - tions, you have seen his na - tal star.
ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing to the e - ter - nal Three in One.

Refrain

Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born king.

The musical score is written for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. It features a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature. The lyrics are arranged in four stanzas, with the first stanza being a four-part setting. The second stanza continues the four-part setting. The third stanza is a single melodic line for the Soprano voice. The fourth stanza is a single melodic line for the Soprano voice. The score concludes with a double bar line.

Prayer of the Day

Heavenly Father, **you gave your incarnate Son the holy name of Jesus to be a sign of our salvation. Plant in every heart the love of the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

Please be seated

FIRST LESSON: Genesis 1

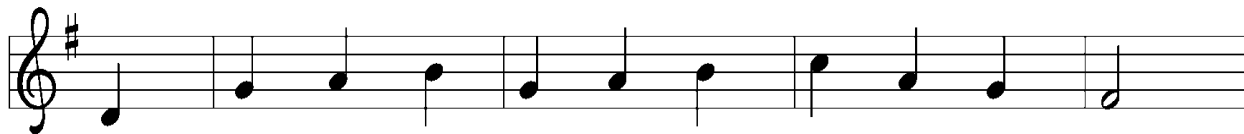
In the beginning, O God, there was only you: Creator, Word and Breath.

¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.³ And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning, the first day.

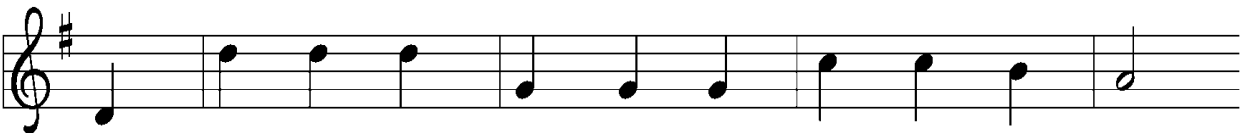
ELW 861 *When Long before Time* v.1,2



1 When long be - fore time and the worlds were be - gun,
2 The si - lence was bro - ken when God sang the Song,
3 The sounds of the crea - tures were one with their Lord's,
4 Though down through the a - ges the Song dis - ap - peared,



when there was no earth and no sky and no sun,
and light pierced the dark - ness and rhy - thm be - gan,
their har - mo - nies sweet and be - fit - ting the Word;
its har - mo - nies bro - ken and al - most un - heard,



and all was deep si - lence and night reigned su - preme,
and with its first birth - cries cre - a - tion was born,
the Sing - er was pleased as the earth sang the Song,
the Sing - er comes to us to sing it a - gain,



and e - ven our Mak - er had on - ly a dream—
and crea - ture - ly voic - es sang praise to the morn.
the choir of the crea - tures re - ech - oed it long.
our God - is - with - us in the world now as then.

SECOND LESSON: Numbers 6:22-27

God commanded Aaron to say these words, known as the Aaronic benediction, in blessing the people of Israel.

²²The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ²³Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the Israelites: You shall say to them, ²⁴The LORD bless you and keep you; ²⁵the LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; ²⁶the LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. ²⁷So they shall put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.

ELW 272 *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* v.1,2

THIRD LESSON: Isaiah 11:1-10

The king is coming and will usher in a reign of justice for the poor and peace for all of God's creation.

¹ Out of the stump of David's family will grow a shoot— yes, a new Branch bearing fruit from the old root.

² And the Spirit of the LORD will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

³ He will delight in obeying the LORD. He will not judge by appearance nor make a decision based on hearsay.

⁴ He will give justice to the poor and make fair decisions for the exploited. The earth will shake at the force of his word, and one breath from his mouth will destroy the wicked.

⁵ He will wear righteousness like a belt and truth like an undergarment.

⁶ In that day the wolf and the lamb will live together; the leopard will lie down with the baby goat. The calf and the yearling will be safe with the lion, and a little child will lead them all.

⁷ The cow will graze near the bear. The cub and the calf will lie down together. The lion will eat hay like a cow.

⁸ The baby will play safely near the hole of a cobra. Yes, a little child will put its hand in a nest of deadly snakes without harm.

⁹ Nothing will hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, for as the waters fill the sea, so the earth will be filled with people who know the LORD.

¹⁰ On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

ELW 294 In the Bleak Midwinter v.1,2

1 In the bleak mid - win - ter, frost - y wind made moan,
 2 Heav - en can - not hold him, nor . . . earth sus - tain;
 3 What . . . can I give him, poor . . . as I am?

earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;
 heav'n and earth shall flee a - way when he comes to reign;
 If I were a shep - herd I would bring a lamb;

snow had fall - en, snow on snow, snow on snow,
 in the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble place suf - ficed
 if I were a wise . . . man I would do my part;

in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go,
 the Lord . . . God al - might - y, Je - sus Christ.
 yet what I can I give him— give my heart.

Mary's Song of Praise

⁴⁶ And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord,
⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant. Surely from
now on all generations will call me blessed,
⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name;
⁵⁰ indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to
generation.
⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the
imagination of their hearts.
⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones
and lifted up the lowly; ⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things and sent
the rich away empty.
⁵⁴ He has come to the aid of his child Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."



Mary's Song ~The Magnificat



1., 3. My soul pro-claims your great-ness, O God, and my
2. You have cast the might - y down from their thrones, and up -



spir - it re-joic-es in you. You have looked with love on your
lift - ed the hum-ble of heart. You have filled the hun - gry with



ser - vant here, and blessed me all my life through.
won-drous things, and left the wealth-y no part.



Great and might - y are you, O Ho - ly One,
Great and might - y are you, O Faith - ful One,



strong is your kind-ness ev - er - more. How you fa - vor the
strong is your jus - tice, strong your love, as you prom-ised to



weak and low-ly one, hum - bling the proud of heart!
Sar-ah and A-bra-ham, kind - ness for - ev - er - more.

FIFTH LESSON: Galatians 4:4-7

Paul proclaims the ultimate significance of the nativity: Jesus was born the Son of God so that, because of him, we all may be God's children.

⁴When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. ⁶And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

⁷So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

ELW 269 *Once in Royal David's City* v.1,2

Please stand

GOSEPL: Luke 2:1—21

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴ Joseph 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. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷ And 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 in the guest room.^[a]

The Shepherds and the Angels

1 There's a star in the east on Christ-mas morn, rise up, shep-herd, and fol-low.
2 If you take good heed to the an-gel's words, rise up, shep-herd, and fol-low.

It will lead to the place where the Christ was born, rise up, shep-herd, and fol-low.
You'll for-get your flocks, you'll for-get your herds, rise up, shep-herd, and fol-low.

Refrain
Fol - low. fol - low. rise up, shep-herd, and fol - low.

Fol-low the star of Beth-le - hem, rise up, shep-herd, and fol-low.

⁸ Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before 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, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah,^[b] 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,^[c] praising God and saying, 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. ²¹After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

MARY'S LITTLE BOY CHILD

Long time ago in Bethlehem
So the holy Bible say, Mary's boy child – Jesus Christ,
Was born on Christmas day.
Hark now hear the angels sing the new king's born today,
And man will live forever more,
Because of Christmas day.

While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
They saw a bright new shining star, And hear a choir
from heaven sing; The music from afar.
Hark now hear the angels sing the new king's born today,
And man will live forevermore,
Because of Christmas day.

Now Joseph and his wife Mary Came to Bethlehem that night;
They found no place to bear her child;
Not a single room was in sight.

By and by they found a nook In a stable all forlorn,
And in a manger cold and dark,
Mary's little boy child was born.

Trumpets sound and angels sing; Listen to what they say,
That man will live forevermore,
Because of Christmas day.

PRAYERS of INTERCESSION

Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need. *A brief silence.*

God of grace, you show us mercy not according to our worthiness, but according to the abundance of your steadfast love. Grant us the courage to go into the world and do likewise. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of abundance, the sun and moon praise you and the shining stars sing of your love. Where we have desecrated your creation, make us into a healing balm for what we have broken. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of righteousness, when leaders fail to fulfill their calls to enact justice, you suffer alongside us. Propel those in power to see you reflected in the faces of all they serve. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of life, you claim us as your own and care for us as Christ's siblings. Pour out your compassion in every place your people suffer, and protect them in the palm of your hand. We pray especially for: Pastor Karen, Christian S., Laura, 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. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of compassion, you nurture children as the apple of your eye. As you sheltered your son Jesus from Herod's grasp, shelter all children in danger. As you comforted Rachel, comfort all who have lost children to violence. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of love, you console those who weep for lost beloved ones. Even as we mourn, we offer thanks for those who have gone before us, trusting in your comfort and protection. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

PEACE

Peace be with you. And also with you.

Please be seated

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERING

Please stand

OFFERTORY HYMN ~ ELW 296 *What Child is This?*

Assisting Minister ~

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Lord of Christmas and New Beginnings,

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

Assisting Minister

PRAYERS of DISTRIBUTION

(At this service of worship, we receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion through the distribution of the elements blessed at a previous celebration. Our Lay Distributors of Holy Communion were selected by the congregational council, received instruction, and were appointed by our synodical bishop. They will serve this congregation during times of pastoral absence that, we may continue to receive communion as Christ's body here at Abiding Hope Lutheran Church.)

Peace to you from our Lord Jesus Christ.

When our congregation gathers for the celebration of Holy Communion, we hear again the story of God's mighty acts and of the love shown us in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

With thanksgiving we remember the words that have been spoken:

"In the night in which he was betrayed, he 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 all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

We have been given assurance of our Lord's presence through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Now we bring to you this same bread of life and this same cup of blessing, that you may be strengthened through your participation in the body of Christ. As often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

LORD's PRAYER

This is the celebration of God's love among us. Let us pray...

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name....Amen.

Please be seated

COMMUNION

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

Please be seated

DISTRIBUTION of ELEMENTS ~ Lay Distributor

COMMUNION HYMN ~ ELW 282 *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*
Instrumental Meditation

SEVENTH LESSON John 1:1 –14

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it...⁹The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹²Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—¹³children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.¹⁴The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Please stand

SENDING PRAYER

God our redeemer, **you have fed us at this table with gifts of grace, truth, and life. As you have gathered us in joy, send us forth as messengers of your peace. Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

BLESSING

Go into the Light of God's eternal, inspiring Love. Go to be those who bring peace, love, hope and joy. And God will always be with you. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN ~ ELW 290 *Go Tell it On the Mountain*

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

PARISH NOTES ~ December 28, 2025

Pastor Karen Parsh ~ 814-881-3266

Office: 814-868-8685 ~ ahadministrator@hotmail.com

FB: [abidinghopelutheranchurch](https://www.facebook.com/abidinghopelutheranchurch) www.abidinghopeerie.org

Please keep in your prayers: The family and friends of Mike Jenkins.

Also these members and friends: Pastor Karen Parsh, Christina Sonthemier, Laura Vanlandingham, 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, Kathy Sinnott, Bob McDaniel, Maury & Linda Allen, Damian & Marcia Santabene, Don & Donna Holder and Little Library requests.

Sunday, January 4: Worship 930a ~ Bible Study - TBA

CHOIR SCHEDULE: Choir will be on hiatus until January 11th.

Rehearsal will resume at 10:45 am after Worship on January 11th.

Monday, January 4: Join the **Prayer Shawl Ladies, 10a-12n..**prayer, good conversation, and knitting. **Showing "how to" offered!**

Tuesday, January 6: Epiphany of Our Lord, Service of Holy Communion followed by Burning of the Greens at **Faith Lutheran Church, 7:00p**

Sunday, January 11: Read Through the Bible Together @ 7pm. This on-going gathering **by ZOOM** will be on the **2nd & 4th 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: Our supply has declined due to increased use. Donations would be greatly appreciated: **small packages of nuts/dried fruit, granola bars (no chocolate please), cheese/peanut butter crackers, dried packets of oatmeal, individual cups/packets of meals/cereals with high protein, and small packaged snacks like pretzels. No canned goods.**

Office Hours ~ Mon. 930a-330p ..Tues. 930a-3:30p. Wed. 930a-1230pFor **immediate pastoral assistance**, call **Pastor Karen**, 814-881-3266. **On Fridays**, please **contact Rich Penn**, 814-737-9974

Worship Leaders – December 28. 2025

Videographer	Andy Saska
Greeter/Coffee	Cindy Filson
Assisting Minister/Acol	Bob Hicks
Lector/Prayers	Penny Gresh
Lay Distributor	Penny Gresh
Communion Cups	Connie Kerr-Vogt
Communion Tray	Lois Kuhns
Usher	Rich Filson
Usher	Rick Penn
Counters	Diana & Andy

Celebrate the Epiphany of our Lord

With the congregations of
the Erie Lutheran Conference
Tuesday, January 6, 2026

7:00 pm @

**Faith Lutheran Church
5441 E. Lake Road**

**Guest Preacher: The Very Rev.
Dr. John P. Downey, Vicar, St
Stephen's Episcopal Church,
Fairview**



All are welcome!

*"Come,
let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!"*



Service of Holy Communion
followed by the
"Burning of the Greens"

Let's

Read through the Bible Together

We'll begin on January 11th at 7pm (the 2nd and 4th Sundays)
and cover each book of the Bible with historical
background and theological purpose. Our twice a month
gathering will be by ZOOM to enable us to meet
regardless of weather. Feel free to read your favorite
Bible translation. Sign-up in the narthex.



**MAKE THIS THE
NEW YEAR'S
RESOLUTION YOU
DON'T BREAK IN 2026.**

