

December 25th, 2023
The Nativity of Our Lord



8470 Landen Drive Maineville, Ohio

*At Abiding Word
We gather around the Word (worship)
We grow in the Word (education)
And we share the Word with the world (outreach).*



Abiding Word Evangelical Lutheran Church
Wisconsin Synod
513.677.9357 abidingword.com

Pastor -Troy Jacobs

937.503.3333 welstroyjacobs@yahoo.com

Welcome!

To all who have gathered here this morning we welcome you in the name of Christ our Lord. Through him we have access to God in boldness and confidence. (Ephesians 3:12)

GOD BECAME MAN

How can an omnipresent God be held in his mother's arms? How can an all-powerful God be too weak to walk? This is the mystery of the incarnation—that God took on human flesh. We cannot understand how it can be so. But the Spirit enables us to grasp that this incomprehensible truth is very good news. This is the Savior we need! As true man, he was born under God's law, all the commandments that we have broken. Where we have failed, Jesus was perfect. As true God, when he laid down his perfect life, it was a sacrifice valuable enough to pay for the sins of the world, so that we might be adopted as God's children.

Christmas Day fills us with wonder—that the Creator God *could* become flesh and dwell among us and that, in his great love for us, he *would* do such a thing. Let us marvel at this good news of great joy!

DIALOGUE FOR CHRISTMAS DAY

M: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

M: Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

C: **His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.**

M: The Lord has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations.

C: **All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.**

M: But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears?

C: **If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?**

M: Restore us again, O God our Savior, and put away your displeasure toward us.

C: **Show us your unfailing love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.**

M: Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,
because he has come and has redeemed his people.

C: **My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.**

M: When the time had fully come, God sent his Son,
born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law,
that we might receive the full rights of sons.

C: **The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.
We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only,
who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

M: I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord.

C: **Glory to God in the highest!**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

M: It is with great joy that we gather this morning to celebrate the birth of our Savior from sin. Even amidst our joy, we do remember that our sin is the reason he came. With humble hearts then, let us bow before our God in repentance and seek his forgiveness:

ALL: Father in Heaven, forgive my lack of focus on your love and the sending of your Son during this Christmas season. I know that I am weak, even at Christmastime—a most important time for my faith. Forgive these particular sins and all that I have done wrong—through Jesus, my Savior. Amen.

M: Today I can say to you with great joy that your Savior has come! In Him you have full forgiveness of your sins. You are the people upon whom God's favor rests!

C: Glory to God in the highest! Amen!

M: In the peace of forgiveness let us join in singing the song of the angels:

C: Sing to the tune of Angels We Have Heard on High.

Glory be to God above! Glory to the Lord we love!

Blessing, worship, thanks and praise Sing we now and all our days!

Gloria in Excelsis Deo!

Lord, You take our sin away; Send Your mercy now we pray.

Lord, You take our sin away; Listen to the prayer we say.

Gloria in Excelsis Deo!

O Lord God, be glorified By Your Church both far and wide!

Now we sing adoringly, Praise to You, great Trinity!

Gloria in Excelsis Deo!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: Let us pray

C: Almighty God, grant that the birth of your one and only Son in the flesh may set us free from our old bondage under the yoke of sin; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

FIRST READING**MICAH 5:2-5a**

²“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah,
out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
from ancient times.”

³Therefore Israel will be abandoned
until the time when she who is in labor bears a son,
and the rest of his brothers return
to join the Israelites.

⁴He will stand and shepherd his flock
in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
And they will live securely, for then his greatness
will reach to the ends of the earth.

⁵And he will be our peace

SECOND READING**GALATIANS 4:4-7**

⁴But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. ⁶Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.” ⁷So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.

HYMN: O REJOICE, ALL CHRISTIANS LOUDLY**366**

GOSPEL

JOHN 1:1-18

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. ⁴In 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.

⁶There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. ⁸He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

⁹The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. ¹⁰He 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.

¹⁵(John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

HYMN: OF THE FATHER'S LOVE BEGOTTEN

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SERMON ON MICAH 5:2-5a

THE HYMN RESPONSE:

**Create my nature pure within And make my heart averse to sin;
Let Your good Spirit not depart, Nor hide Your presence from my heart.**

**I cannot live without Your Light, Cast out and banished from Your sight;
Your holy joys, my God, restore And guard me that I fall no more.**

**Oh, may Your love inspire my tongue! Salvation shall be all my song;
And all my powers shall join to bless The Lord, my strength and righteousness.**

NICENE CREED

C: We believe in one God,	<i>Dt. 6:4</i>
the Father, the Almighty,	<i>2 Cor. 6:18</i>
maker of heaven and earth,	<i>Is. 51:13</i>
of all that is, seen and unseen.	<i>Col.1:16</i>
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,	<i>1 Cor. 8:6</i>
the only Son of God,	<i>Jn. 3:18</i>
eternally begotten of the Father,	<i>Heb. 1:2,5</i>
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,	<i>Jn. 1</i>
begotten, not made, of one being with the Father.	<i>Jn. 10:30</i>
Through him all things were made.	<i>Jn. 1:3</i>
For us and for our salvation,	<i>1 Th. 5:9</i>
he came down from heaven,	<i>Jn. 6:38</i>
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,	<i>Lk. 1:35</i>
and became truly human.	<i>Gal. 4:4</i>
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.	<i>Mk. 15:15</i>
He suffered death and was buried.	<i>1 Cor. 15:3-4a</i>
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.	<i>1 Cor. 15:4b</i>
He ascended into heaven	<i>Ac. 2:33-34</i>
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.	<i>Heb. 1:13</i>
He will come again in glory	<i>Mt. 25:31</i>
to judge the living and the dead,	<i>2 Tim.4:1</i>
and his kingdom will have no end.	<i>Lk. 1:33</i>
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,	<i>Job 33:4</i>
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,	<i>Jn. 15:26</i>
who in unity with the Father and the Son	<i>Jn. 4:24</i>
is worshiped and glorified,	
who has spoken through the prophets.	<i>2 Pet.1:25</i>
We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.	<i>Mt. 16:18; Eph. 2:19-20</i>
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.	<i>Eph. 4:5; Ac. 2:38</i>
We look for the resurrection of the dead	<i>1 Cor. 15:21-22</i>
and the life of the world to come. Amen.	<i>Rev. 22</i>

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M: On this holy day, dear Father, we rejoice to hear the good news of great joy that a Savior has been born for us. For fulfilling your prophecies and in the fullness of time sending your Son to be our Savior, we give you our heartfelt thanks and praise.

C: Unto us a child is born! Unto us a Son is given!

M: What a great mystery of our faith this is: that God has become fully human for our salvation! Even though he is the all-powerful Lord of all, he is wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger.

C: Help us always believe that this precious child was born as our substitute to be our Savior.

M: In the midst of our joy, we grieve for the many people in our world who do not know that Jesus has come to bring them forgiveness and healing. As the shepherds spread abroad the good news of the birth of the Savior born for all the world, may we also make use of the unique opportunities this holiday presents to tell others of what we have seen and heard concerning the child.

C: Grant that the true peace between God and fallen mankind may comfort all people.

M: Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

M: As the angels sang out their praise, move us also to sing out our praise to you, today and every day, as the joy of Christmas remains in our hearts.

C: Glory to God in the highest! 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.

BLESSING

M: May he who by his incarnation gathered things earthly and heavenly into one, fill us with such joy that comes with the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life. And the blessing of God Almighty — the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit — be upon you and remain with you always.

C: Amen.