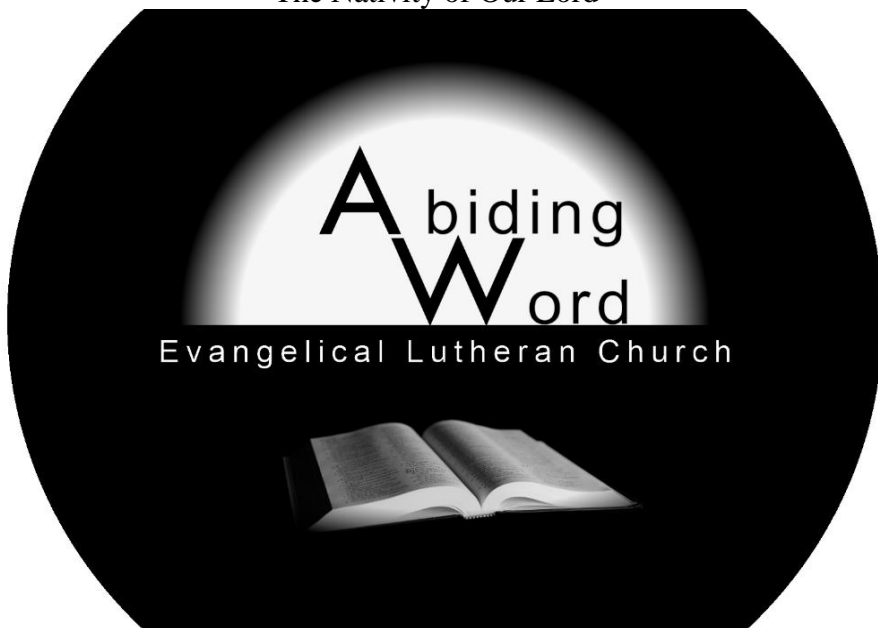


December 25th, 2024
The Nativity of Our Lord



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).*



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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)

THE GIFT OF GOD

When a father puts gifts under the Christmas tree, it is not to compensate his children for doing their chores. That would make whatever is inside that wrapping paper a wage, not a gift. A gift is given voluntarily simply so the giver can show favor to the one receiving the gift, without any expectation of repayment. In the season of Christmas, we receive the gift of God. That does not simply mean we receive the gifts God gives. When we look into the manger, we see that God is the gift.

In the person of Jesus, God gave us himself. And because our God became true man and did everything necessary for our salvation, he is able to give us so many other Christmas gifts: forgiveness, hope, peace, a place in his family, eternal life in paradise. “That is too much!” you object. “I don’t deserve any of it!” True enough. However, none of these things are wages. We could not and need not earn them. Because they are gifts, given by our gracious God to show us his favor.

Have you ever opened a Christmas present and had to ask, “What is it?” Perhaps it was some new type of technology or perhaps a unique toy. You were grateful for the gift, but also not 100% certain what you were looking at. “What is it?” Today, as we look into the manger, we ask that question. In this case, the question is not quickly or easily answered. It requires both deep thought and humble awe. We are looking at the same God who once told the prophet Moses, “No one may see me and live.” Yet, Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds all saw their holy God and survived. How? God became human, hiding his glory within our flesh, so that he might come to us without instilling fear or dread.

“What is it?” This gift is God and man in one person, exactly what humanity needed to deliver us from our greatest enemies: sin, death, and Satan. On the Festival of Christmas, we thank God for this greatest of gifts.

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!**

M: 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! 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! 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! 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**EXODUS 33:18–23; 34:5-7**

¹⁸Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory.”

¹⁹And the Lord said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. ²⁰But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.”

²¹Then the Lord said, “There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. ²²When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. ²³Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen.”

⁵Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the Lord. ⁶And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.”

SECOND READING**ROMANS 8:31–32**

³¹What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

HYMN: JOY TO THE WORLD**353****Gospel Acclamation***Galatians 4:4,5*

Alleluia. But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son,
born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law. Alleluia.

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: ACROSS THE LANDS

549

SERMON ON JOHN 1:1-18

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

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| 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

Eternal and gracious Lord, on this holy day we rejoice with hearts and voices because you sent your one and only Son from his majestic glory to save us from the slavery of sin and the agonies of death. He took on our human flesh that he might reveal your divine glory. He became our brother that we might become your children forever.

Give us quiet time during these busy days to reflect on your love and ponder the miracle of our Savior's incarnation. Help us look beyond our gift-giving and gift-receiving, and discover the greatest gift: the forgiveness of sins and life with you. Put the joys of Christmas into the perspective of our eternal celebration, and let music and art lift our hearts to Christ who is truly the center of the season.

Keep in your loving care all whose Christmas joys are diminished by sickness and sadness, by unhappy recollections and uncertain hopes. Comfort those who sense this Christmas may be their last, and raise their eyes to the brilliant lights of heaven. Soothe consciences that are troubled by guilt and regret, and show them the forgiving love of Christ.

We commend to your care all who proclaim the message of Christ during these holy days; all who care for people in hospitals, nursing homes, and prisons; and all who put themselves out to bring joy to others, especially children. Let the light of your grace shine through all ministries of mercy.

Send us your Holy Spirit, gracious Lord, that the proclamation of the Christmas gospel may lighten the load of guilt and fear and lift our hearts to confident faith and holy living. By the power of your Word, bring your light to hearts struggling to understand you and searching to find you that they may know the joys of this season as we do. Empower us to lead them to your love in our words and deeds.

All this we ask in the name of the newborn King, born in Bethlehem and now living and reigning forever in heaven. 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