

JANUARY 2021



NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH

OUR MISSION

Loving, Living and Promoting
our Faith in Jesus Christ.

INSIDE

Message from Pastor
Church Council
Birthdays/Anniversaries



Epiphany

Annual Congregational Meeting

January 31
Following Service

*Be informed.
Plan to attend.*

Abiding Words

ABIDING SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

“Hope for the Older Adult” Bible Study Released

Life has changed greatly during the COVID-19 crisis, but there is one specific group which has borne the brunt of this devastation, and that is older adults. From the onset, the aging were warned to stay in place, since they were more susceptible to the virus. While this mandate was prudent, for many seniors this was a hard pill to swallow—especially for those who are used to going out, doing things and socializing with friends.

The maturation process is a journey to begin with, so the threat of disease and forced quarantine can cause other issues to surface as there is much time to dwell on the negative. But even during this unprecedented time, the senior can have hope and encouragement in the Lord. And that is what Hope for the Older Adult is all about. Hope for the Older Adult is a short Bible study on issues seniors are currently navigating and how God’s Word can bring strength and comfort in the unknown. The effects of aging can be seen physically, mentally and spiritually. But they don’t have to define who we are or how others see us. We cling to God’s promises for the aging, and the Lord’s guarantee that He will never “leave nor forsake us.” Jesus is our enduring Savior. Whatever our age, He has promised us “life, life abundantly” in His name. So, let’s begin with a promise. In Isaiah 46:3-4 it is written: “Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been borne by me from before your birth, carried from the womb; even to your old age I am he, and to gray hairs I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save.” The Almighty is reminding His chosen people, the Israelites, to recognize Him alone above false gods.

And that is His message to us today. He has created us, and we are His. Even as we age, He still has us and will never let us go. The Lord will always take care of His older disciples.

The Bible Study can be downloaded: [thenalcorg Newsletter](#)

Hope for the Older Adult was written by the Rev. Brad Hales, Director for Aging Ministry & Congregational Renewal for the North American Lutheran Church.



A Message from Pastor

Stand firm in the Lord

Dear Friends of the Abiding Savior,

A New Year, a new start. Many have said they will be glad when 2020 is over. It was a rough year. The pandemic loomed over us, our families and friends, our work, our schools and even our church. The effects will linger a long time.

The good news is that God is with us in the midst of our difficulties. He stands with us in our pain and suffering. He sustains us when we are hurting. He knows how we feel when experiencing loss.

Jesus wept when Lazarus died. Then He proclaimed that He is the resurrection and the life. Anyone who dies in Him will live. The hope of eternal life in Jesus Christ holds us up when we come face-to-face with our own mortality. Jesus is our lifeline in dire circumstances. The Lord is a very present help in time of trouble.

Happy New Year. Keep the faith. Stand firm in the Lord.

Yours in Jesus Christ,

Pastor Hecht

CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

Brandy Bittman - Vice President

Hello Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Well...we made it through 2020. What a year! Usually that statement is followed up by pictures of vacations, visits to the grandkids, and stories of personal fitness goals, like running a marathon. 2021 will be a year of no vacation pictures, stories of grandkids running amok in ZOOM video chats, and collective weight gain of epic proportions. 2020 gave us a run for our money.

But God was with us every step of the way. He gave us wisdom to reopen his Church so we could worship in a safe environment. He gave us health at a time when so many were falling victim to the Covid virus. He gave us hope with stories of heroes feeding the hungry, helping the homeless, and the miracles being performed by armies of Health Care Angels working tirelessly around the clock to manage the volume of patients, more than they have probably ever seen at one time, and heal them so they could celebrate life with their families. In our darkest days, God was there.

When we cried at the unfairness of this pandemic, God was there. When we got angry at the media for spreading too much panic and the politicians for not doing enough to stop the spread of the virus, God was there. When we were confined to our homes and missing out on physically being with our loved ones, God was there. As it is written in Isaiah 41:10: Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

God is always with us, we just need to keep our Faith that He will deliver us from these tough times and bring us out on the other side stronger than ever.

As for your Church Council, we have big plans for 2021. Pressure washing and repainting the exterior of the Sanctuary are top on the list. A close second is new equipment to live stream our church service for those who have been worshipping in their homes. We need to be very cautious with our spending in the upcoming year, especially since we don't know what's next in this merry-go-round of a pandemic. All we can do is pray, watch our pennies, and hold fast to Isaiah 41 that God is with us and God will help us.

Wishing you Peace and Joy,

NEWS FROM ANNA CIRCLE

Marilyn Hausy - President

The December meeting was canceled. We will meet next month on the 3rd Saturday in January. Jan. 16.



epiphany

It is derived from the Greek word, *piphaneia*, and means "an appearance." Centuries ago, the church set aside **January 6**, the

12th day after Christmas, and called that day Epiphany, intending for it to refer to the revealing of Jesus as the Christ to the Wise Men who were Gentiles.

The very first followers of Christ were Jewish. The story of the revelation of Christ to the Wise Men, who were non-Jewish, is a reminder that God meant for Christ to be the Savior of the whole world. As an old hymn puts it:

"The light of the world is Jesus."

The Baptism of Our Lord

Sunday, January 10

A feast day marking the Baptism of Jesus has been celebrated in the Church since the second century A.D. It is not only a celebration of the presence of the Holy Spirit, but also has come to be seen as the true beginning of Jesus' ministry on earth. But to make this day more than just the celebration of a moment in history, we need to remind ourselves of the connection which each of us has – through our Baptism – to Jesus himself, and to the whole Body of Christ.



While we wait
Thoughts on Psalm 13:1-6

by Bill Baker

How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever?

How long will You hide Your face from me?
How long must I take counsel in my soul
and have sorrow in my heart all the day?

David writes about the feeling of being forgotten by God (a figure of speech attributing a human quality or characteristic to God). We too, in this COVID pandemic, can feel alone and forgotten by God. These are feelings from our view point and not fact. God would not forget us - He promises that.

How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

Consider and answer me, O LORD my God;
light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,
lest my enemy say, 'I have prevailed over him,'
lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.

Like David, we wait impatiently for God's deliverance or answers to our prayers. We want an answer or solution now. We forget that God promises that He hears our prayers, and that, we can trust Him with an answer that is best for us. We need to move to the next truth that David states: that he (and we) need to trust God based on His steadfast love for us and rejoice in God's salvation for us - His son Jesus Christ.

But I have trusted in Your steadfast love;
my heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.
I will sing to the LORD,
because He has dealt bountifully with me.

So, what can we do while we wait? Per the Psalm, we can sing praises to God because of His love for us. We can also be hopeful (biblical meaning of "hope" is a fact not yet revealed). To remain focused on those "facts not yet revealed" is to read daily God's words (His truths), be in prayer (giving thanks and praise to Him), and living a life that is obedient to His truths (a life that brings Him glory).

Remember, that throughout Scripture, God reminds us that He loves us, cares for us, and wants a personal relationship with us. So for this Advent Season as we look forward to celebrating God's salvation for us (our Lord Jesus Christ), may we, like David, remember that we are not alone, and that we can trust in God's answers to our prayers or situations.

To God be the Glory!



We would like to thank everyone who took the time to fill out the *Time and Talent* forms. 25 members responded which resulted many new volunteers. If you would like to fill out a form, they are located on the table in the narthex

We would also like to thank all members who filled out commitment cards. You responded to the "Grow One Step in Faith" program. Well done!

35 pledges - \$71,984.00

If you did not have the opportunity to fill out a 2021 commitment card, they are available in the narthex.

**Live Streaming coming to
Abiding Savior**

At the start of the pandemic we have provided those who practiced social distancing a way to worship at Abiding Savior via a video filmed during the week available for view on Sunday through our website.

Cindy and Jeremy, our computer gurus, are working on 'Live Streaming' our Sunday morning worship services. That means on a Sunday morning at 10 am you can visit our website and view the worship service live.

It's in our future. We'll keep you updated.



Cindy working on the fine points for live streaming.

January Birthdays

- 6 Len Unger
- 14 Ethan Burton
David Weigel
James Van Fleet
- 19 Linda Janicek
- 25 Kathryn Davidson
Robert Hecht
- 26 Elizabeth Gamb
Denice Gaudette
Karla Davis
- 28 Bill Liddell
- 29 Forrest Knapp
Frederick Rorick
- 30 Carol DeHaven
Bruce Miller



New Year's resolutions are notoriously hazardous. But if you resolved something that

will enhance your life and the lives of those around you, you may ask the Holy Spirit to sustain you in carrying out your resolution. Our church is the right place to do it - to do it week after week. May this new year be for you a year of growth and faith and obedience.

January Anniversaries

- 4 Skip & Mary Muir
- 22 Ben & Marilyn Hausy

Did we miss your Birthday or Anniversary?
Help us to update our records by contacting
the office: 294-2829

YA GOTTA LOVE KIDS

Dear God...Thank you for my baby brother.
But I was hoping for a puppy...*Joyce*

Dear God...If you watch in church on
Sunday, I will show you my new
shoes ...*Mickey*



2020 Financial Report Year-to-date thru November

Budget -	\$133,826
Income-	131,756
Expenses -	138,336



Altar Flower Chart is located
in the narthex. Sign up.

"Say it with flowers."

Jesus Is Not Colorblind

by Bob Smith

Continued from December Newsletter

Four Reasons You Shouldn't Be Colorblind

Can you imagine wanting to be colorblind? And yet I hear that hope all the time.

When I speak with people about ethnic and racial diversity, it's not long before I hear, "I don't see color. I'm colorblind! My parents taught me not to see color."

The phrase is trying to express that all people are people, and that color doesn't matter. I've also heard colorblindness cited as a defense against racism: "I'm not racist. I love all people. In fact, I'm colorblind."

But I disagree. I'd like to suggest that we aren't colorblind, we don't need to be colorblind, and we actually should strive to *not* be colorblind. Colorblindness leads us in the wrong direction. Instead, I want to encourage us to be color smart. Here are four reasons why:

1. It's Not Realistic

Our Skin color is different. I cannot—and crucially, I have no desire to—erase the fact that God made us this way. There's no hiding my freckled skin color. I am who I am. When I walk into a room and I'm the only freckled skin person in the room, it's obvious. I know it; you know it; we all know it. It's ridiculous to pretend otherwise. This doesn't mean we need to act awkward around each other. If we've embraced the fact that God has created us as equals, there's no reason for awkwardness. If you encounter someone ethnically different from you, it's unrealistic, unhelpful, and possibly unloving to pretend you don't notice. When your child says, "why is that woman wearing a dot on her forehead?" don't shush him quiet out of embarrassment. Take the question as an opportunity to positively explain her culture. Instead of pretending we're colorblind, let's celebrate God's creation and be color smart.

2. It Misses the Opportunity to Celebrate God's Good Design

Colorblindness seeks to ignore or flatten the differences between us. Being color smart, however, enables us to see others as crafted in

God's image—just like us—while still acknowledging the beauty of our differences.

We're all equally created to reflect aspects of our Creator God. Nevertheless, he creates each of us uniquely. This should be proactively acknowledged and celebrated rather than fearfully ignored. The reality is we're *not* all the same in regard to skin color, interests, likes, gifts, and desires. God made us differently for a purpose: his manifold glory. Instead of striving to be colorblind, then, let's recognize these differences in ways that express genuine love for neighbor and gratitude for the beauty of God's flawless design. Don't we want to celebrate who God designed us to be? We should want our kids to rejoice that God created them the way they are and others the way they are. That's the beautiful reality of creation.

Continued next month.



**SOUPER
BOWL SUNDAY**

February 7

Please plan to bring a

CAN OF SOUP
and
ONE DOLLAR
to support
THE MISSION
food pantry



Deadline for February Newsletter
Kindly submit items by Jan 25 to:
John Bardenhagen.
e-mail:johnbardsr@gmail.com



IN THE LORD'S SERVICE January



Communion Assistants 3 - Brandy Bittman 17 - Brandy Bittman				
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Altar Flowers-

3 - Brandy Bittman - Happy New Year ASLC family
 Open
 10- Betty Harris - In memory of Paul's birthday (Jan 9)
 Cade Bicker - In memory of Sharon Bicker
 17- Open
 Open
 24 - Open
 Open
 31 - Open

Sunday School-

Altar Committee-
 John Bardenhagen
 Church Lockup-

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 2nd Sun Christmas Worship 10:00 Communion	4	5	6 Epiphany of Our Lord Choir Rehear. 5 pm	7	8	9
10 Baptism of Our Lord Worship 10:00	11	12 Council Mtg. 7pm	13 Choir Rehear. 5 pm		15	16 Anna Circle -9:30
17 2nd Sun. Epiphany Worship 10:00 Communion	18	19	20 Choir Rehear. 5 pm	21	22	23
24 3rd Sun. Epiphany Worship 10:00	25	26	27 Choir Rehear. 5 pm	28	29	30

31
 4th Sun. Epiphany
 Worship 10:00
 Annual Meeting

The Rev. William J. Hecht
Pastor

Abiding Savior Lutheran Church, NALC
1910 Havendale Blvd.
Winter Haven, FL 33881-1235
Phone: 863.294.2829 Fax: 863.299.4193
E-mail: AbidSav1910@gmail.com
Web Site: abidingsaviorlutheran.net

OFFICE HOURS

Mon. Tues. Thurs. 9:30 am - 3:00 pm
Wednesday 9:30 am - 4:00 pm

SUNDAY WORSHIP – 10:00 am
SUNDAY SCHOOL – 10:00 am

Holy Communion celebrated weekly

OUR MISSION STATEMENT
Loving, Living and Promoting
our Faith in Jesus Christ.

ABIDING SAVIOR COUNCIL MEMBERS

David Weigel, President	517-285-1848
Brandy Bittman, Vice President	407-761-1044
Bob Buchholz, Treasurer	294-2807
Mary Kerns, Financial Secretary	874-4459
Bill Baker, Recording Secretary	299-1265
Kathie Youtsler, Worship & Music	326-9892
Katie Bicker, Worship & Music	224-9427
Bob DeHaven, Member-at-Large	
Suzanne Monzon, Member-at-Large	678-548-0300

CHURCH SECRETARY - Mary Kerns
OUTREACH MINISTRY - Bob Smith

Abiding Savior Lutheran Church
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Epiphany

AbidingWords
January