

JANUARY 2023



NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH

OUR MISSION

Loving, Living and Promoting
our Faith in Jesus Christ.

INSIDE

Message from Pastor
Church Council Report
Abiding Fellowship News
Birthdays/Anniversaries
Outreach Ministry Article



Annual Congregational Meeting

January 29
Following Service

*Be informed.
Plan to attend.*

AbidingWords

ABIDING SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER



A Message from Pastor Gail Sherin

LET'S PRAY

Dear Friends of the Abiding Savior,

In the book of Ephesians, St. Paul writes that we are to "stay alert and be persistent in our prayers for all believers everywhere" (6:18). As Christians, we have the unique privilege of taking not just our praises and thanksgivings to God, but also our needs and concerns to Him in prayer. Beginning in January, 2023, we will be including a copy of the Voice of the Martyrs' international prayer calendar inside our church newsletter. Each day of each month has a country, and a mission need for that country, to pray for on that day. The Voice of the Martyrs is an American nondenominational ministry that serves and helps persecuted Christians and their families in restricted and hostile countries around the world. These are places where government sanctioned circumstances or anti-Christian laws lead to Christians being harassed, imprisoned, killed or deprived of possessions and/or liberties because of their witness for Christ. Severe and even deadly attacks can also be experienced from their own family members, friends, neighbors, community members, other religions, and/or political groups.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Eph. 6:12)

Please join with me this year in lifting up in prayer these suffering Christians; for "the effective, fervent prayers of the righteous avails much." (James 5:16)

In Christ's Love,
Pastor Gail

Church Council Report

Highlights from the December Council meeting.

- Pastor Gail's Tuesday afternoon Advent Bible Study is drawing eight people. They want to continue after the holiday.
- Pastor Gail is conducting counselling sessions.
- *Property* - Lighting fixtures and bulbs throughout the fellowship hall, offices and counting room have be replaced.
- *Worship* - There are new candles on the altar. The offering plates from the rear doors will be presented to the altar during the worship service.

Financials

January thru November 2022

Budget - \$108,630

Income - \$106,287

Expenses - \$108,065

Gifts not reflected in above totals - \$47,764

Abiding Savior will participate in Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes in 2023. However, instead of asking for all of the donations at once, I have decided to try something new. During certain months throughout the year, we will collect specific items. The schedule of collection is below:

January: girl's underwear

February: boy's underwear

March: girl's socks

April: boy's socks

May: toothbrushes

June: bar of soap, 1 new washcloth

July: hair brushes and combs

August: school supplies (month on sale)

September: One WOW toy

October: We will reassess what we have and what we may still need and let everyone know.

Thank you in advance for your kind donations.

Lisa Baker

Abiding Savior Fellowship News

The monthly Fellowship breakfast meeting was held on Wednesday, Dec. 14. Fifteen were in attendance. We discussed our next fund raiser: a Fish Fry scheduled to be held on Friday, February 17. Ticket price will be \$15.00.

Two new candles adorn our church altar. They were purchased by ABIDING SAVIOR FELLOWSHIP cash on hand. (Combined funds of the Men's Fellowship & Anne Circle when we united together as one group.)

Schalamar is currently having problems providing restaurant services due to employment issues, so we have a change in the meeting location.

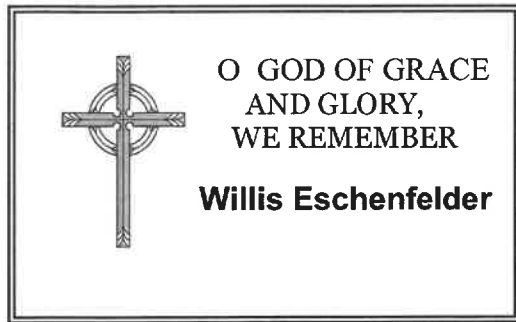
Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 11, 8:30AM at THE PANTRY located at 2122 US-92 West in Auburndale.

All are invited. Come and join us.



We would like to thank all members who filled out Time and Talent Forms, Commitment Cards and responded to the "Grow One Step in Faith" program. Well done!

If you did not have the opportunity to fill out a 2023 commitment card, they are available in the narthex.



Angels Care Center of Eloise

GOD'S PEOPLE CARING FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

There is an "Angels Care Center Box" located in the narthex, where you can place donations.

Kit-Making Needs

First Aid Kits: Band-aids, wet wipes, small soaps, washcloths, Q-tips, cotton balls, small bacterial soap or hand sanitizer, Kleenex, etc

Toiletry Kits: Shampoo, soap, deodorant, razors, toothbrush and toothpaste, combs, lotion, hand gel, washcloths, small samples from hotel/motels, dental floss, etc.

Children's "Jesus Kits": Coloring sheets with Biblical themes, crayons, stickers, small books, small containers of Play Doh, toy cars, hair clips.

Miscellaneous: Zip lock bags (snack, quart and gallon sizes). The food deposited in the "barrel" in the narthex is being delivered to *Angels Care*.

They extend to Abiding Savoir their deepest gratitude for the generous donations.



Relief for Human Need Worldwide

Orphan Grain Train is a recognized service organization of the Lutheran Church

The first Sunday of each month
is designated as
Spare Change Sunday

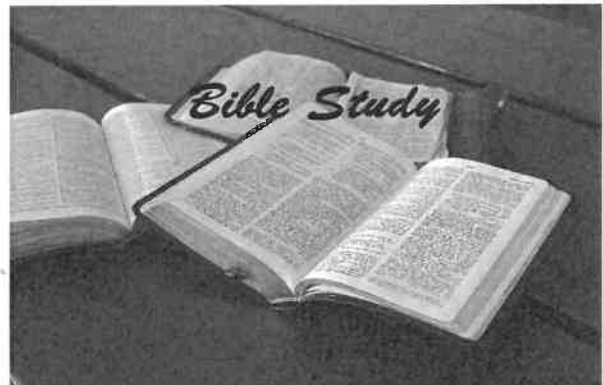
January Birthdays

- 6 Len Unger
- 14 Ethan Burton
David Weigel
James Van Fleet
- 25 Kathryn Davidson
- 26 Denice Gaudette
- 29 Forrest Knapp
- 30 Carol DeHaven
Bruce Miller

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



SUNDAY MORNING ADULT BIBLE CLASS
resumes on Sunday, January 8 at 8:45 AM

The class continues with the study of the series called *Characters*. *Characters* is an exploration of the Bible through the lives of its people.

Please plan to join us as we take a deeper dive into God's Word.

The Arrival

Bob Smith – Outreach Ministry

Last month we wrote about the real meaning of Christmas. God being born in a manger.

Let us go back to when God told Gabriel that God was to become man. What he never expected was what he got - a slip of paper with a Nazarene address. "God will become a baby," it read. "Tell the mother to name the child Jesus. And tell her not to be afraid." Gabriel was never one to question, but this time he had to wonder. God will become a baby? That's okay for humans, he thought to himself. But "God." And what of this name—what was it—*Jesus*? Such a common name. Call the baby Eminence or Majesty or Heaven-sent. Anything, but *Jesus*. The heavens can't contain him; how could a body?

But Gabriel had his orders. Take the message to Mary. Must be a special girl, he assumed as he traveled. But Gabriel was in for another shock. One peek told him Mary was no queen. The mother-to-be of God was not regal. She was a Jewish peasant who'd barely outgrown acne and had a crush on a guy named Joe. And speaking of Joe—what does this fellow know? He's a carpenter. You're telling me the source of wisdom is going to call this guy "Dad?" You're telling me a common laborer is going to be charged with giving food to God?

Only heaven knows how long Gabriel fluttered unseen above Mary before he took a breath and broke the news. But he did. He told her the name. He told her the plan. He told her not to be afraid. And when he announced, "With God nothing is impossible!" he said it as much for himself as for her. For even though he couldn't answer the questions, he knew who could and that was enough. And even though we can't answer them all, taking time to ask a few would be a good start.

The owner of the inn had awakened earlier than most in the town. After all, the inn was full, all the beds taken. Every available mat or blanket had been put to use. Soon all the customers would be stirring and there would be a lot of work to do. One's imagination is kindled thinking about the conversation of the

innkeeper and his family at the breakfast table. Did anyone mention the arrival of the young couple the night before? Did anyone comment on the pregnancy of the girl on the donkey? Perhaps. Perhaps someone raised the subject. But, at best, it was raised, not discussed. There was nothing that novel about them. They were, possibly, one of several families turned away that night. Who had time to talk about them when there was so much excitement in the air? Augustus did the economy of Bethlehem a favor when he decreed that a census should be taken. Who could remember when such commerce had hit the village?

No, it is doubtful that anyone mentioned the couple's arrival or wondered about the condition of the girl. They were too busy. The day was upon them. The day's bread had to be made. The morning's chores had to be done. There was too much to do to imagine that the impossible had occurred. God had entered the world as a baby.

Off to one side sit a group of shepherds. They sit silently on the floor, perhaps perplexed, perhaps in awe, no doubt in amazement. Their night watch had been interrupted by an explosion of light from heaven and a symphony of angels. Near the young mother sits the weary father. The mystery of the event still puzzles him. What's important is that the baby is fine and Mary is safe. He remembers the name the angel told him to use - Jesus. "We will call him Jesus."

She looks into the face of the baby. Her son. Her Lord. His Majesty. The human being who best understands who God is and what He is doing with a teenage girl in a smelly stable. She can't take her eyes off him. Somehow Mary knows she is holding God. So, this is He. She remembers the words of the angel.

Are we still stunned by God's coming? Still staggered by the event? Does Christmas still spawn the same speechless wonder it did two thousand years ago?



epiphany 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.



The Baptism of Our Lord

Sunday, January 8

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.



ALTAR FLOWER CHART is located in the narthex. Sign up to "Say it with Flowers."



What does New Year's Mean to You?

For many, New Year's is just another holiday. For others, it's a time of deep reflection, both on the past year and on the one ahead. For followers of Jesus, New Year's has no unique significance. There's no central biblical narrative informing our celebrations.

But this doesn't mean Christians shouldn't pause and reflect on the turning of the calendar. Moses asked of the Lord, "Teach us to number our days, so we may get a heart of wisdom" (Ps. 90:12). Time—seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years—is a gift to us from a good God. To wisely follow him, then, is to redeem our time (Eph. 5:16).

New Year's can also remind us of the new birth. In a sense, each day with Jesus is a chance to turn the page on an old way of life and embrace a new one. We are, after all, new creation people, and we serve a King who renews us daily by the Holy Spirit.

Excerpt from Daniel Darling, The Gospel Coalition

Communion Assistants	Acolytes	Greeters	Lectors	Ushers
2 - Katie Bicker 15 - Katie Bicker		Denice Gaudette Doris King Pat Roberge	1- Carolyn Smith 8 - Kathy Davidson 15 - Angela Ganzy 22 - M. Rosa Bushman 29 - James Ganzy	John Bardenhagen Bob Buchholz Otto Kohler Kevin Sherin

Altar Flowers:

- 1 - Open
Open
- 8 - Open
Open
- 15 - Dave Wiemer - Bless All
Open
- 22 - Ben and Marilyn Hausy - Anniversary
Open
- 29 - Open
Open

Altar Committee: Lisa Baker John Bardenhagen Bob Buchholz Len Unger	Lock Up: Bob Buchholz
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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
1 1st Sun. after Christmas Worship 10:00 Communion	2	3	4 Choir Rehear. 5 pm	5	6 Epiphany of Our Lord	7 Undecorate Church 10:00am
8 Baptism of Our Lord Worship 10:00 Bible Study 8:45	9	10 Council Mtg. 7pm	11 Choir Rehear. 5 pm	12	13	14
15 2nd Sun. Epiphany Worship 10:00 Communion Bible Study 8:45	16	17	18 Choir Rehear. 5 pm	19	20	21
22 3rd Sun. Epiphany Worship 10:00 Bible Study 8:45	23	24	26 Choir Rehear. 5 pm	26	27	28
29 4th Sun. Epiphany Worship 10:00 Bible Study 8:45 Congregational Meeting	30	31				

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 NIGER Pray that Muslims will hear the gospel and come to faith in Jesus Christ.	2 CAMEROON Pray for front-line workers who risk their lives advancing the gospel in remote areas.	3 CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC Pray that those who have lived in refugee camps for years will continue to hope in Christ.	4 LIBYA Pray that God will raise up indigenous church leaders who are willing to serve at any cost.	5 ETHIOPIA Pray that God will provide for Christians who have been displaced by the civil war.	6 BRUNEI Pray that all Malay Christians will have their own copy of God's Word.	7 KYRGYZSTAN Pray that many new Kyrgyz believers will be added to God's kingdom.
8 MALAYSIA Pray that more Malaysian Christians will share the gospel with the Muslim majority Malays.	9 BAHRAIN Pray that those visiting Bahrain from other nations in the region will hear the gospel.	10 INDIA Pray for students at a Christian school in Madhya Pradesh that was attacked by a Hindu mob.	11 COLOMBIA Pray that God will raise up Christian leaders for small groups.	12 BANGLADESH Pray that Christian videos will be effective in evangelism.	13 MAURITANIA Pray that those blinded by Islam will find truth in the person of Jesus Christ.	14 NIGERIA Pray that Bibles will reach their destinations safely and touch many hearts.
15 SRI LANKA Pray that the next generation of Christian leaders will grow into biblical maturity.	16 ISRAEL Pray that Islamist groups will be thwarted in their efforts to oppose Christian activities.	17 KENYA Pray for village pastors receiving theological training for the first time.	18 MALDIVES Pray for those working on written and audio translations of the Bible in the Divehi language.	19 MEXICO Pray for the success of outreach activities for children in southern Mexico.	20 TAJIKISTAN Praise the Lord for the growing number of Tajik Christians and pastors.	21 IRAQ Pray that church leaders will have opportunities to reach refugees with the gospel.
22 MALI Pray that the gospel will advance to people in unreached areas.	23 UNITED ARAB EMIRATES Pray for Christians who have lost their jobs, homes and family relationships because of their faith.	24 TANZANIA Pray that 72 young Christians ostracized by their families will find a home.	25 DJIBOUTI Pray for the wisdom of Christians who share the gospel with Muslims through social media.	26 VIETNAM Pray that every tribe in Vietnam will include Christians and have Bibles in their language.	27 TUNISIA Pray that local churches will be welcoming and wise as they evangelize.	28 BHUTAN Pray for Christians as they attend public worship under threat of arrest.
29 YEMEN Pray for the continued strong witness of a church that was raided by armed men.	30 LAOS Pray that the gospel will continue to spread among minority peoples.	31 TURKIYE Pray for foreign workers who face deportation if they are suspected of missions work.	NOTES:			

**VOICE OF THE MARTYRS PRAYER CALENDAR
JANUARY**

The Reverend Gail Sherin
Pastor

Abiding Savior Lutheran Church, NALC
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Winter Haven, FL 33881-1235
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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 BIBLE STUDY - 8:45 am

Holy Communion celebrated
First and Third Sundays

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Loving, Living and Promoting
our faith in Jesus Christ



ABIDING SAVIOR COUNCIL MEMBERS

Bill Baker, President	299-1265
Kathie Youtsler, Vice President	326-9892
Bob Buchholz, Treasurer	294-2807
Mary Kerns, Financial Secretary	874-4459
Lisa Baker, Recording Secretary	299-1265
Katie Bicker, Worship & Music	224-9427
Cade Bicker, Member-at-Large	299-2803
Judy Black, Member-at-Large	292-9943

CHURCH SECRETARY - Mary Kerns
OUTREACH MINISTRY - Bob Smith

**Submission deadline for the February
Newsletter is Jan 23 to Kathryn Garcia.
email: sheridangarcia@yahoo.com**

Abiding Savior Lutheran Church
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Epiphany

AbidingWords
January 2023