



the vinebranch

a monthly publication of Abiding Savior Lutheran Church

December 2020

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We NEED a Little Christmas Now!

2020 has been a year for the history books. What a wild and sometimes scary ride we have been on these past nine months! As I write this, COVID numbers are spiking and more and more people close to us are getting sick. Not only that, but now we have lost the fall weather and winter is settling in.



As I was putting up our outside Christmas lights recently and thinking about the situation the world faces right now, I was listening to Christmas music on my phone when I heard these words:



For we need a little Christmas; Right this very minute; Candles in the window; Carols at the spinet...For we need a little music; Need a little laughter; Need a little singing; Ringing through the rafter; And we need a little Christmas now.

The words of the song "We Need a Little Christmas" took on a new meaning. It wasn't just about impatience for Christmas, but about a deep need to find something to celebrate. Right now we do need candles and music, and singing, and laughter. We need a little Christmas now!

Christmas is a celebration like no other. It is often filled with warm memories and family, presents and tasty goodies. But our love of Christmas is not just what is under the Christmas tree or in the Christmas feast, our love of Christmas starts in Bethlehem.

At the time of Jesus' birth, the Jewish people of Israel lived under Roman occupation. The people were oppressed and times were hard. They needed hope, hope they placed in the coming Messiah. Jesus' birth to the Virgin Mary was announced by a host of Angels, "Behold I bring you good news of great joy!"

Jesus' birth is still good news of great joy! Jesus' entry into the world, Emmanuel, God with us, was truly a miracle like no others. For to us that day was born a child, the Messiah! Jesus came to save us, to set us free from the yoke of sin, to give us new life and hope and desire to reach out to care for and love our neighbor. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light!

In 2020, we definitely need (and deserve) a little Christmas. May Jesus who was born is a stable for you, bring you love that never ends. May Jesus, who comes down from heaven above, be born in your hearts and lives. May you and your family find rest and peace this Christmas season and always.

Merry Christmas!

Pastor Ryan



Thursday, Dec. 24th

Virtual Worship Service
Available at 12:00pm
on Facebook and our website

***Outdoor
Candlelight Worship**
Time TBD

**weather permitting*

Christmas Devotional Bag
Available beginning Dec. 21st
Pick up at Abiding Savior
Come, o come Emmanuel!

**Living in God's love,
Abiding Savior
Lutheran Church
is a *welcoming*
and *caring* family
that *nurtures*
spiritual growth,
shares our Christian faith,
and *serves* all creation.**

Worship Moved to Online Only and Other COVID-19 Updates

Due to the recent spikes in COVID-19 cases in our community and out of abundant love for our neighbor, the Abiding Savior Reopening Task Force recommended that indoor in person worship be suspended until the week of January 4th, 2021 at which time there will be re-evaluation of the safety of returning to in person worship. At the discretion of the Pastors, they may allow select sacraments and rites such as communion, funerals, baptisms and weddings.

What does this mean?

- **Sunday services.** Sunday worship services will be available online only.
 - Services will be streamed on [Facebook Live](#) each Sunday at 10am.
 - Services are also available to watch on our [website](#).
- **Funerals, weddings, baptisms and communion.** Funerals, weddings, baptisms, and communion services may still happen within reason and at the discretion of the pastors. However, Abiding Savior will always abide by the regulations set in place by the Governor and the Minnesota Department of Health.
- **Weekly studies/meetings.** Our men's and women's Bible studies will no longer meet in person. Thursday morning Bible study with Pastor Lisa will continue to be available online. Other meetings (staff, council, etc.) will continue to meet via Zoom.
 - Pastor Lisa's Bible study is streamed on [Facebook Live](#) each Thursday at 10am.
 - Thursday morning Bible study is also available to watch on our [website](#).
 - Watch for more online education offerings after the first of the year.
 - Children's ministries and choirs as well as Sunday School will continue to meet online as scheduled.
- **Christmas Eve services.** We will not be able to worship inside with the live animals and glow of candles as we have in the past. Instead,
 - We invite you to watch our Christmas Eve service on Facebook Live or our website. The service will premiere at 12:00 PM on Christmas Eve and can be watched anytime after that on [Facebook](#) or [YouTube](#) via our [website](#) at www.abidingsavior.org.
 - Weather permitting, we hope to hold a brief service in the church parking lot to hear the Christmas story from the Gospel of Luke and to sing some of our favorite Christmas hymns. We'll communicate the time of this service once it's determined.
- **Office hours.** With our local school districts in remote learning for all grades, our office hours (during which staff are physically at church) will continue to be reduced. Please contact us via phone (763-784-5120; leave a message as needed) or email (office@abidingsavior.org), if possible.



Thank you for your understanding as together we keep each other safe as we navigate this pandemic. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Pastor Ryan at pastorryan@abidingsavior.org.

2020 Committee Reports Due for Annual Meeting

2020 is quickly coming to a close and we will soon be preparing materials for the Congregational Annual Meeting. All committees should submit a Year End report to Katie as soon as possible. We realize many committees/groups have not been able to meet much in 2020 but a report summarizing any items from the year is still needed. Thank you!



Mission

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Christmas at Abiding Savior

Christmas Eve Virtual Worship Service



Neither the Grinch or Coronavirus can stop Christmas from coming this year! However, we will not be able to worship inside our beautiful Sanctuary along with the live animals and the warm glow of candles as we have in years past. Instead, we invite you to watch our Christmas Eve service on Facebook Live or our website. The service will premiere at 12:00 PM on Christmas Eve and can be watched anytime after that on [Facebook Live](#) or [YouTube](#) via our [website](#) at www.abidingsavior.org.

Christmas Eve Outdoor Candlelight Service*



Join us for a brief service in the church parking lot to hear the Christmas story from the Gospel of Luke and to sing some of our favorite Christmas hymns. This service will be informal with those in attendance standing (socially distanced) in family groups gathered around the manger. Candles will be provided to light during our singing of Silent Night. Bundle up and join us as we enjoy and celebrate the peace and joy of Christmas in the midst of this most unusual year.

**weather permitting*

Christmas Devotional Bag



We might not be able to gather in person this Christmas to hear the story of the Jesus' birth, but we can still bring the peace and joy of that Christmas miracle into our homes.

Abiding Savior is preparing a **Christmas Devotional Bag that can be picked up at the church starting December 21st.** In these bags you'll find

- a candle
- an ornament made of Olive Wood by Christian wood carvers living in and around Bethlehem
- a Christmas greeting
- a devotional

The devotional can be used by itself or can be used as a guide to follow along and participate in an online Christmas devotion led by Pastor Lisa, Pastor Ryan and Deacon Brad. The devotion will be available on our



Children's Christmas Program 2020

Each December the children of Abiding Savior bless us with the re-telling of the Christmas story, and this year will be no exception.

Online worship on **Sunday, December 20th** will include a video featuring children and families sharing their gifts to celebrate the birth of our Savior. Their readings and musical offerings are sure to touch your hearts during this special season.

Please join us!



Communion and Prayer Offered

For those who are interested in receiving the sacrament of Holy Communion, we plan to offer the opportunity to take communion in the Narthex of church on **Wednesdays, December 2nd and 16th from 6:00 to 7:00.** One of the pastors will be there with you to pray for you or a loved one and to celebrate communion with individuals, families, or groups of whoever is present on a rolling basis. Please bring your mask. Communion will be done socially distanced, and with sanitary precautions in place to avoid the risk of spreading COVID-19. All are welcome at the Lord's Table!

Olive wood items for sale

Shop for Christmas gifts at Abiding Savior and support an important ministry! Stop by

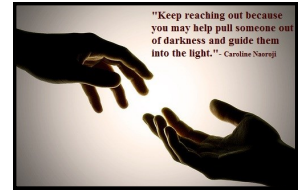


during office hours or **Wednesdays, December 2nd and 16th from 6:00 to 7:00pm** and browse our wide selection of beautifully carved olive wood items. Carvings include Joseph, Mary & Jesus, ornaments, crosses, etc. Contact the office if you have questions.

God's Work. Our Hands. Opportunities to Help Others

Reaching Out

During the long months of pandemic limitations, many have experienced a variety of challenging consequences – worry, loneliness, financial stress, at-home school and work, and illness to name a few. Please take a few moments to make a call, write a note, bake a treat, shovel a sidewalk, or find a unique way to let someone else know they are important and cared about.



Ways to Provide Financial Assistance to Others

If you are the sharing sort that likes to make year-end donations, please consider some of our outreach partners:

- **Quincy House** - Offering unconditional love and support to teens
8025 Red Oak Drive
Mounds View, MN 55112
- **Community Partners with Youth (CPY)** - Social and educational activities/support during non-school hours
1900 7th Street NW
New Brighton, MN 55112
- **Community Support Center (CSC)** - Prevent eviction/homelessness plus long-term support for stability
1600 Silver Lake Road NW
New Brighton, MN 55112

Or, our church office maintains a Love Fund to assist our members and neighbors with a boost during difficult times. Please designate donations to church with “Love Fund” if you can help in this way.

Middle School and High School Youth News

Youth Advent 15 Mins Weekly Check In

6:30—6:45pm on December 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th, & January 6th

Join Brad for a quick check in to share your highs & lows, hear a short reading from the bible, light a candle together, and share prayer requests and pray together. I know you are all zoomed out so we'll keep it to a quick 15 minutes. Zoom info below:

Let's Connect!

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/2350964427?pwd=U1NqU3VLaGpLOTArYUhh4M3gzdnJpUT09>

Meeting ID: 235 096 4427

Passcode: 901816



Selfie Scavenger Challenge

Deacon Brad will take a selfie at a location in Mounds View and post it to the ASLC Facebook page **each Tuesday in December** (starting December 1st). Your challenge is to find this location, take a selfie, and text it to Brad (612.242.7250). If you complete each of the 4 weeks I will send you a surprise!

Youth Communications

Wondering how to stay in the loop about what is going on? 3 Methods are used to communicate:

1. **FACEBOOK:** Check out the Abiding Savior Facebook page for events
2. **EMAIL:** Church emails (make sure to give us your email and ask to be put on the constant contact list)
3. **TEXT:** Remind texts (send a text to 81010 with the message @8211redoak if you haven't signed up yet).

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Creative Year End Sharing Ideas



As we head into the end of the year, here are some creative ways to give to Abiding Savior. These sharing tips come with added tax savings benefits that you might not otherwise receive for your gift if you do not itemize on your tax return. They are a win-win for you and for the work of God done in and through Abiding Savior!

Tax Free Sharing with Abiding Savior from Your IRA!!

Charitable IRA ROLLOVER

For those of you who are 70½ years old or older, there is an exciting way that your gift to Abiding Savior can go even further. For 2019, it is possible for anyone 70½ years of age or older to make a gift to Abiding Savior from their Individual Retirement Account (IRA) and have it be **completely tax free**. Instead of taking a cash distribution from your IRA, which will be taxed as income, and then making a cash donation to the church, you can choose to direct your IRA custodian to send a donation directly to Abiding Savior. This results in a non-taxable transfer of funds. Instead of paying taxes to the IRS, you could increase your gifts to Abiding Savior by 20% or more instead of paying that amount to the IRS in taxes. This donation from your IRA also qualifies as your required minimum distribution (RMD) from your IRA.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your financial planner or accountant. If you would like to talk further about making a gift from your IRA, please contact Pastor Ryan Brodin or Office Manager Katie Brouillard at 763-784-5120.

Donate Stock, Bonds, or Mutual Funds to Abiding Savior

New tax laws can make it harder to see a tax advantage in your charitable giving. One way you can still see a tax advantage, even if you do not itemize your donations, is by donating long-term appreciated securities, including stock, bonds, and mutual funds, directly to Abiding Savior. Compared with selling your appreciated securities and contributing the after-tax proceeds, you may be able to make a bigger impact by increasing your gift and your tax deduction.



Donating appreciated securities is simple and easy. When you donate stock, bonds or mutual funds to Abiding Savior, you'll generally take a tax deduction for the full fair market value. And because you are donating stock, bonds or mutual funds, your contribution and tax deduction may increase because you may not have to pay any capital gains tax on your appreciated securities.*

Donating your stocks, bonds, or mutual funds directly to Abiding Savior is a win-win situation. Instead of paying the IRS, that tax savings can be used to increase your donation toward the work of God done in and through our congregation. Contact your financial planner or accountant and ask them about the value of donating appreciated securities to Abiding Savior. Some people even make two years gifts with one sale of stock covering their pledge for the current year and the year to come.

If you have any more questions about donating stocks, bonds, or mutual funds to Abiding Savior, please contact Pastor Ryan Brodin or Office Manager Katie Brouillard at 763-784-5120.

It's Not Too Late to Participate!

Called Forward Stewardship Campaign



There has been a great response so far to our Fall Stewardship Campaign *Called Forward*. The generosity of Abiding Savior is at the core of our faith and our work as a congregation.

If you have not already done so, **it's not too late to participate**. You are invited to prayerfully consider your sharing for 2021 and turn in your pledge card to the church office. If you did not receive a pledge card or need another one, please contact the church office.

We are *Called Forward* as individuals and as a congregation as together we continue to do God's work and God's will.

Tanzania Scholarship Fund



If you would like an idea for a Christmas gift to give that will help others, consider contributing to the Tanzania Scholarship Fund. In Tanzania there is no funding for children to continue their education past primary school when children are about 11 years old. The yearly cost to attend secondary school is \$650 and for most families in Makungu, that's more than a whole family would earn in an entire year.

To support this effort, you may write a check for any amount to Abiding Savior with "Tanzania scholarship" in the memo line.

October 2020
Financial Highlights

2020	Monthly	YTD
INCOME		
Current gifts and giving	29,543	386,329
Festival giving	81	19,050
SUBTOTAL	29,624	405,379
Other income	3,709	36,154
TOTAL INCOME	33,333	441,533
EXPENSES		
TOTAL EXPENSES	43,864	448,419
NET INCOME OVER EXPENSES	(10,531)	(6,886)
Benevolence paid	2,796	30,836

Stewardship Corner

Pastor Ryan Brodin



Thank You, Thank You!!

I want to take a moment to again say THANK YOU for your generosity during these months of the pandemic. As a congregation we moved past the fear and uncertainty of these past months and continue to share generously of what God has entrusted to us. You saw the importance of what God is doing in and through our congregation and you made the decision to continue to support those ministries. Thank you for each act of generosity which was really an act of faith and trust in God and God's abundance!

As we near the end of 2020, I encourage you to continue your generous sharing and so we can end the year in a strong financial position. By being on solid financial footing we can continue to expand our outreach and enhance our faith nurturing programs and worship. Abiding Savior is a blessing to your family and to this community. Together we make sure the resources are there to continue our participation in the mission of God.

Thank you again for your generosity, and thank you advanced for your continued sharing as together we live in God's love as a welcoming and caring family that nurtures spiritual growth, shares our Christian faith, and serves all creation.

Thrivent Choice Dollars

If you are a Thrivent member, check to see if you receive Thrivent Choice dollars. If so, you are able to direct where your Thrivent Choice dollars will go each year. You can direct yours to Abiding Savior. It's easy! Just log in to www.Thrivent.com or call 800-847-4836 and when prompted, say "Thrivent Choice®." You have the power to recommend where Thrivent Financial gives back!



Get fresh air and exercise this winter! Volunteer to help snow blow/shovel sidewalks at church

We are looking for some volunteers to help snow blow/shovel the church sidewalk this winter! Team up with a friend or family member and sign up for a month (or whatever works best for your schedule). We are hoping to have 3-4 volunteers each month so the work effort can be spread across multiple people. To sign up call the office or visit <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080548ACAA2EA1FF2-20202021> THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR HELPING!

Giving to the Endowment Fund is Simple and Joyful!

When you make or revise your Will or Trust or review your life insurance contracts or retirement funds, please consider Abiding Savior as one of your beneficiaries using the following language:

I bequeath __ % (or \$ ___) of my estate to Abiding Savior Lutheran Church located at 8211 Red Oak Drive, Mounds View, MN, designated for the Mission Endowment Fund of Abiding Savior Lutheran Church.

Please talk to Pastor Ryan Brodin if you have questions about making a gift to the Endowment Fund.

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December

2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 1st SUNDAY IN ADVENT 10:00 Online Worship Service Sunday School (pre-recorded session online)	30 10:00 Staff Meeting via ZOOM 6:30 Committee Meetings (as needed)	1 10:00 Staff Meeting via ZOOM 6:30 Committee Meetings (as needed)	2 5:30 POWER Up! Online/ Via ZOOM 6 – 7:00 Communion & Prayers 6:30 MS/HS Youth Check In	3 10:00 Women's Bible Study (online)	4	5
6 2nd SUNDAY IN ADVENT 10:00 Online Worship Service Sunday School (pre-recorded session online)	7 10:00 Staff Meeting via ZOOM	8 10:00 Staff Meeting via ZOOM	9 5:30 POWER Up! Online/ Via ZOOM 6:30 MS/HS Youth Check In	10 10:00 Women's Bible Study (online)	11	12
13 3rd SUNDAY IN ADVENT 10:00 Online Worship Service Sunday School (pre-recorded session online)	14 10:00 Staff Meeting via ZOOM 6:30 Council Meeting via ZOOM	15 10:00 Staff Meeting via ZOOM 6:30 Council Meeting via ZOOM	16 5:30 POWER Up! Online/ Via ZOOM 6 – 7:00 Communion & Prayers	17 10:00 Women's Bible Study (online)	18	19
20 4th SUNDAY IN ADVENT 10:00 Online Worship Service with Children's Christmas Program Sunday School (pre-recorded session online)	21 10:00 Staff Meeting via ZOOM	22 10:00 Staff Meeting via ZOOM	23 6:30 MS/HS Youth Check In	24 CHRISTMAS EVE Christmas Eve Worship Online at 12PM (and anytime after) Outdoor Candlelight Service Time TBD	25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26
27 10:00 Online Worship Service Sunday School (pre-recorded session online)	28 10:00 Staff Meeting via ZOOM	29 10:00 Staff Meeting via ZOOM	30 6:30 MS/HS Youth Check In	31	1 JANUARY	2 JANUARY

Abiding Savior Lutheran Church
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Mounds View, MN 55112-5929

Phone: 763.784.5120
Email: office@abidingsavior.org
Website: www.abidingsavior.org
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/abidingsaviorlc/>

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call the Church office at 763.784.5120
or email us at office@abidingsavior.org.

Reduce waste.
Reduce mailing costs.
Receive information faster!

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Upcoming Events in December

- Dec. 2: POWERUp (online)
Communion and Prayers (Narthex)
- Dec. 3: Bible Study (online)
- Dec. 6: 2nd Sunday In Advent
Online Worship
Online Sunday school
- Dec. 9: POWERUp (online)
- Dec. 10: Bible Study (online)
- Dec. 13: 3rd Sunday in Advent
Online Worship
Online Sunday school
- Dec. 15: Council Meeting via Zoom
- Dec. 16: POWERUp (online)
Communion and Prayers (Narthex)
- Dec. 17: Bible Study (online)
- Dec. 20: 4th Sunday in Advent
Online Worship w/ taped Children's Xmas Program
- Dec. 24: Christmas Eve Worship
- Dec. 25: Christmas Day (office closed)
- Dec. 27: Lessons and Carols Worship
- Dec. 31: New Year's Eve

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: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

—Luke 2:10-11

Pastors & Staff

- Ryan Brodin**, Senior Pastor
- Lisa Richardson Engen**, Associate Pastor
- Brad Mills**, Deacon & Director of Youth Ministries
- Patty Mesenbring**, Dir. of Children's Ministries
- Janelle Schauer**, Organist
- Andy Pokel**, Senior & Children's Choir Director
- Paul Weller**, Bell Choir Director
- Janet Wilcox**, Parish Nurse
- Katie Brouillard**, Office Manager
- Amy Haugen**, Office Assistant
- Connie Clausen**, Office Assistant
- Tracy Nicholls**, Preschool Director
- Steven Hill**, Custodian

Help keep our contact information up-to-date! If you have a new home phone, cell phone or new email address, please call the church office at 763.784.5120 or visit <http://abidingsavior.org/OutreachPro/update-my-contact-information/>.