



FOUR MYTHS ABOUT OUR FAITH

Myth 1: *Christians Shouldn't Judge*

January 22, 2023

ABIDING LOVE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS)

3205 S. Chiquita Blvd., Cape Coral, Florida 33914

Pastor – Rev. Mark S. Voss – 303-808-0611 (cell)

Staff Minister Mr. Ben Mahnke -- church office-239-984-1441

www.abiding-love.com

www.abidinglovepreschool.com

Church email: info@abiding-love.com

Preschool email: preschool@abiding-love.com

January 22, 2023

Third Sunday after Epiphany

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

"We, as a Christian congregation, are committed to reaching out with the true Gospel of Jesus Christ, while living and growing ourselves in God's Word."

WELCOME!

Thank you for joining us in worship today. In our service we gather before Jesus our Savior to offer him worship and praise. We also gather to strengthen ourselves through the study of God's holy and powerful word.

- Restrooms are located to the left as you exit the sanctuary.
- The Elders request that we observe five minutes of quiet time in the sanctuary prior to the start of each service. Please be seated and use this time to prepare for worship and read the bulletin announcements.
- We love families! Your children are welcome in our service, *including our youngest children!* Thanks for bringing them to hear about Jesus. If you would like, there are children's worship bags with lessons, crayons, and books in the entryway of the church. An usher can assist you. We ask that you return these to the basket after the service.
- **Before the Service:** We ask all our members and visitors to please complete a yellow information card located in the seat backs. These will be collected by the ushers during the offering.
- **Please silence your cell phones.**

Opening Hymn “Christ Is the World’s Light”

CW 343
(Red Hymnal)



1 Christ is the world's light, Christ and none oth - er;
 2 Christ is the world's peace, Christ and none oth - er;
 3 Christ is the world's life, Christ and none oth - er;
 4 Give God the glo - ry, God and none oth - er;



Born in our dark - ness, he be - came our broth - er.
 No one can serve him and de - spise an - oth - er.
 Sold once for sil - ver, mur - dered here, our broth - er.
 Give God the glo - ry, Spir - it, Son, and Fa - ther;



If we have seen him, we have seen the
 Who else u - nites us, one with God the
 He who re - deemed us reigns with God the
 Give God the glo - ry, God with us, my



Fa - ther: Glo - ry to God on high!
 Fa - ther? Glo - ry to God on high!
 Fa - ther: Glo - ry to God on high!
 broth - er: Glo - ry to God on high!

Text: Fred Pratt Green, 1903–2000, alt. © 1969 Hope Publishing Co., Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved.
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Tune: CHRISTE SANCTORUM (10 11 11 6) *Antiphoner*, Paris, 1681.

Invocation

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

C: And also with you.

Confession of Sins

P: God invites us to come into his presence and worship him with humble and penitent hearts. Therefore, let us acknowledge our sinfulness and ask him to forgive us.

C: Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful, and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior, Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

P: God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Prayer and Praise

P: For all that we need in life and for the wisdom to use all your gifts with gratitude and joy, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: For the steadfast assurance that nothing can separate us from your love and for the courage to stand firm against the assaults of Satan and every evil, hear our prayer, O Christ.

C: Christ, have mercy.

P: For the well-being of your holy Church in all the world and for those who offer here their worship and praise, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: Merciful God, maker and preserver of life, uphold us by your power and keep us in your tender care.

C: Amen.

P: The works of the Lord are great and glorious; his name is worthy of praise.

O Lord, Our Lord

C: O Lord, our Lord, how glo-rious is your name in
all the earth. Al-might-y God, mer-ci-ful Fa-ther,
you crown our life with your love. You take a-way our sin;
you com-fort our spir-it; you make us pure and
ho-ly in your sight. You did not spare your on-ly Son,
but gave him up for us all. O Lord, our Lord,



how glo - rious is your name in all the earth.



O Son of God, e - ter - nal Word of the Fa - ther,



you came to live with us; you made your Fa - ther known;



you washed us from our sins in your own blood. You are the



King of glo - ry; you are the Lord! O Lord, our Lord,



how glo - rious is your name in all the earth.

Prayer

P: Almighty God, you sent your Son to proclaim your kingdom and to teach with authority. Anoint us with the power of your Spirit that we, too, may bring good news to the afflicted, bind up the brokenhearted, and proclaim liberty to the captive; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

+The Word+

Old Testament Lesson

Isaiah 9:1–4

The people walking in darkness will see a great light

¹Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—

²The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.

³You have enlarged the nation
and increased their joy;
they rejoice before you
as people rejoice at the harvest,
as warriors rejoice
when dividing the plunder.

⁴For as in the day of Midian's defeat,
you have shattered
the yoke that burdens them,
the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor.

Gospel Acclamation

All: The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. Alleluia.

Gospel

Matthew 4:12-23

Jesus is the brilliant light who shines in darkness

¹²When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee.
¹³Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali— ¹⁴to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:

¹⁵“Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,
 the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan,
 Galilee of the Gentiles—
¹⁶the people living in darkness
 have seen a great light;
 on those living in the land of the shadow of death
 a light has dawned.”

¹⁷From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

¹⁸As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” ²⁰At once they left their nets and followed him.

²¹Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, ²²and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

²³Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise be to you, O Christ!

Children’s Sermon

Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus

CW 704



1 Let us ev - er walk with Je - sus, fol - low his ex -
 2 Let us suf - fer here with Je - sus, to his im - age
 3 Let us al - so die with Je - sus; his death from the
 4 Let us glad - ly live with Je - sus; since he's ris - en



am - ple pure, flee the world which would de - ceive us and to
 e'er con - form; heav - en's glo - ry soon will please us, sun - shine
 sec - ond death, from our soul's de - struc - tion, frees us, quick - ens
 from the dead, death and grave must soon re - lease us. Je - sus,



sin our souls al - lure. Ev - er in his foot - steps tread - ing,
 fol - low on the storm. Though we sow in tears of sor - row,
 us with life's glad breath. Let us mor - ti - fy, while liv - ing,
 thou art now our head. We are tru - ly thine own mem - bers,



bod - y here, yet soul a - bove, full of faith and
 we shall reap in heav'n - ly joy, and the fears that
 flesh and blood and die to sin, and the grave that
 where thou liv - est, there live we; take and own us



hope and love, let us do the Fa - ther's bid - ding. Faith - ful
 now an - noy shall be laugh - ter on the mor - row. Christ, I
 shuts us in shall but prove the gate to heav - en. Je - sus,
 con - stant - ly, faith - ful Friend, as thy dear breth - ren. Je - sus,



Lord, a - bide with me; Sav - ior, lead; I fol - low thee.
 suf - fer here with thee; there, O share thy joy with me.
 here I die to thee, there to live e - ter - nal - ly.
 here I live to thee, al - so there e - ter - nal - ly.

Sermon

Matthew 7:1–5, 15–16
 Rev. Mark S. Voss

Theme: Four Myths About our Faith**Myth 1: “*Christians Shouldn’t Judge*”**

¹“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ²For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

³“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

¹⁵“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. ¹⁶By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?

Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
 maker of heaven and earth,
 of all that is,
 seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
 eternally begotten of the Father,
 God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
 begotten, not made,
 of one being with the Father.**

Through him all things were made.

**For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven,
 was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
 and became truly human.**

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.

He suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who in unity with the Father and the Son
is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Offering and Information Cards

Our offering to the Lord our Savior God flows from hearts of joy and love. The offering is used to support the work of proclaiming the gospel message here and around the world. No one is obligated to join in the offering. To give an offering electronically, visit our website: www.abiding-love.com/giving and click on "donate."

Information Cards: *We ask our members, friends, and those visiting with us today to complete an attendance card located in the seat backs and place it in the offering plate. If your contact information has recently changed, please indicate this so we may update our records.*

Prayer of the Church

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.

+The Sacrament+

Dear visiting friends,

Abiding Love joins in the historic practice of the Christian Church regarding "close" communion. What this means is that our pastor takes his responsibility to spiritually care for each soul in our congregation very compassionately and seriously. We want those coming to the Lord's table to do so to their spiritual benefit and not harm. We also want the oneness expressed in receiving Holy Communion to be genuine and not contrived.

Since this is what we believe, we respectfully ask, if you are not a member of a sister church in WELS or ELS, that you refrain from joining us at communion today. We truly want you to participate in communion with us, but we ask that you give Pastor Voss an opportunity to privately speak with you about it first. Thank you!

P: The Lord be with you

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

P: Praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In love he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. In the past he spoke to us through the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, who is the radiance of his glory. Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ. To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and thanks and honor and glory for ever and ever.

Holy, Holy, Holy



Words of Institution and Distribution

Please follow the direction of the Ushers.

Distribution Hymn ***“Lord Jesus Christ, You Have Prepared”***

- 1 Lord Jesus Christ, you have prepared This feast for our salvation;
It is your body and your blood, And at your invitation
As weary souls, with sin oppressed, We come to you for needed rest,
For comfort, and for pardon.
- 2 Although you did to heav'n ascend, Where angel hosts are dwelling,
And in your presence they behold Your glory, all excelling,
And though your people shall not see Your glory and your majesty
Till dawns the judgment morning,
- 3 Yet, Savior, you are not confined To any habitation,
But you are present ev'rywhere And with your congregation.
Firm as a rock this truth shall stand, Unmoved by any daring hand
Or subtle craft and cunning.
- 4 We eat this bread and drink this cup, Your precious Word believing
That your true body and your blood Our lips are here receiving.
This Word remains forever true, And there is naught you cannot do,
For you, Lord, are almighty.
- 5 Though reason cannot understand, Yet faith this truth embraces:
Your body, Lord, is ev'rywhere At once in many places.
I leave to you how this can be; Your Word alone suffices me;
I trust its truth unailing.

Text: Samuel Kinner, 1603–68; tr. Emanuel Cronenwett, 1841–1931, alt.

Thanksgiving

P: Hear the prayer of your people, O Lord, that the lips which have praised you here may glorify you in the world, that the eyes which have seen the coming of your Son may long for his coming again, and that all who have received in his true body and blood the pledge of your forgiveness may be restored to live a new and holy life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Blessing

Love in Christ Is Strong and Living

CW 726



1 Love in Christ is strong and liv - ing, bind - ing faith - ful
 2 Love is pa - tient and for - bear - ing, clothed in Christ's hu -
 3 Love in Christ a - bides for - ev - er, faint - ing not when



hearts in one; love in Christ is true and giv - ing,
 mil - i - ty, gen - tle, self - less, kind, and car - ing,
 ills at - tend; love, for - giv - ing and for - giv - en,



may his will in us be done.
 reach - ing out in char - i - ty.
 shall en - dure un - til life's end.

Text: Dorothy R. Schultz, b. 1934

Tune: Ralph C. Schultz, b. 1932

Text and tune: © 1980 Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission: OneLicense no. 709601

Silent Prayer

The Ushers will dismiss the rows from front to back.

LAST WEEK AT ABIDING LOVE:

ATTENDANCE: 1/15/23	Bible Class: 26	Sunday School: 15
8:00am: 66	10:30am: 73	Total: 139

SERVING THIS WEEK:

Ushers: 8:00: Dan Rys; Erv Stiemke; Ryan Schlomer
10:30: Sheryl Pierson, Lois Crusan; Linda Gosey

Accompanist: Robert Lozen

PowerPoint: 8:00 Jay & Stacey Devlin **Next:**

Livestream: 10:00 Aaron Rys **Next:** Aaron Rys

Fellowship: Diane Larson **Next:** Becky Cunningham

Altar Guild-Jan: 8:00 Val Widup
10:30 Nicky Shelton

THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tues. Jan. 24	8:00am	Men's Fellowship Breakfast at House of Omelets on Pine Island Road
	6:30pm	Women's Evening Bible Study at the home of Paula Bruns — Book of James
Wed. Jan. 25	8:30am	Preschool Chapel
	10:45am	Ladies' Bible Study

WORSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING – January 28th at 9:00am

The Worship Committee will be meeting on Saturday, January 28th at 9:00am so that we may begin our plans for Lent and Easter worship.

SUNDAY MORNING FELLOWSHIP

We are once again offering a time of Fellowship after services beginning this month. Please stick around and join us for a cup of coffee and a snack. Kathy Kalsto is looking for volunteers to help prepare snacks and coffee for upcoming Sundays. If you are able to assist, please email Kathy at kjkalsto@centurylink.net.



BIBLE STUDY & SUNDAY SCHOOL

Today at 9:15, join us for Adult Bible Study and Children's Sunday School. Pastor Voss will lead the adult Bible study in the church Sanctuary. Children's Sunday School will be held in the Multipurpose Room for children ages 3+. We hope you will join us!

2023 Giving Envelopes

Giving envelopes for 2023 are available this morning in the Narthex. Please take yours home with you today. We understand that not everyone uses giving envelopes as many choose to donate online or choose to give monthly, quarterly or annually. If you have not been assigned giving envelopes and would like them, please see Wendy or Nicky in the church office or contact them by email or phone call -- info@abiding-love.com or 239-984-1441, or simply let one of our ushers know today after services.

2022 Giving Statements

Giving statements for 2022 are available after services this morning. Please see Wendy or Nicky if you would like yours today. Statements that are not picked up today will be mailed out this week. If you wish, we can also email you a copy of your statement. Just let the office know: info@abiding-love.com.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY GROUP –Wednesday Mornings

The Women's Morning Bible Study Group will meet again on Wednesday, January 25th at 10:45am in the Multipurpose Room. We are currently studying *What's Big Starts Small* by Mike Novotny, pastor of The CORE (Appleton, WI) who also serves as the lead speaker for *Time of Grace*, a global media ministry. All women are invited to attend. Please contact Sheryl Pierson if you have any questions—239-464-1740 or jspierson1945@gmail.com.

EVENING WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY GROUP—Tues. at 6:30pm

Paula Bruns hosts an evening Bible Study at her home every Tuesday evening at 6:30pm. The group is studying the book of James. Please join us at 5695 Bolla Court in Fort Myers if you are interested. If you would like to know more about the group, please contact Paula at 239-634-1008.

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST—Tuesdays at 8:00am

The Men's Fellowship Breakfast Group meets every Tuesday morning at 8:00am at the House of Omelets, located at 900 SW Pine Island Road #122 in Cape Coral. We hope you can join us.

Call Process Update

Pastor and Early Childhood Ministry Director

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” Galatians 6:9

We had our fifth Call Meeting on Wednesday, January 11th at which we voted to call both a Pastor and an Early Childhood Ministry Director. We unanimously decided to extend a Call to Rev. Thomas Gorzalski, who currently serves the congregation of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in New Hope, MN. Pastor Gorzalski will be considering our Call over the next few weeks.

We also voted unanimously to extend a Call to Ms. Catherine St. John, to be our Early Childhood Ministry Director. Ms. St. John currently serves as a teacher at Martin Luther College in their Early Childhood Learning Center in New Ulm, MN.

Please keep Pastor Gorzalski, Ms. St. John, as well as the congregation of Holy Trinity and MLC’s Early Childhood Learning Center in your daily prayers as they consider our Calls.

If you would like to contact Pastor Gorzalski or Ms. St. John to offer some encouraging words, please email them.

Pastor Gorzalski – pastortomgorzalski@gmail.com

Ms. St. John – stjohncat@gmail.com



Sermon Series: Four Myths About our Faith

People do not set out to build their faith on myths. But sometimes falsehoods show up in the way Christians think about life and God. These myths are assumed to be rock-solid truth until life proves they are not. This may result in confusion, feelings of betrayal, or distrust of Scripture. So, what is the answer?

The answer is the truth of God's Word. In this practical sermon series, we will look at 4 widely held myths about our faith. Get ready to be surprised, relieved, and inspired by the truth of God's Word.

Myth 1: Christians Shouldn't Judge – TODAY -- Sometime Christians get flustered when others quote Jesus' own words, "Do not judge." The idea that Jesus forbids his followers to judge, however, is a myth. Refusing to make judgments or call sin, sin, is not what Jesus asks us to do. He did it all the time. And Jesus asks us to do the same.

Myth 2: Let Your Conscience Be Your Guide – January 29 -- We often hear these words, "Let your conscience be your guide." The problem is that a lot of us see our conscience as a spiritual thermometer. We assume it can be placed into any situation and it will tell us the moral temperature—too hot, too cold, or just right. But that is not how our conscience works. It is more like the thermostat in our living room. It reflects our definition of hot and cold. Our conscience cannot be our guide because it needs to be guided itself—by God's Word.

Myth 3: Faith Can Fix Anything – February 5 -- The word on the street is that faith can fix anything. Faith is what successful people tout as the key to their achievements, survivors of tragedies cite as the source of their endurance, and motivational speakers make a sweet living promoting. Unfortunately, this kind of wishful thinking has nothing in common with what the Bible calls faith. It is more about faith in faith than faith in God.

Myth 4: Forgiving Means Forgetting – February 12 -- Is forgiveness pretending nothing happened? Is forgiveness a never-ending series of second chances? Is it a fresh start with all the consequences and old baggage removed? It is the immediate and full restoration of a broken relationship, complete with the same level of trust and privileges as before? There is a problem with all these concepts. It is not how God forgives.



ABOUT ABIDING LOVE: *Abiding Love Lutheran Church is a congregation in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), with almost 400,000 members in 49 states and missionaries in 23 nations. The WELS is committed to the Scriptures as the inspired, inerrant Word of God, and therefore the only guide for faith and life. If you would like to know more about us, or if you're seeking Biblical counseling, give Pastor Voss a call at 303-808-0611 or email him at: markvoss35@gmail.com.*