

# The Abiding Grace Connection

## Celebrating God's Gifts

Life isn't always easy. Sometimes you just don't feel like celebrating. You'd rather sulk. But, truth be told, God never promised life would be easy. In fact, Jesus said things like: "Take up your CROSS and follow me." I don't know about you, but "cross" doesn't sound fun.

So why then, did I title this edition of The Abiding Grace Connection "Celebrating God's Gifts"? Well, even though we're sinners living in a sinful

**"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."**

**- James 1:17**

world, suffering the junk of life that that brings, look around. When you really evaluate life, no matter what is going on—God is good. First of all, it's fall in Georgia. The beauty of creation and weather and health—all are gifts from God. Then there is the family and friends and

and support and house and home and food and clothes, and all the things that can be taken for granted. But beyond that, there's the really important stuff. All those physical blessings can fade and fall, but the forgiveness God won for us in Jesus is a gift worth celebrating every day, regardless of what's going on.

So come, celebrate with us—every Sunday at 10:30, but especially at our Fall Festival on October 9th. And then go home and celebrate with all the people in your life. And thank God for all your reasons to celebrate.

*- Pastor Scharf*

(Moms, don't miss Mornings with Mommy on Wednesdays at 10am!)

## Fall Festival!

Join us to celebrate God's gifts to us!



October 9th, 2011

**Fun**

**Cakewalk**

**Hayride**

**Music**

**Games**

The celebration will start with worship at 10:30 followed by barbecue lunch, music, hayrides, a cakewalk, a moonwalk, face painting and fun and games for kids of all ages.

**Family Fun**

**At our new church building**

**5500 Hwy 212**

There is no charge!  
Come Grow with Us!

**Abiding Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church ...**

**... where families connect**

## Sure and Certain of the Unseen

*Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.  
Hebrews 11:1*

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It is amazing that with only a few clicks on a computer, we can dramatically alter photos. Such capabilities have led us to be a bit more wary. We find ourselves saying, “Unless I see it with my own eyes, how can I believe that it hasn’t been touched up? I’ll believe it when I see it.”

Often this cynical attitude can touch our spiritual life. How can I believe that God loves me and knows what is going on in my life considering all troubles and disappointments I have to deal with?

It doesn’t take much for us to see where one of Jesus’ own disciples was coming from when he replied, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it” (John 20:25). I’ll believe it when I see it.

That is in stark contrast to what we read in the Bible, “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” How can we be sure and certain of things we can’t see, can’t prove?

Think of a father and child playing the game where the father stands behind the child and tells him to fall backwards. The child, unable to see his father, still trusts that he is there and is certain that his father won’t let him hit the ground. The child leans back and falls, fully convinced that his father will keep his word and catch him, because his father has always proved trustworthy.

“Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” Though we did not see the creation or the crucifixion, though we were not present to witness the Savior rising from the Easter tomb, though we have not heard his actual voice forgiving our sins and promising his return, we believe.

How can we be so sure and certain? God’s word is true and trustworthy. Our forgiveness is certain because Jesus did die and rise from the dead. God’s love for us today and every day is sure. Every promise our Father has made about our eternal future, he will keep.

Faith is sure and certain of unseen things simply because it takes God at his word.