



The Abounding Joy Herald

Thursday, January 8, 2026



Gathering in Joy - Reaching Out with God's Love *The Baptism of Our Lord, January 11, 2026*

Education Hour is at 9:00 am with Worship at 10:00 am

SUNDAY'S WORSHIP SERVICE live stream can be found on the Abounding Joy website (aboundingjoy.org) and click on Videos. Prepare your hearts for worship on Sunday, Jan. 11 by reading Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Ephesians 2:8-10, 13-22; and John 1:1-14.

PRAAYER PARTNERS On Sunday following the worship service, there will be prayer partners available at the front of the sanctuary for anyone who wishes to have prayer for someone and/or for their own prayer needs.

IN OUR PRAYERS: *Madge Rowe, Ken Lucy, Kathy Erickson, Marlys Hopke, Jeffrey Karbedeh, Arne Moe, Steve Sarff, Ginny Shimota, Sandy Stewart, Barrett (Deb Hendrickson's brother), Gene (Karon Doble's brother), Kim and Traci (Karen Greenwaldt's brother and wife), Michael & Deborah (Amber Freeman's father & stepmother), Mitch (Tammy Holland's nephew), Joyce (Arlene Morey's cousin), and Pat (Greg Voller's friend).*



ADULT EDUCATION We begin a new year of studies and this weekend, we will revisit some of the series we started in November called "One Hit Wonders." Join us as we look at those who only appear once in the Bible, but whose stories guide us to understand profound and wonderful things about God based on their encounters. Starts at 9 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall!

NEW SERMON SERIES This weekend, we begin a brand new 6-week sermon series "Finding Our Way." In this series, we are going to work our way through the Nicene Creed. This profession of faith has been a gift to the Church for the past 1700 years, and its truths help us know the firm foundations of our faith. Join us as we learn why this Creed still matters and what great truths we discover through its words. Starts this Sunday!



NEW SONG Along with this, we are going to be learning a couple of new songs that remind us of the beautiful truths found in the Nicene Creed. Soon, we'll be learning the first song: "All Of Our Tomorrows". Check it out and start learning it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EnllwGdcQM>

HAPPY BIRTHDAY to:

*Shannon Fields, Thursday, Jan. 1
Derek Brinkman, Saturday, Jan. 3
Caleb Brinkman, Saturday, Jan. 10
Will Luepke, Saturday, Jan. 10
John Kokula, Tuesday, Jan. 13
Bill Latare, Wednesday, Jan. 14
Misty Schultz, Wednesday, Jan. 14*



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY :

*Mark and Misty Schultz celebrated their 15th wedding anniversary on Thursday, Jan. 1st;
Dean and Penny Peterson marked 10 years of marriage on Friday, Jan. 2nd;
Tom and Pris Krieg celebrated their 57th wedding anniversary on Sunday, Jan. 4th; and
Brian and Mickey Frank celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary yesterday, Wednesday, Jan. 7th.
May God's blessings be upon these couples as they celebrate this milestone.*

WE EXPRESS OUR CONDOLENCES to *Family and Friends* of Abounding Joy member *Bob Gans* who died unexpectedly on January 1, 2026. Funeral services for Bob will be on Tuesday, January 13, at 11:00 a.m. with visitation 1 hour prior to the service here at Abounding Joy.

CONTINUED PRAYERS AND CONDOLENCES to

Cheryl Biel and Family on the recent death of *her sister*. And also, to *Wanda Fonken and Family* on the recent death of her brother, *Dennis*.

May the promise of the resurrection to new life in Jesus bring hope and comfort to all who grieve.

PRAYER REQUESTS may be made to our volunteer Prayer Team Coordinator Pr. Deb Peterson: debp.prayerchain@outlook.com and/or 320-250-0647 or by using a purple request sheets found either on the info table or in the black attendance folder. She contacts the prayer team for prayer. Daily prayer will be offered for ONE month. If you wish to have continued prayer, please SUBMIT A NEW REQUEST.

USHER VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! Please check the sign-up sheet on the Info Table for your opportunity to volunteer to Usher. Reminder: if the date for which you have signed up comes and you aren't available, the schedule can be adjusted.

God's Word is Powerful and Sufficient

Happy New Year!

In January, it feels a bit different to go into a store. It's not as busy and sometimes you can find great post-Christmas deals. In fact, as businesses start the new year, they will usually offer a special incentive to get you to come in and give them your patronage. Many work hard to invite you to "come" to them.

While we do have to go to businesses as they can meet our needs, one thing that is true in all business is that what's in your wallet is most important. Getting what's in it given freely is the goal. The best way to achieve that goal is to get your physical body present. Then a conversation can happen. Presence first, then proclamation. Even in our digital world, we are still much more prone to making a commitment (and a purchase) through personal connection.

Even though the Church is in a different sort of business, there's a bit of wisdom we can find here and remember. Invitation is crucial to starting a conversation and a personal connection. We want people to "come" to church! Yet, we also have to invite. We have to go out before people will come in.

John the Baptist knew this full well. His standard of practice shows us just what this can do. Let's take a moment and see this from Matthew 3:1-3. I invite you to take a moment to read this on your own.

The first thing Matthew shares about John is that He "came preaching" before he got places. People knew he was on his way over because they could hear him before he got there! John, as he was in the wilderness of Judea was letting the sound "go out" before he welcomed people in.

And John preached...and preached...and preached. He was heard and his message was repetitive. Like a jingle you can't get out of your head, John's words incentivized folks to enter into connection with him. What was John's tune? "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven

is at hand." John knew what business he was about and he kept to it.

John had to do this. It was a part of God's business to fulfill Scripture and John was used for that goal. John's words going out were making a way for the Messiah to come in. This way would help others discover the personal connection found in Christ so they could commit to Him.

That doesn't mean this is easy. Whenever a road is made, there's a lot of work that needs to happen. There's a lot of digging and laying before the final formation is settled. John's words were making a road for Jesus to come. Without the work he did in preaching, that way might not have been made. But John lived into the role God claimed for him before he was born. It was John's words that started a revolution in Israel and pointed the way to the future – it pointed everyone to Jesus as the Messiah.

And this makes me think, "Who's waiting on you to come? Who needs to hear your voice going out?" John "came preaching" so that the Messiah could be revealed to a people who desperately need Him. This holds true for our world: there are still many in need of Jesus, "but how are they to hear without someone preaching?" asks the apostle Paul. Did you realize there are people who need you to "come preaching"?

We need a new model of business as Christians. We need to be preaching! We need to be speaking about Jesus to others and proclaiming that repentance is available to all! We need to let the sound go out that His kingdom is here! Just as John was called into a life of pointing to Jesus, so are we. Our business is to make Jesus known in all the world. There is someone waiting on you to "come preaching" so that they will know. There's someone you're meant to invite to "come" and meet Jesus. In 2026, will you "go out" and try? Will you go in God's Spirit and point the way to Jesus? You might find that God's including you in a mighty way in His business! *Pastor Brandon*

THANK YOU We extend a grateful thanks to Abounding Joy for the card and gift card to Marcus Theaters that we received on Sunday, December 21 during worship! It was truly a surprise and we are so grateful for it. We are blessed to be with you, and I am so thankful for your love and support of my leadership. We are looking forward to all that 2026 holds together!

Pastor Brandon and Family

ATTENTION DRIVERS 55 and Older Abounding Joy is hosting a class for drivers 55 and older on Thursday, January 15, 2026, from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Our instructor is Ron Stewart and the course is offered by the Precision Driving Center at a cost of \$24/person. See Ron Stewart for more details about the class and registration.

CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING Once again this year, we gave away our Christmas Eve general offering. We do so because we remember that God gave us His greatest gift in His Son at Christmas. We, too, want to be vessels of that gift to those in our community.

Through your gifts, we are sending over \$1800 to

Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge and Youth For Christ in St. Cloud! Thank you for your generosity in helping touch the lives of many through these ministries. Together, we are helping Jesus be known!



THANK YOU Last Sunday, we hosted the Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge Men's Choir and it was truly wonderful! Due to reasons of protecting their clients, we are not able to share that video service again. However, I do want to take a moment to share on behalf of the choir their enthusiastic words to Abounding Joy! After the service, many shared with me how welcomed they felt in our congregation. A few shared that they had never been so warmly received in a church before and they were moved by the hospitality! They also loved the meal - a huge shout out to Anna Bleess-Lahr and Jeanie Frolander for their efforts! Thanks to all who made this day of worship special, engaging, and truly good. We lived out our mission of "reaching out with God's love" in a profound way!

2025 ANNUAL REPORT time is here. If you are on a Team that regularly has a report printed in the Annual Report, or you are part of a new Team that should have a printed report, please have it in to the Office *as soon as possible* or by Wednesday, January 21 at the latest. Your cooperation in getting your report in by the deadline is greatly appreciated! Reports will be available on Sunday, February 1st for the Annual meeting on Sunday, February 8th.

SNOW TUBING Join us for winter family fun! Snow Tubing at Powder Ridge will be on Sunday, January 25th, 3:00-5:00 PM for anyone age 4 and older. The cost will be \$15 per person. You can pay in advance—just drop payment off at the church office or you can pay the day of the event. Please sign up on the sign-up sheet on the Info Table to let us know you're coming.

RIGHT NOW MEDIA We have partnered with Right Now Media to offer you (FREE) over 20,000 resources of great Christian content to help you grow your faith in Christ. Scan the QR code or go to <https://app.rightnowmedia.org/joinaboundingjoy>

RECHARGE WINTER RETREAT: Mount Carmel on Lake Carlos, Alexandria, February 13-16, 2026!

Cost: \$235 per adult, lower rates for youth, kids 0-4 free

Consider spending some intentional time this President's Day weekend in Christian community and growing in faith. This will be a fun and relaxing opportunity to get to know more individuals and families from Abounding Joy and from around Minnesota.

Reimbursement: Abounding Joy seeks to promote Bible camp opportunities for families and will reimburse \$100 per person attending for the first time and \$50 for any return attendees. We are hoping that the cost will not be a prohibitive factor for anyone considering this event.

Housing and Meals: Modern housing in heated cabins and hotel-style rooms is provided for 3 nights. Your party will have your own private space for the weekend. Nine lodge meals are provided.

Bible Study and Worship: Experience time of renewal and dive deeper into God's Word in this special Christian Community. There will be opportunities to sing, and learn – kids in age-level programming with camp counselors and adults with the guest speaker.

Snow Recreation: broomball, sledding, ice fishing, and other fun on Mount Carmel campus on Lake Carlos. Then warm up inside by the fire.

How to Register: registration can be online at mountcarmelministries.com or by calling their office at (320) 846-2744. Talk to Tim Knorek if you have any questions or want to know more!

OUR e-GIVING PLATFORM If you choose to give your offering electronically, you can give at this secure link:

<https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZN68/>
or use the QR code. We are grateful for your generosity and commitment.



Christmas Eve, December 24, 2025

ATTENDANCE: 156

OFFERING: \$1,871

Sunday, December 28, 2025

ATTENDANCE: 54

OFFERING: Gen: \$12,685
AJ Capital Expense Fund: \$1,100

Sunday, January 4, 2026

ATTENDANCE: 137

OFFERING: Gen: \$8,410

Financial Briefing January-December 2025

Annual 2025 Budget: \$380,167.03

Income to date: \$358,469.53

Expenses to date: \$359,473.24

This Week at Abounding Joy

The Baptism of Our Lord, January 11

- 9:00 am Education Hour, Sunday School/Adult Class
- 10:00 am Worship Service with Guest Musician Paul Imholte
- 11:00 am Prayer Partners
- 11:10 am Fellowship and Refreshments

Monday, January 12

- 6:30 pm Gospel Gals

Tuesday, January 13

- 11:00 am Funeral Service for Bob Gans (Visitation 1 hr prior)
- 6:30 pm Men's Ensemble

Wednesday, January 14

- 9:00 am Men's Faith Talk
- 10:30 am Seekers Small Group Bible Study
- Noon Bible Study
- 6:00 pm Acoustic Joy Rehearsal
- 6:00 pm Youth Group

Thursday, January 15

- 9:00 am Intercessory Prayer
- 9:00 am-1:00 pm 55+ Driver Discount Program

Second Sunday after the Epiphany, January 18

- 9:00 am Education Hour—Adult/Confirmation/Sunday School
- 10:00 am Worship Service with Acoustic Joy
- 11:10 am Fellowship and Birthday Refreshments

The Abounding Joy Foundation

Brad Lundquist, President	Dennis Holland, Council Representative
Carl Batdorf, Vice President	Dale Hellickson, Member at Large
Greg Norman, Secretary	Deb Hendrickson, Member at Large
Bruce Peterson, Treasurer	Pastor Brandon Foster, Ex Officio member

Abounding Joy Lutheran Church

LCMC - Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (www.lcmc.net)

NALC - North American Lutheran Church (www.theNALC.org)

Ministers: All the people of *Abounding Joy*

Pastor Brandon Foster

Pastor Brandon's contact info: (701) 446-7561 email: Pastor.Brandon@ajlcmc.org

Director of Youth and Family Ministries: Tim Knorek

Tim's contact info: (507) 508-4128 email: tknorek@ajlcmc.org

Church Secretary: Marilyn Schultz

Ministers of Music: Ginny Shimota, Mary Schumann, Michelle Tomsche

Acoustic Joy Directors: Roger DeBoer and Cindi Rhoе

The Church Council welcomes your feedback and suggestions.

Bill Latare, Pres. Amy Krystosek, V-Pres. Gary Braaten, Sec. Lisa Meyer, Treas.
Erik Bergs Steve Hancock Dennis Holland Steve Kron Kim Mielke

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Website: www.aboundingjoy.org

Office Hours: Tuesday-Friday from 9:00 am-1:00 pm