



The Abounding Joy Herald

Thursday, January 15, 2026



Gathering in Joy - Reaching Out with God's Love

The Second Sunday after the Epiphany, January 18, 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. 18 by reading Isaiah 49:1-6; James 1:17-25; and John 14:6-12.

IN OUR PRAYERS: *Dale Hellickson, Ken Lucy, Kathy Erickson, Al Fiskness, Marlys Hopke, Jeffrey Karbedeh, Arne Moe, Madge Rowe, 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), and Pat (Greg Voller's friend).*

ADULT EDUCATION This weekend, we will revisit some of the series we started in November, "One Hit Wonders." Join us as we look at **EYEWITNESS BIBLE SERIES** 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 are in the second week of a 6-week sermon series "Finding Our Way." In this series, we are working 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.

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=EnlllwGdcQM>

PARENTS, PLEASE NOTE there will be NO Sunday School this Sunday, January 18th with the observance of Martin Luther King Day holiday on Monday.

Sunday we celebrate JANUARY birthdays

| <u>HAPPY BIRTHDAY to:</u> | <u>January</u> |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| <i>Shannon Fields</i> | 1 |
| <i>Derek Brinkman</i> | 3 |
| <i>Caleb Brinkman</i> | 10 |
| <i>Will Luepke</i> | 10 |
| <i>John Kokula</i> | 13 |
| <i>Bill Latare</i> | 14 |
| <i>Misty Schultz</i> | 14 |
| <i>Laurie Lucy</i> | 16 |
| <i>Dana Blais</i> | 18 |
| <i>Bruce Peterson</i> | 18 |
| <i>Kylee Kron</i> | 20 |
| <i>Jim Tuorila</i> | 20 |
| <i>Randy Smith</i> | 22 |
| <i>Sue Kreuz</i> | 23 |
| <i>Carl Batdorf</i> | 28 |
| <i>Carolyn Fiskness</i> | 28 |
| <i>Kayla Klatt</i> | 30 |



WE EXPRESS OUR CONDOLENCES to *Bill Latare* and *Family* on the unexpected death of his son, *Arnie*. Funeral services for *Arnie* will be on Wednesday, January 21, at 11:00 a.m. with visitation at 9:30 a.m. here at Abounding Joy.

CONTINUED PRAYERS for AND CONDOLENCES to *Family and Friends* of Abounding Joy member, *Bob Gans* whose funeral was here on Tuesday.

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

LADIES' NOON LUNCHEON is scheduled for Friday, January 30th, at Drakes Fine Food and Spirits (520 1st St. NE, Sartell). There is a sign-up sheet on the info table. All Abounding Joy ladies and friends are welcome.

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.

God's Word is Powerful and Sufficient

One of my favorite lessons to teach in confirmation is on baptism. In this lesson, I invite parents in for a special session to join with their son or daughter. Over the 18 years of teaching these lessons, I've always done the same thing every time: I invite parents to bring pictures, dresses, or any other items from the day their child was baptized.

This lesson becomes even more special this way. The lesson ties together not only our beautiful theology around the sacrament, but also the emotion that comes from it. Each time, a parent will share a story or bring an item or picture from that moment. It is always touching and it brings home this point about the sacraments: these acts that we do have immense meaning because they have been done as an act of love for us.

In every one of us is a need to make meaning of the pieces of our lives. We are story-telling creatures and our minds are wired this way. When we can make meaning of our circumstances, we realize those situations matter and have a purpose. In that purpose, we can find life, no matter how hard, boring, or beautiful it may be going. We most want this to tell us that no matter what, we are loved.

I imagine that might have been what was going through John the Baptist's mind as he preached in the wilderness. Those days of preaching brought crowds, but John wasn't so much into the size of the crowds or who was in them. He wanted his preaching to mean something in folks' lives. He wanted his baptism to resonate with purpose. What purpose was that? Repentance.

John wanted people to realize that God's ways mattered. He wanted the Israelites to understand that what they were facing with the Romans and religious corruption wasn't purposeless. But, in truth, this task was a bit of a slog. I imagine there were days when he felt it was dragging on.

Until one day, a moment came that showed John why what he was doing was all worth it. Let's take a moment to read about it in Matthew 3:13-17 in our Bibles.

ANNUAL MEETING The Abounding Joy Annual Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, February 8, 2026, following our worship service and Souper Bowl meal. The Annual Report will be ready to be picked up on Sunday, February 1st (one per household, please) and bring it along with you to the meeting on February 8th.

2025 ANNUAL REPORT If you are on a Team that has a report printed in the Annual Report, or you are part of a new Team that should have a printed report, it's time to get that report in to the Office no later than Wednesday, January 21. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated! And, thank you to those who have already submitted reports.

John's job was to prepare the way for the Lord and to make straight his path. Last week, I shared that laying a road is arduous work. Preparing a pathway takes time, energy, and diligence. John had been doing his job and the pathway was ready.

And then the Lord showed up and came straight to him. The way Matthew tells it, John was surprised when it happened. John even tried to stop the moment. Jesus speaks that this moment has meaning and what John is to do for Him in baptism will give it all its purpose.

For Jesus, the one never in need of repentance, receives the baptism for repentance. Through the water and the word, Jesus joins Himself to the repentant, the recipients of this act. Jesus supplies the meaning and makes baptism full of purpose. For in baptism, we are joined to Jesus our Lord. We are made the ones God loves.

Acts of love don't always make sense in the moment. But eventually, those acts become the right spot for a story to come. The story that came out of Jesus' baptism is one full of meaning for God Himself showed up and spoke. John would then know that it was all worth it. He was loved and his role had purpose. All because of Jesus.

That same news is true for you. God is showing up and speaking still, especially in the sacraments. He is present there to tell us about Jesus so that we would receive Him. In receiving Him in our present moment, we would be reminded that whatever our life holds - the good, the boring, or the bad - there is a purpose that God will use for His glory.

Just as in baptism, we don't capture it quite in the moment, soon enough the story emerges that gives all the meaning. Through these acts, we discover purpose. God gives purpose. He has made a way for you. He loves you. Let that love touch your life today.

Pastor Brandon

SUPER BOWL SUNDAY Mark your calendar and plan to stay for a soup(er) lunch after worship on Sunday, February 8th followed by our Annual Meeting. There is a sign-up sheet on the info table for those who wish to bring sandwiches, soup, or salad. Even if your favorite team won't be playing in the Super Bowl, you can enjoy a super bowl of soup here at Abounding Joy. Everyone is welcome!

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.

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>

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.

REMINDER Announcements serve to point us to our opportunities to live out our mission over the next week before we go with God's blessing. To ensure this happens so that all can hear, announcements are readied in advance. The deadline to turn in announcements to Pastor Brandon for the upcoming weekend will be Friday mornings at 10 a.m.

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!

Sunday, January 11, 2026

ATTENDANCE: 134

OFFERING: Gen: \$18,779
AJ Capital Expense Fund: \$ 1,730

YOUR DOLLARS SENT ON THEIR MISSIONS:

Abounding Joy Quarterly Tithing Report (Oct.-Dec. 2025)

| | | |
|---|-----|-------------|
| Rice Area Food Shelf (Local) | 35% | \$3,570.00 |
| Global Teen Challenge/US (National) | 15% | 1,530.00 |
| The Navigators – Luke & Sarah DeBoer (International) | 10% | 1,020.00 |
| Institute for Lutheran Theology (10% fixed) | | 1,020.00 |
| Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) (10% fixed) | | 1,020.00 |
| NALC (10%) | | 1,020.00 |
| Emergency Fund (10%) | | 1,020.00 |
| | | |
| Total Tithe | | \$10,200.00 |

Each month Abounding Joy gives away at least 10% of all undesignated offerings. The Mission Team seeks recommendations for ministries to support locally, nationally, and internationally. Please contact or one of the team members.

This Week at Abounding Joy

Second Sunday after the Epiphany, January 18

9:00 am Education Hour—Adult Class only
10:00 am Worship Service with Acoustic Joy
11:10 am Fellowship and Birthday Refreshments

Tuesday, January 20

10:00 am Selah Small Group Bible Study
6:30 pm Men's Ensemble

Wednesday, January 21

11:00 am Funeral Service for Arnie Latare (Visitation starting at 9:30 a.m.)
1:15 pm Joyful Stitchers Quilt-tying and binding
4:00 pm Church Council Meeting

Thursday, January 22

9:00 am Intercessory Prayer

Sunday, January 25

9:00 am Education Hour—Adult/Confirmation/Sunday School
10:00 am Worship Service with Men's Ensemble
11:10 am Fellowship and 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

Custodian: Holly Olson

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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Phone: (320) 217-8784 Email: general.info@ajlcmc.org

Website: www.aboundingjoy.org

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