



# the vinebranch

a monthly publication of Abiding Savior Lutheran Church

December 2023

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## Christmas Then and Now



Christmas is a very special time of year. A time when we reflect on the past remembering our excitement anticipating the celebration (and presents) at Christmas. We remember the way our tree was decorated when we were children and how Grandpa always fell asleep in his chair after dinner. In reality, Christmas probably was not as perfect as we remember, but we tend to become nostalgic this time of year.



Christmas is not only about nostalgia. True, Jesus' birth and God entering into our world was something that happened in the past, but Jesus did not come only for a brief period of time. Jesus came to be with us and to change us forever. Jesus came to be our Messiah, our Savior. Jesus came to repair our relationship with God and offer to us the gift of life everlasting. Jesus came to be Emmanuel, God with us.

As we get nostalgic, we also remember the moving worship services on Christmas Eve. Singing Joy to the World, seeing live animals in the church or lighting candles during Silent Night. You are invited to experience the wonder of Christmas once again during worship here at Abiding Savior. Join us for worship every Sunday morning at 10:00 and Christmas Eve at 10:00am, 2:00pm, 3:30pm and 10:00pm.

Joy to the World, the Lord is Come! Christmas blessings to your family and I'll see you in worship!

*Pastor Ryan*



### Christmas Pageant

Sunday,

December 19th

10:00am

Followed by brunch

Sunday,

December 24th

10:00am

Sunday Worship  
with Holy Communion

2:00pm & 3:30pm

Family friendly services  
with live animals

10:00pm

Candlelight  
and Holy Communion

## Sustain and Soar Campaign



SUSTAIN AND SOAR  
ABIDING SAVIOR  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Our Sustain and Soar campaign is off to a great start! As we close our funding gap for the year, God continues to be at work here at Abiding Savior. The excellent ministries and life changing relationships here in our congregation are worth sustaining through the sharing of our time and resources. As we look towards the future, we want to be able to answer the call of God to share love in and through our wonderful welcoming community at Abiding Savior. It is imperative to retain our excellent staff. We want to call an Associate Pastor and move our ministries forward to ensure that we can meet the needs of our church and community.

We are asking that you prayerfully consider helping to close our 2023 funding gap. You can donate anytime in the Sunday offering plate, through the church website, through the church office or return the envelope you received in the mail. As we live together in God's love, we will ensure that Abiding Savior is a welcoming and caring family that nurtures spiritual growth, shares our Christian faith, and serves all creation.

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.

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### Tree of Sharing



The Tree of Sharing is a way for volunteer opportunities at Abiding Savior to be posted and for you to be able to find places to volunteer. The Tree of Sharing is located in the Narthex outside the Sanctuary and on the tree will be little tags with volunteer opportunities for you and your family. You are invited to look over the many volunteer opportunities and to choose how you want to share your talents. Each volunteer opportunity on the tree has two separate tags stapled together. One tag has a description of the volunteer opportunity and the contact person for that volunteer opportunity. The second tag has a place for you to fill in your name and contact information and that second tag can be placed in the jar provided by the tree. You are encouraged to visit the tree, check out the volunteer opportunities, and choose how you will joyfully share your time and talents at Abiding Savior.

### Scholarships for Students from Makungu Parish



The gift of education continues to enhance the lives of our brothers and sisters in the rural village of Makungu, Tanzania. Unlike the K-12 system of public education in the United States, the government of Tanzania supports only primary schools for all children in the local areas. Those students wishing to continue higher education on the secondary levels, must enter boarding schools. The Tanzanian government provides secondary schools in a region, yet most students attend private schools. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT) operates 6 secondary schools throughout the Iringa Diocese (similar to our St Paul Area Synod). In addition to secondary scholarships, our Tanzania ministry is also providing opportunities for post-secondary scholarships for students in colleges and universities.

The Tanzanian secondary system involves 6 levels (called Forms) which must be passed each year by a formal examination. Passing the initial 4 Forms result in a choice between continuing on with Forms 5 and 6 to earn a professional diploma and/or prepare for a university degree (BS, MS, D).

Currently, we are supporting 12 students: 10 in secondary schools, 1 at the University of Iringa, and one in technical education. The support varies as amounts are awarded by our Makungu parish committee based on type and level of school as well as family need. The range of scholarship funding is \$250 to \$500. Abiding Savior commits to an annual amount for scholarships rather than identifying individuals. We have pledged to continue our support in 2024 at the same level of \$5,000.

With five of our Makungu students reaching Forms 5 and 6, we have an opportunity to support advanced education through the Postsecondary funds of the Iringa Diocese. Recipients are selected annually for additional support through an interview process involving the Scholarship Committee of United States and Tanzanian representatives. This fund is administered separately from the Makungu parish committee and is supported by many congregations in the Saint Paul Area Synod. At this date, ASLC is not part of this specific funding, yet students from Makungu are eligible to apply. For questions about contributing to the scholarships in Tanzania, please contact Katie in the office ([office@abidingsavior.org](mailto:office@abidingsavior.org)).

### New Committee Forming—Makungu Parish, Tanzania

Opportunities abound in ways to support the mission and ministry of Abiding Savior - local, regional, national and international arenas. The children's globe offerings are a frequent reminder of our international partnership with the Makungu Parish in Tanzania. Yet what is this partnership really about? The scholarship program is one part of this ministry as are our prayers for the members in Tanzania. We have supported the travel of two groups and two individuals in the past 13 years. We provide funds each year through our globe contributions and have supported construction projects in Makungu and preaching points. Recently we have supplied a motorbike for the pastor to visit the many preaching points in the mountainous Makungu region. Following the last group visit, we have been approved for a project to bring clean water up the mountain to Makungu through the Saint Paul Partners water affiliate with the Saint Paul Area Synod and the University of Minnesota School of Engineering.

A committee is being formed in order to emphasize our partnership with Tanzania. It may, yet does not need to be limited to a focus on international travel. If interested in being involved, please contact Linka Holey at [linka.holey@gmail.com](mailto:linka.holey@gmail.com). We will set a meeting based on interest in January, 2024.

#### Mission

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.



**Santa (and Fire Trucks)  
Coming to Abiding Savior  
Tuesday, December 5th @ 6:30pm**

You're invited to come watch the SLP-Blaine-Mounds View Fire Department's Santa Parade in the Abiding Savior parking lot! Hot chocolate, treats, fire pits provided. Ring a non-perishable food item to donate!



**CONFIRMATION/HS YOUTH GROUP  
CHRISTMAS PARTY**

**Ugly Sweater and White Elephant Gift Exchange**

**Wednesday, December 13th  
7:00 - 8:00pm**

Wear a Christmas sweater or costume and bring a \$5 or less value white elephant gift wrapped up for our fun Christmas celebration for confirmation and



**Cookie Making & Lock In for  
ELCA Youth Gathering Bake Sale**

**When:** Friday, December 15th (6-9pm)  
Saturday, December 16th (8-11am)  
**What:** Come make Christmas cookies to help raise funds for the ELCA Youth Gathering  
**Where:** The kitchen at Abiding Savior  
**Who:** Anyone is welcome to come help!  
**LockIn:** We will be hosting a High School (including 8th Grade) Lock-In so students are encouraged to spend the night making/decorating cookies and watching Christmas movies.

For adults/those who do not wish to spend the night, Friday 6-9pm and Saturday 8-11am. We will be sharing a google form or signup genius in the next few weeks for anyone who would be willing to bring in breakfast items for the bakers.



**Sam's Christmas Village Outing—Somerset, WI  
Friday, December 8- meet at church at 6:30pm  
to carpool or meet us there!**

**All Ages**

Help kick-off the holiday season with an outing to view the beautiful lights at Sam's Christmas Village! Cost: Age 10+: \$20, Ages 3-10: \$10; Under 3: FREE; \$10 per vehicle parking fee. It is a walking tour and the trails would be difficult for wheelchairs and/or scooters, but they state the following about strollers/wagons: Our gravel mile long trails are groomed to handle wagons and strollers. If there is fresh snow we recommend bringing in a sled!

**Special Music Sunday—December 10**

Join us for this special Advent worship service filled with song!



**Christmas Eve Worship  
10:00am  
2:00pm, 3:30pm and 10:00pm**

Our Christmas Eve services will be at 10:00am, 2:00pm and 3:30pm (with the animals at the afternoon services!). We hope lots of families are able to attend together. You are also invited to the candle-light service at 10:00pm. **All are welcome!**

**Wednesday Night Schedule**

4:30—6:30pm Dinner served  
Dec. 6: Chicken Hot Dish  
Dec. 13: Hamburger Gravy w/ Mashed Potatoes  
*Next Dinner: January 3, 2024*  
5:30—6:30pm POWER Up  
6:30—7:00pm Wednesday Worship  
6:30—8:00pm Confirmation  
7:00—8:00pm Adult Choir



## Children's Christmas Program Rehearsals

All children are invited to join us, regardless of whether they participate in Sunday school or Wednesday evening programs.

- **Saturday, 12/2, 9:30-11:00:**  
Grades 2-5 and narrators
- **Saturday, 12/9, 9:30-11:00:** All children
- **Saturday, 12/16, 9:30-11:00:** All Children

The program will be **Sunday, December 17** during worship.

Children's Christmas Program  
Sunday, December 17  
Children will present their special message during morning worship.

Families are invited to brunch in the Fellowship Hall following the service.



## POWER Up! for Kids

- Devotions & Activities with Patty and Jackie
- Music Exploration & Expression with Mary

**Wednesdays, 5:30-6:30**  
**Ages: 4yrs—5th grade**

## DECEMBER

**December 6: *Holiday Traditions in Other Lands***

**December 13: *Holiday Pajama Party with songs, stories, hot chocolate and more!***

**— POWER Up will NOT meet on December 20 & 27 (Christmas break)**

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

**Sunday Mornings, 9:00-9:50 a.m.**

*Parents are encouraged to enjoy fellowship in the library during this time.*

Children 3 years old (and potty-trained) through 5th grade are invited to join us for Bible stories, songs, crafts and other activities.

### On the Calendar:

**December 17: Children's Christmas Program (no Sunday school).** Children should arrive at 9:30 to prepare for the program, which will be presented during the 10:00 worship service. Stay afterward for brunch!

**December 24 and 31: No Sunday school** (Christmas/New Year break)

*Families do not need to be members of Abiding Savior to become a part of our Sunday school program.*

You are WELCOME You are VALUED  
You are LOVED You BELONG

## Mission

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## Start the New Year with “Philippians: Joy in the Journey”

Wednesday Night Bible Study Opportunity With Pastor Ryan and Pastor Marla



Do you want to think about joy – what it means to have joy in faith? That is one of the themes of the Bible study that will be co-led by Pastor Ryan and Pastor Marla in January. Paul’s letter to the church at Philippi was written from prison. Yet, in these four chapters he talks about joy and rejoicing 16 times! The people at Philippi were Paul’s favorite church community. He loved these people and spoke candidly and lovingly with them.

So come and immerse yourself in the joy of the Christian journey as shared by Paul. We will meet five times – each Wednesday between January 10 and February 7 from 5:30 to 6:30. If you’re interested in participating, let the church office know so we can be prepared for your participation.

## God’s Work. Our Hands. Helping Others.

**Giving Tree:** The Christmas giving tree is back! We’re hoping to brighten Christmas for neighbors, students, and local families needing a boost. Join in the caring by choosing an ornament and returning the requested gift or gift card for distribution no later than December 17th, the sooner the better. Thank you for remembering those in need of some TLC.



**Coat Drive Thanks:** Thanks to the generosity of many congregations and organizations, 139 children and 170 adults have warm winter coats this year. What a great gift of warmth!



**Thank You Kitchen/Dish Crew!** November was a very busy month for meals here: Wednesday night suppers, Election Dinner, Brunch, Thanksgiving Pie Social, and a number of funerals. Sincere thanks to everyone who planned, shopped, cooked, served, bussed dishes, washed dishes, and did the laundry. It’s great to be able to share meals but be sure to thank our dedicated members for making it possible. Better yet, come and join the crew. Free, on-the-job training.

**Thanksgiving Baskets:** Super-shopper Dawn has worked her magic and we were able to supply a week’s worth of food for two CPY families during Thanksgiving week. They even got copies of the church cookbook so there’s good food to come. Many thanks.



**Meals on Wheels December 18-22:** Have you been thinking about getting involved this way? Here’s your chance. Deliver meals, with or without a partner, during the lunch hours. Routes start at Unity Hospital and run mainly in the Columbia Heights, Fridley, and Spring Lake Park areas. Let Fern Fisher or the office know if you can help.



**Blood Drives:** 2024 blood drives at Abiding Savior will be in January, March, May, September, and November. Volunteers and blood donors are always welcome.



**School Supplies:** Warm, handmade hats were delivered to Sunnyside and Pike Lake – a nice warm hug for little noggins! School supplies and some holiday extras were delivered to Irondale for students needing to know they are cared for.



**Toys:** We are not collecting toys here, but if you like shopping for children there are many places collecting toys before Christmas. Ralph Reeder’s Operation Joy, Salvation Army, and Toys for Tots come to mind. Check online for local drop-off spots near you. Thank you for caring.



October 2023  
Financial Highlights

2023	Monthly	YTD
<b>INCOME</b>		
Current gifts and giving	41,775	389,152
Festival giving	-	11,708
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>41,775</b>	<b>400,860</b>
Other income	5,276	62,968
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>47,051</b>	<b>463,828</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>47,860</b>	<b>524,298</b>
<b>NET INCOME OVER EXPENSES</b>	<b>(809)</b>	<b>(60,470)</b>
Benevolence paid	3,358	38,497

**Tanzania Scholarships**

To all who have contributed to the Tanzania Scholarship fund, thank you! If you are interested in making a donation, they are accepted at any time. Simply put "Tanzania Scholarship" in the memo line. Please see the article on page 2 for more information about supporting this important ministry!

**Thrivent Action Teams  
Deadline December 31st**

If you have a qualifying Thrivent policy or investment you are eligible to apply for two Thrivent Action Team Grants up to \$250 each to be used for fundraisers, volunteer opportunities, educational events, or meals. If you have not already applied for your grants, it is not too late!

Unused grant applications will expire on December 31. The application is simple and quick. If you would like to apply for a Thrivent Action Team Grant to benefit one of the ministries of Abiding Savior, please contact the church office.

**Preschool News!**



Wow where has the time gone? I feel like I blinked and November was gone! It has been a whirlwind month with our Annual Wreath Fundraiser and Election Night Bake Sale both being hugely successful. Thanks to everyone for the support of our program!

We also had a visit from The Jolly Pops! What a great interactive movement and music in house guest for both preschool and toddlers! Everyone had a great time!

In the month of November we also welcomed 3 new toddlers to our program so we are full at capacity with 14 toddlers enrolled! We have two amazing teachers in there and a bunch of sweet little kiddos!

We also welcomed two new preschoolers to our program during November! We are at a total of 19 total preschoolers enrolled in our program!

Thank you again for your continued support of our ever growing program!



Jen Boog, Preschool Director  
[preschool@abidingsavior.org](mailto:preschool@abidingsavior.org)  
763-784-5326

**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.



**Mission**

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 CHRIST THE KING SUN <b>Volunteer Appreciation Sunday</b>  (NO SUNDAY SCHOOL) 10:00 Worship Service (also via Face-book) 11:00 Volunteer Appreciation Reception	27	28 8:30 Men's Breakfast & Bible Study  10:00 Staff Meeting 12:00 Benedicistine Service	29 9:45 Cub Foods delivery 4:30 - Wed. Night Supper 5:30 - 6:00 PowerUP 6:00 - 6:30 PowerUP 6:30 - 7:00 Wed. Worship 6:30 - 8:00 Confirmation 7:00 - 8:00 Adult Choir	30 10:00 Women's Bible Study  7:00 Jubilation Ringers	1 OFFICE CLOSED	2 Decorate the church for Advent - 9am  Sunday School Christmas Program Practice 9:30 - 11:00 (Grades 2-5 and narrators)
3 COMMUNION SUN <b>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Advent</b> 9:00 Dec. 10 Special Choir Practice 9:00 Sunday School & SS Family Fellowship 10:00 Worship Service 11:00 Cinnamon Roll Sale	4	5 8:30 Men's Breakfast & Bible Study 10:00 Staff Meeting 6:30 Santa Parade (gather in parking lot) 6:30 Committee Meetings	6 9:45 Cub Foods delivery 4:30 - Wed. Night Supper 5:30 - 6:00 PowerUP 6:00 - 6:30 PowerUP 6:30 - 7:00 Wed. Worship 6:30 - 8:00 Confirmation 7:00 - 8:00 Adult Choir	7 10:00 Women's Bible Study  7:00 Jubilation Ringers	8 OFFICE CLOSED  Sam's Christmas Village Youth Outing Meet @ 6:30	9 Sunday School Christmas Program Practice 9:30 - 11:00
10 <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Advent</b>  9:00 Dec. 10 Special Choir Practice 9:00 Sunday School & SS Family Fellowship 10:00 Worship Service (also via Face-book)	11  5:30 Women's Gathering at Moe's	12 10:00 Staff Meeting  5:30 Lydia Circle	13 9:45 Cub Foods delivery 4:30 - Wed. Night Supper 5:30 - 6:00 PowerUP 6:00 - 6:30 PowerUP 6:30 - 7:00 Wed. Worship 6:30 - 8:00 Conf EOY Party 7:00 - 8:00 Adult Choir	14 9:00 Work Crew 10:00 Women's Bible Study  7:00 Jubilation Ringers	15 OFFICE CLOSED  Cookie Making Fundraiser 6-9pm 8 <sup>th</sup> - 12 <sup>th</sup> Grd Lock-In	16 Cookie Making Fundraiser 8:00 - 11:00 Sunday School Christmas Program Practice 9:30 - 11:00
17 <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent</b> 10:00 Children's Christmas Program during Worship Service (also via Facebook) 11:00 Brunch	18 MEALS ON WHEELS	19 MEALS ON WHEELS 8:30 Men's Breakfast & Bible Study 9:00 Quilting 10:00 Staff Meeting 6:30 Council Meeting	20 MEALS ON WHEELS 9:45 Cub Foods delivery	21 MEALS ON WHLS 10:00 Women's Bible Study  7:00 Jubilation Ringers	22 MEALS ON WHLS OFFICE CLOSED	23 MEALS ON WHLS OFFICE CLOSED
24 CHRISTMAS EVE  10:00 <b>Worship Service with Communion</b> 2:00 & 3:30 Family Friendly Worship with live animals 10:00 Candlelight Service with Communion	25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26 Preschool Christmas Program 6:00	27 9:45 Cub Foods delivery	28 7:00 Jubilation Ringers	29 OFFICE CLOSED	30 OFFICE CLOSED
31 <b>NEW YEARS EVE</b> 10:00 Worship Service						

## Abiding Savior Lutheran Church

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Website: [www.abidingsavior.org](http://www.abidingsavior.org)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/abidingsaviorlc/>

Non-Profit Organization  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
TWIN CITIES MN  
PERMIT NO. 4987

## December Vinebranch Newsletter Volume 23 Number 12 Date 2023



If you want to go paperless,  
call the Church office at 763.784.5120  
or email us at [office@abidingsavior.org](mailto:office@abidingsavior.org).

Reduce waste.  
Reduce mailing costs.  
Receive information faster!

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

### Upcoming Events in December

- Dec. 2: Decorate the Church for Christmas  
Children's Christmas Program Practice
- Dec. 3: 1st Sunday in Advent  
Sunday School & Family Fellowship  
Worship with Holy Communion  
Cinnamon Roll Sale
- Dec. 5: Men's Bible Study  
Committee Meetings  
Santa Parade viewing at Church
- Dec. 6: Wednesday Evening Programming
- Dec. 7: Bible Study (in-person or online)
- Dec. 8: Sam's Christmas Village Outing
- Dec. 9: Children's Christmas Program Practice
- Dec. 10: 2nd Sunday in Advent  
Sunday School & Family Fellowship  
Worship
- Dec. 11: Women's Gathering at Moe's
- Dec. 12: Lydia Circle
- Dec. 13: Wednesday Evening Programming (Last one for '23)
- Dec. 14: Work Crew  
Bible Study (in-person or online)
- Dec. 15: Cookie Making for Christmas Cookie Bake Sale
- Dec. 16: Cookie Making for Christmas Cookie Bake Sale  
Children's Christmas Program Practice
- Dec. 17: 3rd Sunday in Advent (No Sunday School)  
Children's Christmas Program during Worship  
Brunch
- Dec. 19: Men's Bible Study and Quilting  
Council Meeting
- Dec. 21: Bible Study
- Dec. 24: Worship at 10:00am, 2:00, 3:30 and 10:00pm
- Dec. 31: Worship at 10:00am

### Pastors & Staff

- Ryan Brodin**, Senior Pastor
- Marla Amborn**, Interim Pastor
- Josh & Alex Ertz**, Interim Youth Mentors
- Patty Mesenbring**, Dir. of Children's Ministries
- Janelle Schauer**, Organist
- Mary Larew**, Vocal Choir Director
- Paul Weller**, Bell Choir Director
- Katie Brouillard**, Office Manager
- Connie Clausen**, Office Assistant
- Trisha Bourassa**, Office Assistant
- Jennifer Boog**, Preschool Director
- Gene Herman**, Custodian

**UPDATE**  
CONTACT INFORMATION

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/> so we can update our records. Thanks!