



the vinebranch

a monthly publication of Abiding Savior Lutheran Church

January 2024

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Fellow members of Abiding Savior,

The beginning of a new year brings with it the hope and excitement of all that can and will be in the coming months and days ahead. 2024 promises to be an exciting year at Abiding Savior. God has plans for us to continue to share the love of God as we have been for the past 84 years and to discover new and exciting ways to nurture faith.



In 2024 we will continue to provide inspiring weekly worship services, meaningful Bible studies, children's programming, Confirmation, choirs, bells, youth activities, visits to the sick and homebound, amazing fellowship around meals and coffee, feeding ministries to this community, partnering with CPY, Quincy House, CSC and others, and walking shoulder to shoulder (Bega kwa Bega) with Makungu Parish in Tanzania.

The Church Council has been hard at work planning for the coming year and beyond. In 2024 we hope to call a new Associate Pastor and as a part of that process, we have been engaged in strategic planning. The congregation shared with the Council their hopes and dreams for Abiding Savior at four separate listening sessions. Here is an update on the priorities set by the Council for the coming year based on the congregation members input and our current strengths and needs:

1. Family Ministry: more young families growing their faith through engagement with each other and the church
2. Growing participation in Abiding Savior Lutheran Church ministries by members and those who are not yet here
3. Worship services that are comforting and creative, inspiring, and exciting
4. Active engagement in sharing God's love with our local community and around the world

We enter 2024 as a strong congregation with lots of vitality and amazing ministries. Moving forward we will continue to listen to God's calling as we bring aboard a new Associate Pastor and discover together to what it means to be God's church today and into the future.

If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please talk to any member of the Church Council. Please continue to pray for our church, it's leaders, our upcoming call process, and for the ministries of God done in and through this place.

A safe and blessed New Year to all!

Your brothers and sisters in Christ,

Abiding Savior Congregational Council

Connecting with your church council

President

Dawson Blanck

Vice President

Karn Matthews

Treasurer

Ben Schnabel

Secretary

Maren Hawkins

Members

Annika Bankston

Tanya Cox

Ryan Gunderson

Jim Schlotterback

Matt Schwartz

Micky Sonderman

Julie Zarambo

Ellen Zimmerman

Meetings: 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6:30pm

To view Church Council Meeting Minutes: Visit: <http://abidingsavior.org/OutreachPro/council-meeting-minutes/>
(Password: ASLCCouncil)

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.

Stewardship Corner God of Abundance or God of Scarcity?

The myth of scarcity is the misguided belief that there is not enough; not enough resources to do what God asks of us in the world and not enough resources for us to consider giving some away to our church or other good causes. The myth of scarcity causes individuals and congregations to withdraw and refrain from sharing and serving out of a fear of not having enough. It is based on the belief that once the resources currently available are used up, there will be no more. It is a belief that God will not provide more once the current resources God has entrusted to us in this world are either consumed or given away.

The opposite of the myth of scarcity is the reality of God's abundance. This reality is based on having faith in the promises of God that God has provided and God will continue to provide. Even when we share our resources, maybe even especially when we share our resources, God provides even more blessings. If a family feels the desire to share their financial resources with their congregation or another organization, they have the opportunity to feel free and emboldened to do so trusting that God will not forsake them, but will bless them with more than enough in their lives.

We have a God of abundance, not a God of scarcity. I invite you to experience the joy of sharing as you put your faith in God into actions of generosity.

ANNUAL MEETING

Mark your calendars!
Annual Meeting
Sun., Feb., 11, 2024 @ 11:30am

All members of Abiding Savior are invited and encouraged to attend our Annual Meeting. The Annual Reports will be reviewed, any current elections will take place, and the 2024 proposed budget will be presented.

Come before the meeting for a meal with proceeds benefiting those going to the ELCA Youth Gathering.

2023 Committee Reports for Annual Meeting



We will soon be preparing materials for the Annual Meeting which will be held on February 11. All committees should submit a Year End report to Katie (office@abidingsavior.org) by January 15.



Tree of Sharing

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 Area 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.

Usher Training Monday, January 22 | 6:30—8:00PM

USHERS NEEDED!! You are invited to be an usher! Ushers not only hand out bulletins and receive the offering, they also are often the first people to greet visitors to our church and are there to provide help in emergencies and keep the building safe. Ushers are an essential part of worship and Abiding Savior is in need of more volunteers.

We'll cover the week-to-week tasks of ushering as well as an overview of the new Abiding Savior Safety Policy. Please considering becoming an usher and joining us for this training!

Wednesday Schedule

- 4:30—6:15pm Dinner served
 - Jan. 3: Goulash
 - Jan. 10: Hamburgers and potato salad
 - Jan. 17: Scalloped Potatoes and Ham
 - Jan. 24: Turkey Dinner
 - Jan. 31: Tator Tot Hot Dish
 - Feb. 7: Chow Mein
- 5:30—6:30pm POWER Up
- 6:30—7:00pm Wednesday Worship
- 6:30—8:00pm Confirmation
- 7:00—8:00pm Adult Choir

Mission

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Women's Gathering Mon., Jan. 8

You are invited to join in on a monthly "meet-up" for the Women of ASLC at Moe's in their main dining room at 5:30pm on January 8 (come for as long as you're able).

The purpose of this meet-up is simply to socialize and get to know our "Pew Sisters" better and may to discuss future activities and gatherings.

You're invited to Lydia Circle



You're invited to Lydia Circle on **Tuesday, January 9 at 5:30pm!** The Lydia Circle meets in the evening in order to provide access for women with professional duties during the day. The Bible study is taken from the Gather magazine, an ELCA publication (gather@elca.org or gathermagazine.org).

FMSC Packing Event Wednesday, January 17



Abiding Savior has reserved 85 spots to pack food at Feed My Starving Children on **Wednesday, January 17**. We will pack food from 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM. All ages are welcome (under 12 must be supervised by an adult). Please sign up outside the church office. Absolutely NO experience necessary. Come and experience the joy of sharing!

Blood Drive



Join us **Thurs., Jan. 11 from 1:30pm—6:30pm** for our blood drive! Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit redcrossblood.org and enter: Abiding to schedule an appointment. If you are available to help check people in or serve treats to donors, please let the office know.

Philippians: Joy in the Journey Wednesday Night Bible Study with Pastor Marla

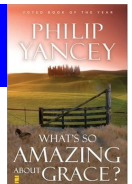


Do you want to think about joy – what it means to have joy in faith? That is one of the themes of the Bible study that will be led by Pastor Marla in January. Paul's letter to the church at Philippi was written from prison. Yet, in these four chapters he talks about joy and rejoicing 16 times! The people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

All are welcome – men and women, young and old! 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 in the coffee house.** If you're interested in participating, let the office know!

Women's Thursday Bible Study – Grace

As Lutherans, grace is baked into who we are. A central tenet of our faith is that we are saved by grace through faith. We rely on God's free gift of grace to save us, and in gratitude for God's grace we love and serve our neighbors.



Grace is not only about salvation and eternity, it also affects us in very practical ways here and now – in family feuds, marital disputes, and even international crises. Grace is not just about what happened on the cross 2,000 years ago. It affects how we treat those who have wronged us and those with whom we disagree. Might it be that grace holds a key to unlocking the stalemates that separate us?

The Women's Bible Study will tackle this question using materials from acclaimed author, Philip Yancey, and his book "What's so Amazing about Grace." A Thrivent Action Team grant has been secured to offset the cost of the materials. **Plan to come on Thursday mornings between 10 and 11:15 starting January 11** to delve into this topic of grace, led by Pastor Marla. While you're there, enjoy some time socializing with other women, praying for one another, and experiencing the grace that comes with loving Christian community.

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:

January 7: Welcome Back!

Sunday school is back in session.

2nd-5th graders—come take part in our annual New Year Celebration. Bring a friend!

Families don't 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



Abiding Savior Preschool

What a wonderful December our program had! We had our annual Christmas Program on December 18th and what a joy it was to see all those tiny faces smiling and singing! There is nothing better than the sound of children's voices and seeing a smile that

lights up their entire face! It was so fun to have both the preschoolers and our new toddlers participate in such a wonderful evening!

Our program has grown a lot in the last year and it is such a blessing! All the effort and hard work has paid off. We have a total of 33 children enrolled! We have 19 preschoolers (we just added a new friend at the beginning of December) and our toddler classroom is full with a total of 14 toddlers! I have 4 absolutely amazing teachers that truly love all these kiddos!

February is right around the corner and that is when enrollment opens for the 2024-2025 school year! Please pass the word along if you know of anyone that is looking for either a preschool or toddler program!

Thank you for your continued support!

Jen Boog, Preschool Director

preschool@abidingsavior.org

763-784-5326

facebook.com/AbidingSaviorPreschool/



POWER Up! for Kids

Devotions & Activities with Patty & Jackie
Music with Mary

Wednesdays, 5:30-6:30

Ages: 4yrs—5th grade

— JANUARY —

Jan. 3: All Things New

Super Science Activity

Jan. 10: Sparrows—Make a Bird Feeder

January 17: Spin a Snowflake

January 24: Snow Painting

January 31: Penguin Fun

Mission Endowment Fund Grants Available

Apply for a Grant

The Endowment Committee is thrilled to again be awarding grants for mission and ministry in 2024! The Mission Endowment Fund accepts applications

from committees, staff, Council members, ministries of Abiding Savior, individual church members, and community non-profit organizations.

Grant Applications are available in the church office or by contacting the office if you would prefer an electronic copy of the application. Applications must be received by February 29, 2024. The application process is simple and criteria for grant funding is explained further on the application form. If you have a new ministry idea or know of a worthy organization, please consider applying for a grant from Mission Endowment Fund of Abiding Savior.

As the Mission Endowment Fund grows, the Endowment will be able award more and more grants to be used in sharing God's love in the world. If you haven't done so already, please prayerfully consider including the Abiding Savior Endowment in your estate planning. This can be done in a variety of ways including life insurance and IRA beneficiary designations, annuities, and simple language added to your will. All gifts, big or small, are appreciated and will be used to further the work of God done in the world. For more information contact Pastor Ryan Brodin.

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God's Work. Our Hands. Resolutions to Help Others.

Giving Tree: Thank you all for your generous response to the Christmas giving tree! We have brightened Christmas for numerous neighbors, groups, and friends, young and old. Thank you for remembering those needing extra love and care. You are amazing!



Food Shelf Courtesy: When bringing food to church for donation to Ralph Reeder Food Shelf, please make sure packages are unopened and food is not beyond the "Use By" date. All food dates are checked before being dropped off and again at the food shelf. Expired items are thrown away and create unnecessary work for volunteers. Thank you for this simple courtesy.

Gardeners Needed: It's never too early to start thinking about our Garden of Grace. Maybe you're getting seed catalogues already. The garden needs a few willing folks to adopt a bed for personal or food shelf fresh vegetables. Fresh air, exercise and companionship guaranteed.



Kitchen Help: Our congregation excels at sharing meals and the brunch, Wednesday supper, and funeral kitchen crews can always use a helping hand. If you could be "on call" to fill in when we are short-handed, please let the office or kitchen crew know. Thank you for sharing your time and talents!



Meals on Wheels Thanks: Hearty thanks to our volunteers who delivered meals the week of December 18th, taking time out of busy days to deliver hot food and warm greetings.

join in **Join In:** Did you make a resolution to be more involved in 2024? We have committees, teams, odd jobs, and any number of ways that your involvement would be greatly appreciated. Let the office know what you're interested in, or talk to the volunteers who keep things running smoothly. Big thanks!

Women's Retreat | April 19-21 | Heartwood Conf. Ctr.

We're planning a women's retreat at Heartwood Conference Center in Trego, WI Fri., Apr. 19 – Sun., Apr. 21.

Why go on retreat? Retreat is a time set apart. It is time to be with God and to be supported by Christian friends. Women tend to take responsibility for so many other people and things. Retreat is a time of setting aside the many responsibilities that call for our attention so that we can have the time to relax, recharge, and refresh.

Emile Griffin writes, "When we go on retreat, we clear space for God's action in our calendar... Making a retreat requires a certain kind of trust... We don't know what God has in store for us, but we are willing to risk what we will find out." As we take time with God in the beautiful nature setting of Heartwood, life's worries become lighter. As we spend time listening for God's word for us, our souls are nurtured. The flight attendant's advice rings true, "Put on your own oxygen mask first, then assist others." Retreat time gives us a chance to breathe deeply, to refresh our souls, and to strengthen us for the many things that call for our time and attention when we return to daily life. As we are rested and rejuvenated, we are better able to serve others.

What's the plan? We have reserved space at Heartwood Conference Center. It is a comfortable space with good meals, nice meeting rooms, and lovely grounds. Pastor Marla is working with a small group to plan the retreat. If you'd like to be part of that planning team or have ideas for the retreat, let Pastor Marla know. More details on the specifics of the program will be shared as they become available in coming weeks. The cost for the weekend will be \$250 per person for double occupancy rooms and meals. There will be scholarship and fundraising opportunities for those who would like help defraying the cost.

For now, save the date. Think about how a retreat might feed your soul. Prepare to be part of it. If you think you might be interested in participating, please let Lisa Schlotterback know!



November 2023
Financial Highlights

2023	Monthly	YTD
INCOME		
Current gifts and giving	44,347	433,499
Festival giving	1,007	12,715
SUBTOTAL	45,354	446,214
Other income	9,586	72,554
TOTAL INCOME	54,940	518,768
EXPENSES		
TOTAL EXPENSES	54,194	578,492
NET INCOME OVER EXPENSES	746	(59,724)
Benevolence paid	4,671	43,168

**Thrivent Choice Dollars
Thrivent Action Teams**

If you are a Thrivent member, you may receive Thrivent Choice dollars that you are able to direct to Abiding Savior each year. Directing your choice dollars is easy. Just log in to www.Thrivent.com or call 800-847-4836 and when prompted, say "Thrivent Choice." 2023 Thrivent Choice dollars must be directed to Abiding Savior no later than March 31 or they will expire.

You can also apply for two Thrivent Action Team Grants up to \$250 to be used for fundraisers, volunteer opportunities, educational events, or meals. 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.



- Joining with our community in the church parking lot to watch the Spring Lake Park-Blaine-Mounds View Fire Department's Santa Parade.
- A beautiful telling of Christ's birth by our Sunday school children at during their Christmas Program.
- Yummy cookie trays to enjoy over Christmas made as a fundraiser for those attending the upcoming ELCA Youth Gathering Thanks to all the bakers!!!

**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.



ENDOWMENT FUND

Notes of Thanks

Dear friends—We want all of you to know how grateful we are for the many prayers, Pastor Ryan's phone calls, your texts, cards, friendship and more!! Thank you all! I'm doing well! *Chris (and Jack) Canfield*

Thank you so much for your donation of beautifully handmade winter hats! Our students that don't have hats love getting a hat all their own—and it's extra special that it's a hat made with love! Thank you for your time and generosity!

Pike Lake Kindergarten, PreK and Preschool

Thank you so much for your generous donation of \$500. At Shobi's Table we are excited to jump into a new year of ministry with your help. This gift is already on its way to becoming a catalyst for God's love and justice in the form of a from-scratch meal.

Deacon Kari Alice Olsen, Shobi's Table

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31 DECEMBER (NO SUNDAY SCHOOL) 10:00 Worship Service (worship also available via Facebook Live)	1	2 8:30 Men's Breakfast & Bible Study 10:00 Staff Meeting 6:30 Committee Meetings	3 9:45 Cub Foods delivery 4:30 - Wed. Night Supper 5:30 - 6:00 POWER Up 6:00 - 6:30 POWER Up 6:30 - 7:00 Wed. Worship 6:30 - 8:00 Confirmation 7:00 - 8:00 Adult Choir	4 10:00 Women's Bible Study (in-person or Facebook) 7:00 Jubilation Ringers	5 OFFICE CLOSED	6
7 COMMUNION SUNDAY 9:00 Sunday School & SS Family Fellowship 10:00 Worship Service 11:00 Cinnamon Roll Sale	8 5:30 Women's Gathering -Moe's	9 9:00 Staff Meeting 2-4:00 Caring Visitors Training 5:30 Lydia Circle	10 9:45 Cub Foods delivery 4:30 - Wed. Night Supper 5:30 - 6:30 Philippians Study 5:30 - 6:00 POWER Up 6:00 - 6:30 POWER Up 6:30 - 7:00 Wed. Worship 6:30 - 8:00 Confirmation 7:00 - 8:00 Adult Choir	11 9:00 Work Crew 10:00 Women's Bible Study BLOOD DRIVE 1:30 - 6:30 7:00 Jubilation Ringers	12 OFFICE CLOSED	13 Trelstad Family in Fellowship Hall (Afternoon)
14 9:00 Sunday School & SS Family Fellowship 10:00 Worship Service 11:00 Brunch	15 OFFICE CLOSED MLK JR DAY	16 8:30 Men's Breakfast & Bible Study 9:00 Quilting 10:00 Staff Meeting 2-4:00 Caring Visitors Training 6:30 Council Meeting	17 9:45 Cub Foods delivery 4:30 - Wed. Night Supper 5:30 - 6:30 Philippians Study 5:30 - 6:00 POWER Up 6:00 - 6:30 POWER Up 6:30 - 8:45 FMSC Service Nite 7:00 - 8:00 Adult Choir	18 10:00 Women's Bible Study (in-person or Facebook) 7:00 Jubilation Ringers	19 OFFICE CLOSED	20
21 COMMUNION SUNDAY 9:00 Sunday School & SS Family Fellowship 10:00 Worship Service	22 6:30 Usher Training	23 10:00 Staff Meeting 12:00 Benedic'tine Service 2-4:00 Caring Visitors Training	24 9:45 Cub Foods delivery 4:30 - Wed. Night Supper 5:30 - 6:30 Philippians Study 5:30 - 6:00 POWER Up 6:00 - 6:30 POWER Up 6:30 - 7:00 Wed. Worship 6:30 - 8:00 Confirmation 7:00 - 8:00 Adult Choir	25 9:00 Work Crew 10:00 Women's Bible Study (in-person or Facebook) 7:00 Jubilation Ringers	26 OFFICE CLOSED	27
28 9:00 Sunday School & SS Family Fellowship 10:00 Worship Service (worship also available via Facebook Live)	29	30 8:30 Men's Breakfast & Bible Study 10:00 Staff Meeting 2-4:00 Caring Visitors Training	31 9:45 Cub Foods delivery 4:30 - Wed. Night Supper 5:30 - 6:30 Philippians Study 5:30 - 6:00 POWER Up 6:00 - 6:30 POWER Up 6:30 - 7:00 Wed. Worship 6:30 - 8:00 Confirmation 7:00 - 8:00 Adult Choir	1 FEB 10:00 Women's Bible Study (in-person or Facebook) 7:00 Jubilation Ringers	2 FEB OFFICE CLOSED	3 FEB Huesman's in Coffee House 1 - 5PM

Abiding Savior Lutheran Church

8211 Red Oak Drive

Mounds View, MN 55112-5929

Phone: 763.784.5120

Email: office@abidingsavior.org

Website: www.abidingsavior.org

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

Non-Profit Organization
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Go Paperless

If you want to go paperless,
call the Church office at 763.784.5120
or email us at office@abidingsavior.org.

Reduce waste.
Reduce mailing costs.
Receive information faster!

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Upcoming Events in January

- Jan. 1: Happy New Year - Blessings to you in 2024!
- Jan. 2: Men's Breakfast & Bible Study
Committee Meetings
- Jan. 3: Wednesday Night Activities (see pg 2 for info)
- Jan. 4: Women's Bible Study
- Jan. 7: Sunday School & Family Fellowship
Worship with Holy Communion
Cinnamon Roll Sale
- Jan. 8: Women's Gathering at Moe's
- Jan. 9: Lydia Circle
- Jan. 10: Wednesday Night Activities (see pg 2 for info)
- Jan. 11: Work Crew
Women's Bible Study
Blood Drive (1:30—6:30)
- Jan. 14: Sunday School & Family Fellowship
Worship and Brunch following
- Jan. 15: MLK, Jr. Day—Office Closed
- Jan. 16: Men's Breakfast & Bible Study
Council Meeting
- Jan. 17: Wednesday Night Activities (see pg 2 for info)
Service Night at FMSC (No Wed. Worship)
- Jan. 18: Women's Bible Study
- Jan. 21: Sunday School & Family Fellowship
Worship with Holy Communion
- Jan. 24: Wednesday Night Activities (see pg 2 for info)
- Jan. 25: Work Crew & Women's Bible Study
- Jan. 28: Sunday School & Family Fellowship
Worship
- Jan. 30: Men's Breakfast & Bible Study
- Jan. 31: Wednesday Night Activities (see pg 2 for info)

Pastors & Staff

Ryan Brodin, Senior Pastor

Marla Amborn, Interim Pastor

Patty Mesenbring, Dir. of Children's Ministries

Josh & Alex Ertz, Interim Youth Mentors

Janelle Schauer, Organist

Mary Larew, Senior & Children's Choir Director

Paul Weller, Bell Choir Director

Katie Brouillard, Office Manager

Connie Clausen, Office Assistant

Trisha Bourassa, Office Assistant

Jen 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/>.