

## 50 YEARS OF GREAT MUSIC AT FALCON HEIGHTS CHURCH

50 years ago! In 1966, Joel and Karen Johnson, both graduates of Macalester College, began their long tenure at Falcon Heights Church as Music Director and Organist.

The Johnsons have continuously maintained a strong and vibrant Chancel Choir. They have “worn well” with their friendly and outgoing personalities which enable them to keep a collection of “beautiful people” faithful and focused. Important also is that they stress and adhere to music from the mainstream of great choral literature coupled with tasteful contemporary compositions.

Each year, at the 1st Sunday worship service in December, a 40 voice Falcon Heights Choir and professional orchestra present a major work such as last year’s Mozart *“Credo” Mass*. More than 275 church members and community friends fill the sanctuary. Joel says that, “It is important to develop skills and commitment needed for a major work which then benefits the choir and congregation each Sunday throughout the year.”

Joel feels that the most important strength contributing to their long-term success is that together, as a team, they have had long tenures working at all levels in performance music.

As music educators for over 30 years in the Roseville Schools, Karen was an elementary music teacher who also served as an accompanist for the high school choirs and many solos and ensembles at State Contest. In 1993, Joel was awarded Minnesota State High School Choir Director of the Year by the Minnesota Music Educators Association.

At the community level, for 18 years Joel has conducted and Karen served as orchestra pianist in the Roseville String Ensemble’s “Christmas Sing Along” involving over 400 participants.

For 50 years, each summer, the Johnsons experienced professional growth at the New Hampshire Music Festival. Having conducted the 120 voice auditioned chorus, symphony orchestra and soloists from the Metropolitan Opera, Joel has now been designated “Symphonic Chorus Conductor Emeritus.” Karen, in addition to being Orchestra Librarian, played piano, harpsichord and organ. She was a featured soloist with the orchestra’s performance of the Saint Saens *“Organ Symphony.”*

Joel and Karen Johnson believe the power of music enriches and speaks to faith in special and unique ways. They are excited as they begin another church year of beautiful and inspirational music at Falcon Heights Church, UCC.