

Meet Chuck Thiel and His Jolly Ramblers

With many years in the music and dance band industry, Chuck Thiel and His Jolly Ramblers of Lester Prairie, MN will please you with their very danceable and memorable music that is pleasing to crowds of all ages. As the band transitions into more of a show band featuring Generations II-III-IV, you'll enjoy anything from polka to the old standards to classic country to 50's-60's and country rock... and even a little folk music. A steady beat and beautiful instrumental and vocal blends make this band very popular throughout the local area and beyond.

The composition of the group allows many interesting instrumental and vocal combinations. Solid bass keyboard, 2-3 part horns and percussion along with some very nice concertina fills and solos complete a really enjoyable sound.

Chuck Thiel, the concertina player, lead vocalist, and leader, is the son of the band's originator Albert Thiel, who passed away May 12, 1994. Chuck has been a Jolly Rambler since 1962. Father of Jason, Jeremy (died of cancer at age 34), and Jamison, he makes his home in Lester Prairie. After teaching high school English for 25 years, Chuck plays music and organizes and directs tours.

Ken Schmidt, who has been a Jolly Rambler since 1971, still makes occasional appearances. He plays trumpet and saxophone and does many of the vocals. Ken and his wife Cathy live in Le Center where Ken retired as a high school science teacher. They have two grown sons.

Jason Thiel is a third generation Jolly Rambler who became a full-time member in January 1995. Jason most often plays keyboard and does vocals, but occasionally will be found playing trumpet and even behind the drums. A graduate of St. Cloud State University, he now works for WCCO-TV in Minneapolis and lives in Bloomington with his wife Mary and sons Jacob, Noah and Benjamin.

Jacob Thiel, the son of Jason and Mary, was born in 2008 and made his public debut with the band on his great-grandpa's drum set in 2013. A fourth generation Jolly Rambler, Jacob can be found most often on trumpet, but occasionally he still plays drums. A senior at Bloomington Jefferson High School, he plays in the school's Marching Band as well as the Wind Ensemble, Jazz Collective and Big Band.

Noah Thiel, Jason and Mary's middle son, was born in 2010 and has made various appearances on drums throughout the years. He's now playing trumpet more often and continues to add more songs to his library. A sophomore at Bloomington Jefferson High School, Noah has joined the Marching Band and also plays in the Wind Ensemble, Jazz Collective and Big Band.

Benjamin Thiel, the youngest of Jason and Mary's sons, was born in 2012 and spent his early years as the band's roadie, always jumping in to help pack and carry equipment. Now, he's picked up the sticks and plays drums. Ben is a seventh grader who plays tenor sax in the Bloomington Jefferson Marching Band and the middle school band.

In 1991 the Jolly Ramblers added the "polka mass/service" to their library and have since released five Christian CD's/cassettes. Christian ministry through music has become a major part of their annual schedule.

"It's a Family Tradition" is their latest release (August 2020). The Jolly Ramblers have recorded 20 albums/cassettes/CDs.

If you're looking for entertainment, please check us out. We can come as a two-piece group or anywhere up to five with the boys. Special events and shows are a hit when "the boys" hit the stage.