

**St. John Ev. Lutheran Church, ELCA
5304 North 44th Avenue
Wausau, WI 54401**

Telephone: (715-675-6950)

THE MESSENGER

December 2023

From Pastor Maggie

God's Beloved,

Grace and peace to you for this month of December. I know December is a busy month and that it can be a hard month. It can be hard for many reasons: it's the last month of the year and you may be asking yourself, where did the time go? Holidays can be stressful, lonely, or involve a lot of traveling. It is dark, cold, and the weather is ever changing... Usually not for the better.

And yet, there are many beautiful blessings that December brings. For outdoor enthusiasts (with enough snow) one can go snowshoeing, skiing, sledding, and snowmobiling. There are holiday movies, family traditions, Christmas songs, and decorative lights on display.

And St. John has some beautiful traditions carried on by all of you. Every Sunday, until Christmas Eve, we will light our Advent wreath. A wreath with evergreen boughs, to represent everlasting life in Christ.

Advent is a time to wait with purpose. Waiting for Christ to be born and for Christ to come again, while knowing Christ is with us still. Which reminds me of Psalm 139, "Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast."

God is with you in all things, even as we wait for Christ to be born. God is with you when your December days are bright and merry. God is with you when your December days are dark and dreary. God is with you when you have that cup of cocoa, snuggle up on the couch, and watch a Christmas movie (even if it is about Santa). God is with you in all things.

I look forward to Advent with you all, as we wait with excitement, anticipation, and hope—till Christmas Eve. The night I can wish you all a very Merry Christmas.

With Love & Gratitude,
Pastor Maggie Westaby

“Council Corner”
Jennifer Schwede, President

The month of December is filled with all sorts of feelings and emotions, there's always something to do whether it be sending cards, buying presents, baking cookies, decorating and the list goes on. The stress we put on ourselves is immense. Why do we do this? The answer is simple, we want Christmas to be perfect.

Christmas is for children, a phrase we hear all the time as the season approaches. There's never been a truer statement, as we are all children of God, what a spectacular time of year for Christians. The awe of the birth of Jesus in a manger alongside animals, we think of what that night must have been like and how the birth of a child would affect the entire world. A miracle indeed.

As Christians, we begin our celebration with the beginning of Advent in preparation for Christmas. Our Christmas is not that complicated, we celebrate the birth of our Savior. We choose to complicate it with all the other “necessities” of Christmas. How about this year, we slow down, enjoy the season, relax and share the birth of Jesus with others. Prioritize what needs to get done now, what needs to get done, but not right now and what would be nice if it gets done, but is not necessary. Perhaps we look for ways we can help others to experience the joy of Christmas. This could be volunteering, visiting shut-ins or donating to places who are in need of items or time.

Whatever your Christmas entails, enjoy the season and the beautiful people in your lives, make memories and savor the past ones. On behalf of the Church Council and myself, we wish all of you a Blessed Christmas.

Council Members. Here is a list of Council members. Please contact them with any concerns or issues you may have. Council meets once a month and welcomes input from the congregation.

President: Jennifer Schwede – 715-432-6079; jenniferschwede@aol.com

Vice President: Karen Ohrmundt – 715-370-0645; tkohrmundt@frontier.com

Treasurer: Perry Kufahl – 715-675-1383; 715-409-0524; pnskufahl@outlook.com

Secretary: Shelley Kufahl – 715-675-1383; 715-409-0524; pnskufahl@outlook.com

Trustees: Jim Borelli – 715-803-8282; jimb.newlife@gmail.com

Tim Ohrmundt – 715-297-0152; anntimohrmundt@gmail.com

Evangelism: Lane Bahr – 715-297-0017; lucylane35@hotmail.com

Fellowship: Barb Paulsen – 715-845-9884; ericbarbp@aol.com

Education: Heidi Teske – 715-536-6134; 715-551-4485; Heidi.teske2007@gmail.com

Worship: Sue Harris – 715-551-6282; smae53@gmail.com

Council Meeting Minutes. Copies of the minutes from the most recently held Council meeting are by the mailboxes. Please feel free to pick up a copy. If more are needed, please contact the church office.

Live Streaming and Photography Notice. When you enter a St. John Church service or event, you will be entering an area where photography, video and audio recording or live streaming may occur. If you prefer not to be recognized on camera, the back row inside the church is not within viewing distance of a camera and communion will typically be only on a wide shot where it may be difficult to recognize congregants. Parents, please note our children's sermons are being recorded and live streamed. If you do not want your child to be recognized on camera, please refrain from having them participate.

2024 Time & Talent sheet is ready for you to select area(s) that you would like to help share your time and talent with your church! There are so many options, and the wonderful thing is that most have very little time investment for you, but the benefit is great to our church! Please take a moment to look over the Time & Talent sheet, it is divided into different areas of service, with the council chairperson's contact info listed, for you to reach out to with any questions you may have. Please fill out and return your sheet in the offering plate on any Sunday, leave in Mary's (secretaries) mailbox, or even call / email me and we'll get you signed up! Please take time to fill out a Time & Talent sheet, even if you already serve in areas of the church. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lane Bahr.

St. John Quilting Wishlist. Left over fabric or never used fabric, light weight denim, cotton or flannel sheets, pillow cases, cotton curtains (unlined), cotton shower curtains. If you are interested, come join us! You can also sew a quilt top from home. Size needed is 60 x 80. They do not need to be fancy. Thank you!

Advent Resources Available. ELCA Advent Devotionals & Advent Calendars are in the Narthex. If you are interested in Kate Bowler's Advent Devotional, see Pastor Maggie.

Men's Breakfast. Pastor Will from Trinity in Stettin and St. Peter's in Marathon has invited all men from St. John to meet the second Saturday of the month at 9 a.m. At LC Restaurant, in Marathon (Formerly the Village Inn).

Tuesday, December 12 at 5:00 p.m. St. John's Sisterhood Ladies Christmas Gathering. Please consider joining the Sisterhood crew for our annual Christmas gathering at 2510 Restaurant. "Happy Hour" starts at 5:00 p.m. with dinner to follow at 6:00 p.m. As per tradition, we will be collecting non-perishable items for the Women's Community (toiletries, toothpaste, shampoo/conditioner, etc.) and holding our annual white elephant gift exchange... so start looking in those storage rooms and basements (this exchange will be held after dinner – don't forget to wrap your 'gift'!). A sign-up sheet and additional information are located in the Narthex.

Saturday, December 16 9:30-10:30 a.m. Dress Rehearsal for Children's Christmas Program

Sunday, December 17 worship is at 10:00 a.m. for our Children's Christmas Program!
Potluck to follow! Bring an appetizer or dessert to share.

Monday, December 18 at 6:30 p.m. Blue Christmas. A prayerfully cultivated service for those who have lost loved ones, for those who find the holidays to be a lonely time, and for those who would like to spend more time in prayer. This service will have candle lighting, music, prayers, and a sermon. All are welcome.

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Sunday, December 24. Christmas Eve Worship will be at 4:00 & 6:30 only. We will not have a 9:00 a.m. Worship Service.

Wednesday, December 27 at 6:00 p.m. Christmas Pizza & PJ Party. Pizza served at 6, "Mickey's Christmas Carol" and "A Muppet Family Christmas" from 6:30-8. Kids are welcome to bring a friend!

Holy Baptism. On Sunday, December 3, 2023 we celebrated the Holy Baptism of Josie June Hein. Josie is the daughter of Jesse & Jill Hein and was born on November 8, 2022. Josie's sponsors are Joshua Hein and Stephanie Hein. May God's blessings be with Josie throughout her life.

Annual Report Articles are Due to the Church Office by Sunday, January 7, 2024!

Homebound Parishioners. The following parishioners are no longer able to consistently attend worship services. Pastor Maggie visits them to remind them that they are loved by God and loved by their community of faith, St. John. Sometimes it is helpful to hear those reminders from someone.

Carol Fitzke 237227 N. 120 th Ave. Wausau, WI 54401	Joanne Zahn 4905 Falcon Dr. Wausau, WI 54401	Don & Carol Prochnow 3402 Terrace Court-Room 141 Wausau, WI 54401
Harley Goetsch Rennes Health/Rehab Ctr. 4810 Barbican Avenue Weston, WI 54476	Jim & Barbara Leffin 214 N. 12 th Avenue Wausau, WI 54401	

Attendance Report

	2023	2022
Average Weekly/October	82	73
Average Weekly/Year-To-Date	91	81

December Birthdays

12-1 Drew Detert
12-1 Brenda Tesch
12-3 Tom Ohrmundt
12-4 Robbie Haroldson
12-5 Ryder Schindler
12-5 Hudson Voigt
12-5 Jan Ziebell
12-6 Dan Detert
12-7 Sarah Sala
12-10 Laverne Grunenwald
12-10 Tari Harter
12-11 Maci Landwehr
12-12 Avery Oestreich
12-14 Levi Ohrmundt
12-14 Luke Saari
12-16 Mark Anderson
12-17 Lane Hoeft
12-17 John Rakow
12-18 Veronica LaVake
12-18 Pete Seubert
12-18 Serena Ugoretz
12-19 Andrew Harter
12-20 Braxtin Borth
12-22 Rebecca Voelker
12-23 Madison Voelker
12-24 Dan Graveen
12-24 Cherish Oestreich
12-24 Jacob Paulsen
12-25 Barb Nass
12-27 Deb Maley
12-28 James LaVake
12-29 Alex Zahn
12-30 Jill Cohrs
12-30 Jesse Hein
12-30 Luciana Nass
12-30 Tammi Walter

December Anniversaries

12-5 Tom & Karen Ohrmundt
12-6 John Czarnota & Erin Randall
12-11 Don & Carol Prochnow
12-26 Bob & Kara Rode
12-29 Chad & Tammi Walter

Upcoming Events:

Sunday, December 3 at 3:30 p.m. – Community Supper at First Presbyterian Church

Saturday, December 9 at 9:00 a.m. – Men’s Breakfast – LC Restaurant, Marathon

Tuesday, December 12 at 5:00 p.m. – Sisterhood of St. John Christmas Party – 2510 Restaurant

Sunday, December 17 at 10:00 a.m. – Children’s Christmas Program

Monday, December 18 at 6:30 p.m. – Blue Christmas Service

Sunday, December 24 at 4:00 and 6:30 – Christmas Eve (No Sunday morning service)

Monday, January 1, 2024 – Happy New Year – Church Office Closed

Monday, January 7, 2024 – Annual Report Articles due to Church Office

Sunday, February 4, 2024 – Annual Meeting to follow Worship Service

Wednesday, February 14, 2024 – Ash Wednesday – 5:00 p.m. Lent Supper; 6:30 p.m. Lent Service

Worship Schedule

Sunday Mornings

9:00 a.m.

Sunday School

10:15 a.m.-11:15 a.m.

Mission Statement: “We are called to serve God; serve each other; serve the community; serve the wider church.”

Pastor Maggie Westaby

St. John Office: (715) 675-6950

Cell Phone: 1-608-345-9616

E-mail:

Pastor.maggie.westaby@gmail.com

E-mail: stjohnwausau@msn.com

Web Address: stjohnwausau.org