

St. John Ev. Lutheran Church, ELCA  
5304 North 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Wausau, WI 54401

Telephone: (715-675-6950)

# ***THE MESSENGER***

***December 2024***



**Annual Report Articles are Due to the Church Office by Sunday,  
January 12, 2025!**

**Mark your calendars! Annual Meeting Date is  
Sunday, February 9, 2025**

**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. Which is why December is an important month to carve out time together – to slow down and take a deep breath – to center ourselves with one another and with our Creator. A time to wait together in anticipation of Christ's birth.

And even though we wait for this wondrous night every year, every year is different, even though the good news of this story remains the same. A story told in many different ways – read from Scripture, recited from memory, performed in Children's Christmas Programs, made into movies, and musicals. Because the good news of Christ's birth cannot be forgotten, and is a part of many holiday traditions that have united us for centuries.

And one of my family traditions is to sing *Happy Birthday* to Jesus on the night of Christ's birth. And birthdays are all about new beginnings. The beginning of a life, and the beginning of a new year at a new age.

Which is why our Advent theme this year will be *Words For The Beginning*, as Christ's birth is a sacred beginning. A beginning that not only celebrates him, but unites all of creation into God's very being. As we read in John 1:1, 3, 14 *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. And the Word became flesh and lived among us."*

These words harken back to the "birthday" of all creation if you will, and reveals this truth: that Christ was not only with us since his birth, but Christ was with us since the very beginning, and continues to be with us. Good news that is at the heart of the Christmas story, when the angel proclaims

*"Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, God is with us."*

Words found in the Gospel of Matthew and also prophesied in the Book of Isaiah. Words that bring comfort and joy – for God is with us in all things.

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 beginning another new church year with all of you this Advent. 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”*

**Calling All Volunteers: Time and Talent Sheet for 2025**

Dear St. John Community,

As we look forward to the new year, we are reminded of the incredible impact each of you has on our church's success. Your dedication and willingness to serve are what make our community thrive. To continue this tradition of service, we invite you to fill out the Time and Talent Sheet for 2025.

**Why Your Participation Matters**

The Time and Talent Sheet is more than just a form—it's a way for us to understand the unique gifts and skills each member brings to our church. Whether you have a knack for organizing events, a talent for music, or a passion for teaching, there is a place for you to contribute.

**How to Get Involved**

Please take a moment to review the areas of interest listed on the enclosed sheet. Check the boxes next to the activities you are interested in and return the completed form in one of the following ways:

- Place it in the offering plate during service.
- Email it to Connie Nowak at [bcdenowak@gmail.com](mailto:bcdenowak@gmail.com).
- Mail it to St. John 5304 N 44<sup>th</sup> Ave, Wausau WI 54401

**Your Contribution Makes a Difference**

It takes many hands to make our church as successful as it is. By volunteering, you help create a welcoming and vibrant community. A schedule for the year will be distributed so you will know when you are scheduled to serve.

Thank you for considering how you can share your time and talents with St. John. Together, we can continue to grow and support one another in faith.

Blessings,

Connie Nowak, Evangelism

## ***Happenings at St. John***

The **Memorial Committee** is pleased to announce to the congregation that our church council has approved the installation of a new church sign. St. John church memorial fund has grown through the years allowing our congregation the opportunity to use those funds for a much needed new sign. The new sign will have a digital message system and will face north and south, giving better visibility to the more traveled 44<sup>th</sup> Ave. The memorial fund will be able to cover most of the expenses with some monies coming from our general fund. The project is in the final planning stages. We will keep the congregation updated with the progress of the sign.

**Chili Supper/Raffle.** Sunday, October 13 was the annual chili supper and raffle. Thanks to everyone who contributed items to the raffle and to Linda Graveen for making the raffle so successful. The money made from the raffle (\$1,334.00) will go toward helping our community suppers. The money raised from the chili dinner (\$1,318.00) will go to support our church. Thank you to everyone who contributed ingredients and to Connie and Brian Nowak who made the chili.

**Pie Auction.** The pie auction was held on Sunday, November 24. The money raised will be used to help fund the Community Suppers (\$1,135.00).

**Thank you, *Louie Reissman for the beautiful Christmas Tree!***



## **Exciting News... Introducing the St. John Church Choir!**

We are excited to report that we now have an awesome church choir with fun upcoming events planned!

You are welcome to join the choir, below is a list of upcoming practices and events. If you have any questions or concerns, please, feel free to contact Amanda Grueneberg or Gavin Bahr.

Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup> / Practice after Worship Service

Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup> / Practice after Worship Service

Monday, December 16<sup>th</sup> / 6:30p Sing during Blue Christmas Service

Sunday, December 29<sup>th</sup> / Caroling for Homebound Parishioners held at church, after worship service.

Watch for additional practices and events!!

*"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth" Psalm 98:4*

**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!

**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 8 a.m. at LC Restaurant, in Marathon.

**Tuesday, December 10 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 5:45 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!').

**Sunday, December 15 at 5:00 p.m. Candlelit Shepherds Meal.** Gentlemen and ladies of St. John are invited to participate in a simple Shepherds meal of soup, bread, dried fruit, nuts and cheeses by candlelight on Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm. Wine and sparkling grape juice will also be served. After our meal, we will move into the sanctuary where we will watch "Journey to Bethlehem," a 2023 "live-action Christmas musical adventure...that weaves classic Christmas melodies with humor, faith and new pop songs in a retelling of the greatest story ever told." \$10 /participant paid that evening – money remaining after cost will be donated to the Salvation Army. Sign-up in the narthex. This is intended for adults and older/mature children.

**Monday, December 16 at 6:30 p.m. Blue Christmas Service.** 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.

**Sunday, December 22 Worship is at 10:00 a.m. for the Children's Christmas Program! A Fellowship Potluck will follow Worship. Bring a dish to pass!**

**Monday, December 23 at 5:30 p.m. "The Star" Pizza & Pajama Party** Kids of all ages are welcome to put on their PJs, grab their stuffies and blankies and enjoy pizza and popcorn while watching the animated film "The Star." A pizza dinner will be served at 5:30 p.m. Movie will start at 6 pm. Sign-up in the narthex.

**Tuesday, December 24 Christmas Eve Worship at 4:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.**

**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](mailto:jenniferschwede@aol.com)
- Vice President: Karen Ohrmundt – 715-370-0645; [tkohrmundt@frontier.com](mailto:tkohrmundt@frontier.com)
- Treasurer: Perry Kufahl – 715-675-1383; 715-409-0524; [pnskufahl@outlook.com](mailto:pnskufahl@outlook.com)
- Secretary: Shelley Kufahl – 715-675-1383; 715-409-0524; [pnskufahl@outlook.com](mailto:pnskufahl@outlook.com)
- Trustees: Scott Oestreich – 715-675-4360; [scottsmachinellc@gmail.com](mailto:scottsmachinellc@gmail.com)
- Tim Ohrmundt – 715-297-0152; [anntimohrmundt@gmail.com](mailto:anntimohrmundt@gmail.com)
- Evangelism: Connie Nowak – 715-675-1577; [bcdenowak@gmail.com](mailto:bcdenowak@gmail.com)
- Fellowship: Barb Paulsen – 715-845-9884; [ericbarbp@aol.com](mailto:ericbarbp@aol.com)
- Education: Heidi Teske – 715-536-6134; 715-551-4485; [Heidi.teske2007@gmail.com](mailto:Heidi.teske2007@gmail.com)
- Worship: Randy Knapp – 715-581-5558; [rknappej@gmail.com](mailto:rknappej@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.

**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 <sup>th</sup> Ave. Wausau, WI 54401	Joanne Zahn 4905 Falcon Dr. Wausau, WI 54401	Glen & Marlene Opichka 2434 Nesting Lane Kronenwetter, WI 54455
Harley Goetsch Rennes Health/Rehab Ctr. 4810 Barbican Avenue Weston, WI 54476	Jim & Barbara Leffin 214 N. 12 <sup>th</sup> Avenue Wausau, WI 54401	

**Attendance Report**

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>Average Weekly/October</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Average Weekly/Year-To-Date</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>92</b>

### **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  
12-6 Dan Detert  
12-7 Sarah Sala  
12-8 Jesse Pagel  
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  
12-19 Ken Parsch  
12-20 Braxtin Borth  
12-22 Ashley Borrero  
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  
12-19 Glen & Marlene Opichka  
12-26 Bob & Kara Rode  
12-29 Chad & Tammi Walter

# *Upcoming Events*

*Sunday, December 1 – Community Supper – First United Methodist Church*

*Sunday, December 1 - Decorating St. John's for Christmas*

*Sunday, December 8 – 9:00 a.m. Worship – 10:15 a.m. Christmas Program Practice*

*Tuesday, December 10 – 5:00 p.m. Sisterhood Christmas Gathering – 2510 Restaurant*

*Saturday, December 14 – 8:00 a.m. Men's Breakfast – LC Restaurant, Marathon*

*Sunday, December 15 – 9:00 a.m. Worship – 10:15 a.m. Christmas Program Practice*

*December 15 – 5:00 p.m. – Candlelit Shepherds Meal*

*Monday, December 16 – 6:30 p.m. – Blue Christmas Service*

*Saturday, December 21 – 9:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m. Christmas Program Dress Rehearsal*

*Sunday, December 22 – 10:00 a.m. Worship - Christmas Program*

*Monday, December 23 – 5:30 p.m. 'The Star' Pizza & Pajama Party*

*Tuesday, December 24 – 4:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Candlelight Worship 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***

***E-mail:***

***[Pastor.maggie.westaby@gmail.com](mailto:Pastor.maggie.westaby@gmail.com)***

***E-mail: [stjohnwausau@msn.com](mailto:stjohnwausau@msn.com)***

***Web Address: [stjohnwausau.org](http://stjohnwausau.org)***