

St. John Ev. Lutheran Church, ELCA
5304 North 44th Avenue
Wausau, WI 54401
Telephone: (715-675-6950)

THE MESSENGER

February 2026



From Pastor Maggie

Beloved Community,

Grace and peace to you. As February unfolds, the Church once again turns toward Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent.

The season of Lent has shaped Christian life since the earliest centuries of the Church, not as a time of gloom, but as a holy invitation—an invitation to return to the waters of baptism and remember who we are.

From its beginnings, Lent was a season of preparation. In the early Church, the forty days before Easter were devoted especially to those preparing for baptism at the Easter Vigil. They studied Scripture, learned the Creeds, prayed the Lord's Prayer, and were formed in a way of life rooted in Christ. At the same time, the whole community walked alongside them—praying, fasting, and renewing their own faith—remembering that baptism is never a private act, but a communal one.

That communal identity begins at the font. In baptism, we are welcomed into the life of the Triune God: Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit. We are sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever. Baptism names us as God's beloved and binds us to one another, creating a community shaped not by perfection, but by grace.

It is no accident, then, that Lent begins with Ash Wednesday. Once again, we are marked with the cross—this time in ashes. The same sign traced on our foreheads at baptism is traced again, accompanied by stark words: *"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."* These words echo Genesis, reminding us of our mortality and our deep dependence on God. Yet even here, death does not have the final word. The ashen cross is still a cross—still a sign of Christ's promise, still pointing us toward resurrection.

Throughout Lent, the Church has practiced prayer, fasting, and generosity—not as ways to earn God's favor, but as practices that clear space for God's grace. These ancient rhythms help us return to our baptismal calling: to die daily to sin and rise daily to new life in Christ. Lent strips away distractions so we can listen more closely for the Spirit's voice, calling us back to love of God and love of neighbor.

As we journey together through this holy season, may we remember that we do not walk alone. We walk as a baptized people, created for community, sustained by grace, and held in hope. May this Lent deepen our trust in God's promises and strengthen our life together, as we move toward Easter—where baptismal waters and resurrection joy overflow once more.

I look forward to walking with you this Lent, discovering together how the Holy Spirit shapes us into a community marked by the cross and rooted in hope.

*With Love & Gratitude,
Pastor Maggie Westaby*



“Council Corner”

The Beauty—and Care—of Our Poinsettias

Greetings everyone, as we look at the Christmas season in our rear-view mirrors. I hope the season created new happy memories for you.

This past Christmas, so many of you generously chose to purchase poinsettias to help beautify our church and to honor or remember those dear to you. Thank you for that generosity and care. Because of you, the sanctuary was filled with color and meaning.

Last year we had 24 poinsettias, and this year that number grew to 44—a wonderful expression of love and enthusiasm. With that increase also came some unexpected challenges. Caring well for that many plants required significant space, time, and ongoing attention, and despite our best efforts, not all of them were able to thrive as we had hoped. The vendor acknowledged that some of the poinsettias were not in the best condition, and graciously refunded part of the cost, for which we are thankful.

Looking ahead, I would like to offer a gentle recommendation that we return to a limit of 24 poinsettias, which allows us to care for them more fully and ensures they remain a lasting symbol of beauty throughout the season. Should there be more than 24 memorials or dedications requested, we would still joyfully list and honor each donor and loved one, while directing any additional gifts to St. John’s Memorial Fund—a meaningful way to continue honoring those we love while supporting the ongoing ministry of our congregation.

This is just my recommendation as my time on the church council has come to an end. It has been a pleasure to serve because it was both fun and challenging to be part of the leadership to help guide our wonderful St John Immanuel. Thank you.

Kind regards,
Randy Knapp



Mailbox/Envelope Reminder!!

Church mailboxes have moved. The mailboxes are now in order numerically by envelope number, though your name is also listed alongside your number. There are master lists located in multiple red binders which will help you find your number and locate your mailbox.

We currently have too many members for our mailboxes – so we have a temporary overflow section located in the side door right off the Narthex. Again, this is only temporary until we have a better solution.

We have also changed our envelope system. If you are looking for offering envelopes, please fill out the pink offering envelope form and place it in the office door mailbox.

If you do not see your name in our master list, please let us know. We apologize for any errors.

Thank you for your grace and patience as we figure this all out.



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: Rick Nevers – 715-574-0288; rlnevers57@gmail.com

Trustee: Ryan Landwehr – 715-212-3540; ryanlandwehr@aol.com

Trustee: Scott Oestreich – 715-675-4360; scottsmachinellc@gmail.com

Evangelism: Connie Nowak – 715-675-1577; bcdenowak@gmail.com

Fellowship: Jeanne Klinger – 715-675-9939 Jeanjam9939@gmail.com

Education: Greg Grudznske – 715-212-6529; gregorylinda@gmail.com

Worship: Randy Knapp – 715-581-5558; rknappeoj@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.

FEBRUARY



2026

February Birthdays

02/01	Emelia Grueneberg	02/13	Jennifer Schwede
02/02	Nathan Fitzke	02/14	Wayne Kallio
02/02	Troy Knight	02/14	Madilynn Knoblock
02/03	Aubrey Arneson	02/14	Paul Linzmeyer
02/03	Chloe Arneson	02/15	Robert Hoff
02/03	Annabel Harris	02/15	Josie Schoepke
02/03	Annie Mae Krueger	02/16	Easton Augustine
02/03	Brock Switlick	02/17	Andie Norman
02/04	Dawson Nowak	02/17	Ron Schuster
02/05	Art Dellenbach	02/18	Louis Norman
02/06	Lorie Anderson	02/18	Donna Treu
02/06	Louie Reissman	02/19	Briella Grueneberg
02/08	Brian Anderson	02/19	Katie VanDerGeest
02/08	Matthew Harris	02/21	Avery LaVake
02/09	Dylan Detert	02/24	Bob Rode
02/09	Sawyer Hein	02/25	Paul Anderson
02/09	Terry Kickbusch	02/25	Nancy Helling
02/09	Bill Schwede	02/25	Carolyn Viergutz
02/10	David Ugoretz	02/27	Tara Pasholk
02/10	Dennis Wunsch	02/27	Brooke Schindler
02/11	Randy Graveen	02/27	Vivian Lauersdorf
02/11	Jessica Pierschalla	02/28	Susan Knight
02/11	Sue Sann	02/28	Sydney Mathwich
02/11	Amiyah Walters	02/29	Brian Klug
02/13	Shawn Chadwick	02/29	Lillian Nolan
02/13	Luke Harris		



February Anniversaries

02/14 Keith & Karen Kolbe
02/22 Dale & Barbara Nass

Sunday School / Confirmation Schedules

2025 – 2026



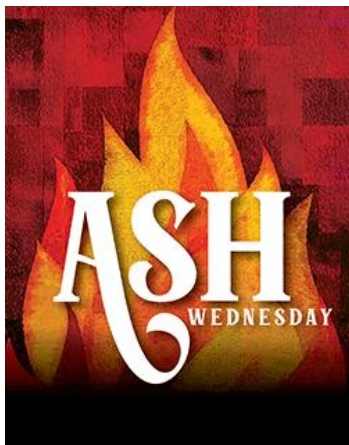
February 2026

Sunday School

- 2/1 Naomi & Ruth
- 2/8 David & Goliath
- 2/15 No Sunday School
- 2/22 Elijah & The Widow

Confirmation Schedule

- 2/4 Class
- 2/11 Class
- 2/18 Ash Wednesday Worship
- 2/25 Lenten Worship



Attendance Report

	2026	2025
Average Weekly/January	104	79
Average Weekly/Year-To-Date	104	79

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 Wood Aven 1821 N 4th Ave #311b Wausau, WI 54401	Marlene Opichka Renaissance Sr. Living 4602 Barbican Ave. #105 Weston, WI 54476	Harley Goetsch Rennes Health/Rehab Ctr. 4810 Barbican Avenue Weston, WI 54476
Jim & Barbara Leffin Primrose 2100 Townline Rd Apt. 217 Wausau, WI 54403	Fritz Poeske Amethyst Health of Wausau 1010 E. Wausau Ave. #84 Wausau, WI 54403	Mary Anne Klinker Rennes Health/Rehab Ctr. 4810 Barbican Ave #301 Weston, WI 54476
Alene Howe Acorn Hill Apartment 430 Orbiting Dr. #19 Mosinee, WI 54455	Dorothy Westfall 4205 Fleet Dr. Wausau, WI 54401	Marlene Bahr 238456 N 84 th Ave. Wausau, WI 54401
Jeff Groethe Riverview Tower 500 Grand Ave. Wausau, WI 54401	Joan Bonstead Forest Park Village 2901 N. 7th Street #W503 Wausau, WI 54403	Carol Hettinga Bell Tower Residence 1500 O'Day St. Rm. 307 Merrill, WI 54452
Judy Blanchfield Mt. View Care Center of Wausau 2400 Marshall Street, Rm #4007 Wausau, WI 54403	Thelma Bursik Primrose Retirement Community 2100 Townline Rd, Apt #101 Wausau, WI 54403	Ann Kurth 2806 Polzer Drive Wausau, WI 54401
Jeannette Petterson 905 E Grant Street, #10 Marshfield, WI 54449	Carolyn Viergutz Fairway Knoll N112 W17500 Mequon Rd. Germantown, WI 53022	Bob Henning Gardens Apartments 801 Parcher Street Apt 110 Wausau, WI 54403





Noisy offering! The 2nd Sunday of the month! Next Noisy offering: Sunday, February 8th bring your coins (bills also accepted 😊).

Money will be raised and donated quarterly. This noisy offering will go to: *Community Dinners for those in need*. Did you know St. John hosts three Community Dinners a year and each one costs approximately \$1,300. Your donations help serve a very real need in our community! **If you are a Thrivent member, you may be eligible to apply for a \$250 Thrivent Action Team card** which can go directly towards our community dinners. Please see Connie Nowak if you can help!

LENTEN DINNERS: We need volunteers to prepare and serve our Lenten Dinners. We also need volunteers to bring salads, desserts and milk, and to help with cleanup. The dinners will be served from 5-6 pm. Worship starts at 6:30. The sign-up chart is in the narthex. Please join us for Lent this year.

Sunday School Teachers Needed: As parent-teachers age out of Sunday School with their kids, we need 2-3 new teachers to step in and help teach the good word! With enough help, the commitment averages to teaching one lesson each month. Please contact Kim Landwehr at kamootz@gmail.com if you are interested!

Friday, February 6th 11a.m. - 2p.m. serving food for The Marty Bus

We are in need of a ***Community Outreach Task Force***: To serve a hot meal to Wausau's underprivileged. If you would like to 1) help prepare and serve the meal, 2) donate food ingredients for the meal, or 3) donate money to help pay for the meal, please talk to Kim Landwehr after worship for more details. Thanks for your help with this quick turn-around! "Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received." 1 Peter 4:10

Men's Bible Study – Every 2nd Saturday of the month at L.C. Restaurant in Marathon City. If you are interested, please reach out to Eugene Dehnel.

Monday, February 9th at 6:00 p.m. Council Meeting

Thursday, February 12th at 6:30 p.m. Adult Study will discuss Chapters 14 – 19:27 of the Gospel of Luke.

Wednesday, February 18th Ash Wednesday. Lenten Dinner starts at 5:00 p.m. Worship 6:30 p.m.

Chair Yoga: February 21st / February 28th all starting at 10:00 a.m. at St. John! A free event, donations are accepted for St. John's Youth.

Mission Trip to Duluth, MN Sunday, July 12th – Friday July 17th Grades 6th – 12th
Please let us know if your student is interested by 02/18/2026

Sunday, February 22nd at 10:15 a.m. – St. Johns Annual Cemetery Association Meeting

Monday, March 9th at 6:30 p.m. Pastor Maggie's Book Club will discuss *The Correspondent* by Virginia Evans.

Kwik Trip Gift Cards Sign-up in the Fellowship Hall or on our website! Help support St. John when buying groceries, gas, or getting your car washed at Kwik Trip! <https://stjohnwausau.org/fundraising/>



Worship Schedule

Sunday Mornings

9:00 a.m.

Sunday School

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

Mission Statement: "We are a fellowship of believers committed to serving God, serving each other, serving the community, and serving the wider church by sharing God's love."



Pastor Maggie Westaby

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