

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

Telephone: (715-675-6950)

THE MESSENGER

January 2026



From Pastor Maggie

Beloved Community,

Grace and peace to you all as we usher in the new year, as we are met with the crispness of January—a time of fresh beginnings, renewed hopes, and the promise of Immanuel, God’s abiding presence with us. The days may still be short, and the cold chill of winter may linger, yet even in this season, God is already at work—quiet, faithful, and steadfast—bringing light where the days feel dim and warmth where we long for reassurance.

The start of a new year often comes with pressure: resolutions to keep, goals to meet, expectations to fulfill. But the grace of God invites us into a different mindset. Rather than striving for perfection, we are invited into faithfulness. Rather than demanding instant change, we are called to patient trust. Because the hope we carry into this new year is not rooted in our ability to get everything right, but in God’s promise to walk with us through it all.

A promise that is at the heart of who we are—and who we are becoming. As a congregation, we find ourselves discerning a new chapter, including the possibility of changing our name to St. John Immanuel. *Immanuel* means “God with us,” and this truth grounds us deeply. For God is with us as we celebrate milestones, as we live into our merger, and as we navigate change. God is with us—not only in our history, but also in our future.

And what a beautiful way to honor both the histories and futures of St. John and Immanuel by embracing the name *St. John Immanuel*.

As we move through this new year together, may we give ourselves permission to move at the pace of grace. May we be gentle with one another, bold in love, and rooted in hope. And may we remember that no matter what lies ahead, we do not walk alone. God is with us. Thanks be to God.

*With Love & Gratitude,
Pastor Maggie Westaby*

“Council Corner”

Request to Thrivent Members: Support Our Community Dinners

If you are a Thrivent member, you may be eligible to apply for a **\$250 Thrivent Action Team card**. This program is a wonderful way to support meaningful service projects—and we would be grateful for your help.

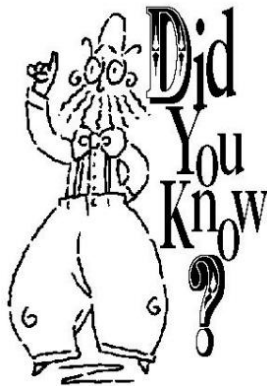
Our church will host three **community dinners in 2026**. Thrivent Action Team funds can be used to make these meals possible.

Please consider applying for a card to support our upcoming dinners. The application is simple, and we can assist with any details if needed.

Your participation directly helps us continue offering warm meals, fellowship, and welcome to our community. Thank you for considering this meaningful way to serve.

With gratitude,
Connie Nowak, Evangelism





❖ **Immanuel means “God with us”**

➤ *If we embrace the name St. John Immanuel – it would mean, St. John God is with us.*

- *Immanuel is the direct Hebrew translation vs. Emmanuel is the transliteration from Greek in the New Testament.*

❖ In our surrounding area there are 7 St. John churches! That’s a little confusing, especially since you have to type “St. John Evangelical” into google maps for our church to show up.

❖ St. John’s official name is: *St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church ELCA (Village Of Maine) Wausau, WI Inc.* – that is a really long name!

❖ There are no other St. John Immanuel Churches in Wisconsin!

❖ Immanuel has donated substantial finances to our congregation. In addition to general funds, there are two scholarship funds and an endowment fund. Embracing the name St. John Immanuel continues to honor the many ways they have contributed.

❖ *Changing our name to St. John Immanuel provides a way for us all to faithfully live into our merger – recognizing both our histories – while moving forward together sharing God’s love.*

❖ Join us for a discussion about changing our name to St. John Immanuel on Sunday, January 11th, 2026.

❖ **We will vote on the name change at our Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 1st, 2026.**

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.

Open Council Positions for 2026: President, Treasurer, Trustee, Worship. The current Secretary, Rick Nevers, plans to run for Treasurer (though we continue to accept nominations for Treasurer). Because the Secretary position will be vacated a year early, we will appoint Patti Busche in 2026 (who has agreed to this) to finish out the Secretary term. This way we will ensure the proper rotation of Executive Council Chairs. The Church Council feels this is the best decision for St. John to ensure a smooth transition with the Merger process.

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.



January Birthdays

01/01	Jase Glaze	01/16	Tammy Schoepke
01/03	Joe Duginski	01/17	Thomas Anderson
01/04	Miranda Clausen	01/19	Rylan Chadwick
01/04	Heidi Teske	01/20	Maxwell Nass
01/06	Sue Schwede	01/21	Colton Haroldson
01/07	Carol Smith	01/21	Thomas Leduc
01/08	Isaac Hoffman	01/22	Cody Herning
01/08	Justin Zahn	01/23	Elise Gallenberg
01/09	Harlan Grinde	01/24	Shannon Graveen
01/09	Molly Lubecke	01/25	Jason Tesch
01/09	Matthew Nass	01/26	Vernon Diestelhorst
01/09	Jack Saari	01/26	Karen Kolbe
01/10	Elaine Grinde	01/26	Kelly Rosenau
01/10	Randy Knapp	01/26	Dorothy Westfall
01/10	Charlee Pagel	01/27	Robin Hein
01/14	Kelly Dehnel	01/27	Charlie Knoblock
01/14	Jerome Klug	01/27	Jeanne Wunsch
01/14	Brayden Sann	01/28	Michelle Bolz
01/15	Lane Bahr	01/29	Corey Busche
01/15	Jamie Kickbusch	01/30	Selena Sann
01/16	John Borth	01/31	Amber Eno
01/16	Jackson Hein		



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

January Anniversaries

01/06	Clark & Jennifer Bronsteatter
01/07	Bruce & Kathryn Knox
01/24	Robert & Susan Doede

Sunday School / Confirmation Schedules

2025 – 2026



January 2026

Sunday School

- 1/4 No Sunday School
- 1/11 No Sunday School
- 1/18 No Sunday School
- 1/25 The Battle of Jericho

Confirmation Schedule

- 1/7 Class
- 1/14 Class
- 1/21 Class
- 1/28 Class



Attendance Report

	2025	2024
Average Weekly/December	233	160
Average Weekly/Year-To-Date	109	102

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 605 Eagle Nest Blvd. Apt. 208 Rothschild, WI 54474	Carolyn Viergutz Fairway Knoll N112 W17500 Mequon Rd. Germantown, WI 53022	





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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.

Noisy offering! The 2nd Sunday of the month! Next Noisy offering: Sunday, January 11th bring your coins (bills also accepted 😊).

Money will be raised and donated quarterly. This noisy offering will go to: *Community Dinners for the Houseless*

Sunday, January 11 at 10:15 a.m. Town Hall meeting - Meeting to discuss name change.

Monday, January 12th at 6:30 p.m. Adult Study will discuss Chapters 9:17 – 14 of the Gospel of Luke.

Monday, January 26th at 6:30 Pastor Maggie's Book Club will discuss *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus.

Sunday, February 1st at 10:15 a.m. Annual Congregational Meeting.

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/>

He spreads
the snow
like wool and
scatters
the frost
like ashes.
Psalm 147:16. NIV

But God
demonstrates
his own love
for us in this:
While we were
still sinners,
Christ died
FOR US.
Romans 5:8. NIV



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

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