

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

THE MESSENGER

September 2026



From Pastor Maggie

Beloved Community,

There is something about September that feels like a beginning. Even though the calendar tells us that autumn does not officially arrive until later in the month, September has its own kind of energy. School begins. Schedules fill back up. Summer clothes slowly make their way to the back of the closet. We start looking ahead—to the next season, the next project, the next thing that needs our attention.

And perhaps that is why September can carry a little pressure with it. There is something about a new season that makes us want to get organized. To get back on track. To figure out what comes next. We make lists. We set goals. We imagine what this season might hold.

And sometimes, without even realizing it, we begin to believe that if we can just get everything in order, we might finally feel like we are doing life “right.”

But the Gospel offers us something different. Jesus does not begin by asking his disciples whether they have a plan. He does not ask them if they have everything figured out. Instead, he meets them in the middle of the chaos, uncertainty, and change.

Because faith is not the same thing as having everything figured out. Faith is not certainty without questions. Faith is not a perfectly mapped-out life. Faith is a relationship with the One who continues to meet us in the middle of all our questions, doubts, and joys.

Jesus does not wait for us at the finish line. Jesus meets us along the way. And that matters, because so much of life happens in the middle. We spend very little of our lives at the beginning or the end of anything. Most of the time, we are somewhere in between.

And this September, we will find ourselves in a beautiful mix of all the things—we are at a beginning with **Rally Sunday** and our annual **Blessing of the Backpacks**, a time to ask God to surround all entering this school year with kindness, courage, wisdom, and growth (followed by our yummy potluck). **Confirmation** starts, and we look forward to our annual **Chili Dinner & Raffle** (see **page 13** for details).

All of these are beautiful opportunities to gather and pay attention—to God, to one another, and to the world around us. They invite us to be the body of Christ at the beginning of a new school year, even as we continue meeting one another in the midst of all that life holds.

May this September be a season of showing up for one another and trusting that God is already present in all that lies ahead. And may we walk into this new season together, with open hearts, grateful for the gift of being a beloved community.

With love & gratitude,
Pastor Maggie Westaby



“Council Corner”

The new church year is fast approaching and opportunities are available to all! But first, a quick recap. I hope everyone enjoyed their summer as much as our youth! The children and youth of St John Immanuel were very busy and active with Christian activities.

VBS was in full swing June 21 to 25 with a theme of Rainforest Falls - exploring the nature of God. There was a “great crowd” of children, youth and adults who participated and taught. Each night, dinner and bad jokes gave way to themes from the Psalms about our Creator. Themes such as: God is our Creator, God Sees Us, God is a Refuge, God is Faithful and God is Forever left no doubt in our children's minds our everlasting deep connection to God.

July saw more activity as seven youth and three adults traveled to Duluth for a Mission Trip! While smoke from wildfires caused disruption much was learned about serving others and enjoying the company of other Christians.

Adult Bible study had a bit of a break but will resume August 31st with Acts chapters 4 and 5. We would love to see this area of education grow, come join us!

Sunday school and Confirmation registration is now open! An introductory meeting for confirmation students and parents will take place September 2nd at 6:30 pm. Maddie Grueneberg will be taking over the Sunday School program this year and is excited for this adventure!

Lay School will be starting soon over at St. Andrew's. Anyone interested in a deeper dive into biblical and Lutheran theology and spirituality please consider this school. Class sizes are comfortable and you get the chance to meet other local Lutherans and enjoy a good meal together before class. Registration ends on September 4th. Scholarships are available!

The Education committee is pleased to announce a new Youth Group starting this fall! Kim Landwehr and Kelly Hirn will be facilitating the group discussions and activities. This is for post-confirmation youth and high school age. The idea really is to fill the gap between confirmation and adulthood. We want our youth to stay connected to the church! Stay tuned to upcoming information.

September 13th will see Rally Sunday, blessing of the backpacks, revenge of the water balloons and potluck.

Pastor Maggie's Book Club will meet on Monday, September 14th at 6:30 p.m. We will be discussing "*Sandwich*" by Catherine Newman & "*Beneath A Scarlet Sky*" by Mark Sullivan. There is still time to read the books if you would like to join us!

I want to thank the congregation for your generous donations. Without this, none of these opportunities would exist. Your support of our youth and all areas of Christian Education shows your heart is with God. If anyone ever has questions, concerns or new ideas related to any of the areas of Education please feel free to reach out to me. Let's get this church year started!

In Christ,
Greg Grudznske – Education



IMAGINE MORE

*More faith. More hope. More love.
More together.*

Every three years, thousands of youth from across the ELCA come together to worship, learn, serve, make new friends, and grow in faith.

**This is more than an event—
it's a *once-in-a-3-years* kind of opportunity!**

2027 ELCA YOUTH GATHERING

 **MINNEAPOLIS,
MINNESOTA**

 **JUNE 28–JULY 2,
2027**

THEME:
Imagine More 

"Now to him who is able
to do immeasurably more
than all we ask or imagine..."
EPHESIANS 3:20



WHO CAN GO?

Youth participants must be
in 8th to 12th grade at time
of registration (fall 2026).



IMPORTANT DATES

- We need to register by
Nov. 11, 2026
- We need to know all those
who want to go by
Sunday, November 8.



HOW TO SIGN UP

To register for the youth gathering
please let Pastor Maggie know
and provide a **\$50 deposit**.

If the deposit amount is too much
please let Pastor Maggie know as
we do not want cost to get in the
way of going to this wonderful event.

LET'S
MAKE THIS
HAPPEN—
TOGETHER!



WE WILL BE DOING
FUNDRAISING
FOR THIS EVENT!

UP FIRST: OUR PIZZA FUNDRAISER!



*Thanks be to God for this opportunity to
gather and grow in faith!*



Meet your Council Member

My name is Kelly Hirn and I've been a member of our amazing church since 2011 when my now husband and I were in search of a church community to be part of when we moved to the area. One of the things that drew me into St John's was the openness. Having not grown up in faith and raised to question everything, I was inquisitive about every tradition, practice, and small things other people seemed to just get or take for granted. Every question was met with openness, love, and just like the jokes about Sunday School questions, it all eventually came back to, because Jesus loves us.

Pete and I are bringing up 3 rowdy and inquisitive boys in the same church with now even more energy for the spiritual growth of our young people with Pastor Maggie, the Education Committee, and since becoming St John Immanuel. Outside of Sunday School, Youth Group, and Council; I am chasing the boys, growing a business, training for various runs and my 2nd triathlon, serving on the Board of Maple Grove School, and snuggling my 1-year-old lab.

I am so blessed to be part of St John Immanuel and even more so to be able to serve the congregation as President of the Council.



HEGGIE'S PIZZA

Youth Fundraiser!



We're raising money to support our youth programs, events, and activities.

Your support makes a huge difference!

Thank you for helping our youth grow in faith and fellowship!

UPCOMING EVENTS



Youth Gathering in Minneapolis
June 28 to July 2, 2027

☆ **OUR GOAL:** ☆
350 PIZZAS

Reaching our goal will help ensure the success of this fundraiser and provide important funds for our youth activities throughout the year.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE



Ask family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and anyone who loves great pizza to support our youth!



Collect payment when taking orders. Checks or cash are accepted.



Turn in your order form and payment by October 12.

Every pizza sold helps! ♥

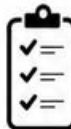
⋮ Thank you for supporting our youth! ⋮

IMPORTANT DATES



ORDER DATES

August 30 to
October 12



ORDER DUE DATE

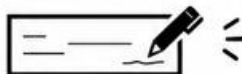
October 12



DELIVERY DATE

October 28

PAYMENT INFORMATION



Checks should be made payable to:

St. John Immanuel

Youth Pizza Fundraiser – We're raising money to support our youth programs, events, and activities. Your support makes a huge difference!!! Thank you for helping our youth grow in faith and fellowship! Please see flyers and order forms in the Narthex for details!



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: Kelly Hirn – 715-216-4352; hirn.kelly@gmail.com

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

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

Secretary: Patti Busche – 715-571-0914; busche1240@msn.com

Trustee: Ryan Landwehr – 715-574-8911; ryanlandwehr@aol.com

Trustee: Joe Duginski – 715-650-2361; duginuthouse@msn.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; gregorynlinda@gmail.com

Worship: Holly Westaby – 715-218-7184; hollylocks@msn.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.



09/02 Nancy Frostman
 09/02 Sue Harris
 09/03 Taylen Augustine
 09/03 Timothy Mielki
 09/04 Mindy Arndt
 09/04 Croy Sala
 09/06 Easton Voigt
 09/07 Greg Gruenewald
 09/09 Hailey Cole
 09/09 Jason Loos
 09/10 Bonnie Dern
 09/10 Marla Harris
 09/11 Amy Loos
 09/12 Brian Nowak
 09/12 Tre Swemke
 09/13 Adam Doede
 09/13 Colter Grueneberg
 09/13 Carter Grueneberg
 09/14 Tania Myszk
 09/14 Addilynn Van Der Geest
 09/15 Greg Melander
 09/16 Patricia Luce

09/16 Jackson Mueller
 09/16 Chad Walter
 09/18 Virginia Kirsch
 09/20 Eleanor Grueneberg
 09/20 Pete Hirn
 09/21 Jessica Switlick
 09/22 Heather Gilles
 09/23 Roger Knight
 09/23 Mitch Lubecke
 09/23 Frederick Poeske
 09/23 Kelsi Seubert
 09/24 Douglas Doede
 09/24 Douglas Luce
 09/25 Mandy Herning
 09/27 Julie Cole
 09/27 Hunter Landrath
 09/29 Gary Anderson
 09/29 Brandon Lauersdorf
 09/29 Dale Nass
 09/29 Zachary Voelker
 09/30 Sharon Kilinski
 09/30 Kathryn Knox

09/08 Eugene & Kelly Dehnel
 09/08 Mike & Sharon Kilinski
 09/14 Tim & Ann Ohrmundt
 09/18 Jerome & Deb Klug
 09/19 Joshua & Brooke Howe
 09/20 Michael & Tara Pasholk
 09/21 Jacob & Jessica Pierschalla
 09/23 Dan & Mindy Arndt
 09/26 Bill & Jennifer Schwede
 09/28 Wayne & Kristin Kallio
 09/28 Roger & Susan Knight
 09/29 Brec & Rachel Ohrmundt
 09/30 Josh & Ciera Grueneberg



*******Parking Lot Envelopes*******

Thank you for your continued generosity and support of our parking lot project. If you would like to contribute, you can give using **Parking Lot Envelopes** or through **Vanco** by selecting the "**Parking Lot Donations**" tile.

Parking lot envelopes will be given to those who request them. Please complete the "Parking Lot Envelopes" form on golden paper (in your mailbox) and place it in Ann's inbox on her office door.

Using parking lot envelopes helps the counters.

A gift of just \$1 a day can help us reach our goal and provide a parking lot that is safe, accessible, and welcoming to all who gather here.

Sunday School / Confirmation Schedules

2026 – 2027



September 2026

Sunday School

- 09/13 Rally Sunday
- 09/20 Philip and the Ethiopian
- 09/27 Saul to Paul

Confirmation Schedule

- 09/2 Introductory Meeting
- 09/9 Class
- 09/13 Rally Sunday + Blessing of the Backpacks + Potluck
- 09/16 Class
- 09/23 Class
- 09/30 Class



Attendance Report - Sundays

	2026	2025
Average Weekly/June	78	67
Average Weekly/July	84	67
Average Weekly/August	84	76
Average Weekly/Year-To-Date	108	87



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 Immanuel.

Jim Leffin Primrose 2100 Townline Rd Apt. 217 Wausau, WI 54403	Marlene Opichka Renaissance Sr. Living 4602 Barbican Ave. #105 Weston, WI 54476	Harley Goetsch Rennes Health/Rehab Ctr. 4810 Barbican Avenue Weston, WI 54476
Alene Howe Acorn Hill Apartment 430 Orbiting Dr. #19 Mosinee, WI 54455	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
Jeff Groethe Riverview Tower 500 Grand Ave. Wausau, WI 54401	Dorothy Westfall 4205 Fleet Dr. Wausau, WI 54401	Marlene Bahr 238456 N 84th Ave. Wausau, WI 54401
Judy Blanchfield Mt. View Care Center of Wausau 2400 Marshall Street, Rm #4007 Wausau, WI 54403	Joan Bonstead Mount View Care Center 2400 Marshall Street Suite B Wausau, WI 54403	Ann Kurth 2806 Polzer Drive Wausau, WI 54401
Jeannette Petterson 905 E Grant Street, #10 Marshfield, WI 54449	Thelma Bursik Primrose Retirement Community 2100 Townline Rd, Apt #101 Wausau, WI 54403	Carol Fitzke Wood Aven 1821 N 4th Ave #311b Wausau, WI 54401





Confirmation Registration now open!! Please go to our website under Education to register for the 2026 – 2027 School year. The QR Code will take you right to the page. <https://stjohnwausau.org/education/confirmation-classes/>



Wednesday, September 2nd at 6:30 p.m. Confirmation Orientation! All first and second year students are required to attend this informative meeting with one parent.

Sunday School Registration is now open! See our website for details!

<https://stjohnwausau.org/education/sunday-school/> The QR code will take you right to the page.



Sunday, September 13th Rally Sunday, Blessing of the Backpacks, Revenge of the Water Balloons & Potluck! Join us this year on Rally Sunday for a fun filled Worship Service & Fellowship. Bring a favorite dish to pass! Sign-up in the Narthex!

Sunday, September 13th Noisy offering! Bring your coins (bills also accepted 😊).

This noisy offering will go to: “**Fuel For the Future** – has a mission to raise money to help with weekend food insecurities for over 4,400 kids in Marathon County along with paying off school lunch debt which is projected to reach \$30,000 for the Wausau School District. This fundraiser works closely with Blessings In A Backpack” - Noisy offering will be the 2nd Sunday of the month. Money will be donated **quarterly**

Monday, September 14th Book Club at 6:30 p.m. Will discuss “*Sandwich*” by Catherine Newman & “*Beneath A Scarlet Sky*” by Mark Sullivan.

Sunday, September 27th WORSHIP IS @ 10 AM! Chili Dinner & Raffle to

follow. Sign-up in the Narthex for chili donations needed. We are also in need of raffle donations. Please bring your donations early to help boost ticket sales. Make sure to check out the beautiful quilt hanging in the Narthex. Will you be the lucky winner at the raffle?

Please bring all donations to St. John's on or before Sunday, September 6th Ticket sales will start Sunday, September 13 (Rally Sunday). Any questions, please call or text Linda Graveen 715-573-7739.

Endowment Fund Is there an item for St. John Immanuel that would be useful to many? Is there a wonderful St. John Immanuel group/committee that could benefit from additional funds to continue their ministry? Endowment Fund Grant Request Forms for 2026 are available in the narthex . Please submit to the church office between August 1, 2026 and September 30, 2026. The total amount available this year is \$7,442.00. All requests will be reviewed and approved disbursements will be made after October 1, 2026. Please contact Patti Busche if you have any questions.

Parking Lot Update: Thank you to everyone who participated in our parking lot discussions. The congregation overwhelmingly approved Option 4: rebuilding all existing parking lots and adding the westward expansion. More details can be found in the Summer Newsletter, available in the Narthex, online, and via email. As we move forward, we invite households to consider pledging **\$1 per day** toward this project. We recognize that some can give more and others less, and we trust God to provide through the generosity of this congregation. Thank you for helping create a safe and welcoming space for all. Donations may be made using Parking Lot envelopes (request them by completing the gold form in your mailbox) or through Vanco on our website by selecting the **Parking Lot** fund.

Please Note: *This is a very large project for the church and as a Council we're doing our due diligence to ensure we serve the congregation, steward our funds, and protect the church as a whole. If you have specific questions or concerns I'm happy to bring them to the Council for you or you are more than welcome to join a Council meeting.*

Waypost is Closing See flyers for details, located in the Narthex.

Jan Petterson had a total hip replacement surgery and will be going to rehab after the hospital release. If anyone would like to send a card her address is:
Jan Petterson, 409 E Grant St #10, Marshfield, WI 54449.

Kwik Trip Gift Cards Sign-up in the Fellowship Hall or on our website! Help support St. John Immanuel with Kwik Trip gift cards!



Do you like Texas Roadhouse?

Enjoy a meal on a Sunday and earn money back to St. John Immanuel!

Bring our church bulletin, turn it into your server, and St. John Immanuel will receive 10% back from your food sales!

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.



***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
St. John Office: (715) 675-6950***

Office Hours:

Monday 5:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Thursday 5:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Or by appointment

Cell Phone: 1(608) 345-9616

E-mail: Pastor.maggie.westaby@gmail.com

E-mail: stjohnwausau@gmail.com

Web Address: stjohnwausau.org