



Sunday, September 27th 2026
18th Sunday After Pentecost
10:00 a.m.

St. John Immanuel Lutheran Church

Reverend Maggie Westaby

5304 N 44th Ave

Wausau, Wisconsin 54401

Web Address: stjohnwausau.org

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

Email: stjohnwausau@gmail.com



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

WELCOME & CALL TO WORSHIP

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who pours love into our hearts and healing upon the earth. **Amen.**

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

Let us confess our sins to the One who gathers us in grace and gives life abundantly.

Holy God, you fill the earth with goodness and gather us together in your love, yet we confess that we do not always live with grateful and generous hearts. We hold too tightly to what we have, overlook the needs of our neighbors, and forget that all we have is a gift from you. Forgive us. Turn our hearts toward one another, renew us in your grace, and help us bear the fruits of your love, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Beloved people of God: God's grace is abundant, God's table has room, and God's mercy is more than enough. Through Jesus Christ, † your sins are forgiven. You are gathered in love, renewed in grace, and sent to share the goodness of God.

Thanks be to God.

GATHERING HYMN

Shall We Gather at the River



- 1 Shall we gath - er at the riv - er, where bright an - gel feet have trod,
- 2 On the mar - gin of the riv - er, wash - ing up its sil - ver spray,
- 3 Ere we reach the shin - ing riv - er, lay we ev - 'ry bur - den down;
- 4 Soon we'll reach the shin - ing riv - er, soon our pil - grim - age will cease;



with its crys - tal tide for - ev - er flow - ing by the throne of God?
we will walk and wor - ship ev - er, all the hap - py gold - en day.
grace our spir - its will de - liv - er, and pro - vide a robe and crown.
soon our hap - py hearts will quiv - er with the mel - o - dy of peace.



Yes, we'll gath - er at the riv - er, the beau - ti - ful, the beau - ti - ful riv - er;



gath - er with the saints at the riv - er that flows by the throne of God.

Text: Robert Lowry, 1826–1899
Music: HANSON PLACE, Robert Lowry

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Gracious God,

In this season of harvest, you gather us together and call us to lives of love and service. Turn our hearts toward you and toward one another. Give us the mind of Christ, that our faith may take root in our actions, our hands may bring comfort, and our lives may bear the fruit of generosity and compassion for all in need; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING OF THE QUILTS

You are invited to extend out a hand to join in the blessing of the quilts.

God, our neighbors around the world are in need of hope. Your Spirit is a mighty force; your whispers of hope bring light into the world. Open our hearts and hands to see your presence in our neighborhoods and across the world.

God, we give you thanks for the pieces of fabric, thread, sewing machines, and all tools used in these quilts. May their presence be a sign of hope, and may these quilts wrap our neighbors in unending love.

God, we give thanks for all the hands that fashioned hope into a quilt, for the hands that collected and sorted, for the hands that continually open wider so that no one feels left out.

God, be with our neighbors who will receive these gifts. May they be wrapped in love, may they taste your goodness, may they touch signs of your hope. Whether or not we know their names or where they live, they are our neighbors, our siblings in Christ.

Recognizing God's abundant hope, go and be a sign of hope to our neighbors near and far: offering hands to hold, sweet scents of justice, and a feast of God's goodness.

In the name of the Father, + the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.



READING: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

The word of the Lord came to me: What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, “The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge”? As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins who shall die. Yet you say, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed, they shall die. Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. Yet the house of Israel says, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God. Turn, then, and live.

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God

Psalm 25:1-9

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me.

Let none who look to you be put to shame; rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous.

Show me your ways, O Lord, and teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.

Remember, O Lord, your compassion and love, for they are from everlasting.

Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions; remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your goodness, O Lord.

You are gracious and upright, O Lord; therefore you teach sinners in your way.

You lead the lowly in justice and teach the lowly your way.

Word of God. Word of Life. **Thanks be to God**

READING: Philippians 2:1-13

If, then, there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation from love, any partnership in the Spirit, any tender affection and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, assuming human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death - even death on a cross. Therefore God exalted him even more highly and gave him the name that is above every other name, so that at the name given to Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence but much more now in my absence, work on your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Word of God. Word of Life. **Thanks be to God**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (page 205)

Alleluia! Lord and Savior: open now your saving word. Let it burn like fire within us; speak until our hearts are stirred. Alleluia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.

GOSPEL: Matthew 21:23-32

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why, then, did you not believe him?’ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for all regard John as a prophet.” So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. “What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ He answered, ‘I will not,’ but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same, and he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him, and even after you saw it you did not change your minds and believe him.” The Gospel of The Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

Blessed Assurance



- 1 Bless-ed as-sur-ance, Je-sus is mine! Oh, what a fore-taste of glo-ry di-vine!
- 2 Per-fect sub-mis-sion, per-fect de-light, vi-sions of rap-ture now burst on my sight;
- 3 Per-fect sub-mis-sion, all is at rest; I in my Sav-ior am hap-py and blest,



Heir of sal-va-tion, pur-chase of God, born of his Spir-it, washed in his blood.
an-gels de-scend-ing bring from a-bove ech-oes of mer-cy, whis-pers of love.
watch-ing and wait-ing, look-ing a-bove, filled with his good-ness, lost in his love.

Refrain



This is my sto-ry, this is my song, prais-ing my Sav-ior all the day long:



this is my sto-ry, this is my song, prais-ing my Sav-ior all the day long.

Text: Fanny J. Crosby, 1820–1915

Music: ASSURANCE, Phoebe P. Knapp, 1830–1908

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Responding to “Hear us, O God,” with “**Your mercy is great.**”

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Everything we have is a gift from God. As autumn colors the trees and the earth yields its harvest, we are reminded of God’s abundant grace—gifts gathered and shared, are like baskets filled from the harvest. With grateful hearts, we return a portion of what we have received, trusting God to work through them.



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GIVE THANKS

Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks to the Holy One, give thanks because he's given Jesus Christ, his Son. Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks to the Holy One, give thanks because he's given Jesus Christ, his Son. And now let the weak say, "I am strong," let the poor say, "I am rich," because of what the Lord has done for us. And now let the weak say, "I am strong," let the poor say, "I am rich," because of what the Lord has done for us. Give thanks!

OFFERING PRAYER

O God, maker of heaven and earth,

Your steadfast love embraces all creation. You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth and bring forth its bounty. Receive these offerings and use them to bring your love into the world. Through Christ our Lord we pray. **Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (page 207)

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heav'n and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever & ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

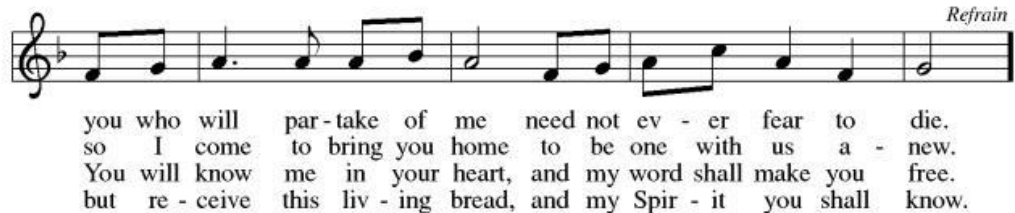
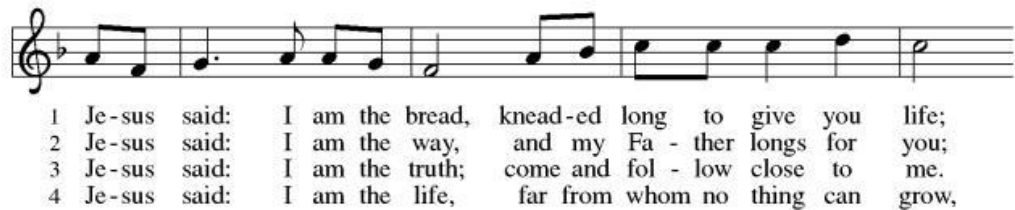
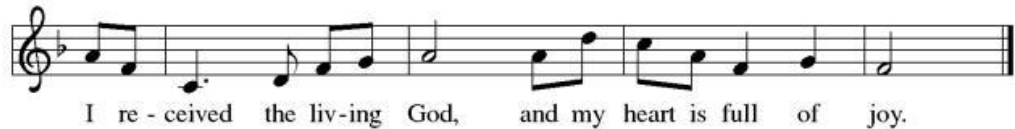
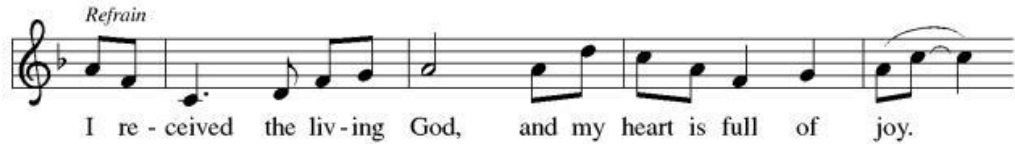
As autumn colors unfold and leaves fall in a tapestry of color, we are reminded that seasons change, yet God’s love endures forever. As the harvest is gathered in to nourish us through the winter, we remember that God continues to sustain us through every season. At this table of abundance, Christ gathers us in every season of life—in moments of plenty and in times of letting go, in the beauty of change and in the promise of renewal. Here there is bread for the journey, wine for the soul, and grace for every turning of the year. Here Christ gathers us together, like many grains made into one loaf and many grapes into one cup. This is Christ’s table, and all are welcome here.

LAMB OF GOD (page 154)

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

COMMUNION HYMNS

I Received the Living God



Text: Anonymous
Music: LIVING GOD, Anonymous

What a Friend We Have in Jesus



1 What a friend we have in Je - sus, all our sins and griefs to bear!
2 Have we tri - als and temp - ta - tions? Is there trou - ble an - y - where?
3 Are we weak and heav - y - lad - en, cum - bered with a load of care?



What a priv - i - lege to car - ry ev - 'ry - thing to God in prayer!
We should nev - er be dis - cour - aged—take it to the Lord in prayer.
Pre - cious Sav - ior, still our ref - uge—take it to the Lord in prayer.



Oh, what peace we of - ten for - feit; oh, what need - less pain we bear—
Can we find a friend so faith - ful who will all our sor - row share?
Do your friends de - spise, for - sake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer.



all be - cause we do not car - ry ev - 'ry - thing to God in prayer!
Je - sus knows our ev - 'ry weak - ness—take it to the Lord in prayer.
In his arms he'll take and shield you; you will find a so - lace there.

Text: Joseph Scriven, 1820–1886

Music: CONVERSE, Charles C. Converse, 1832–1918

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God of life,

We give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls, reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey. Through the body and blood of your Son, may we become Christ's body in the world, bearing witness to your love for all creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING

May the God who gathers us in love turn your hearts toward all that gives life.
May Christ, who came among us as a servant, give you willing hands and generous hearts.

May the Spirit send you forth to comfort, to serve, to share, and to love.
And as the earth yields its harvest, may your lives bear the fruits of God's grace.
Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and always.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN

I Love to Tell the Story



1 I love to tell the sto - ry of un - seen things a - bove,
2 I love to tell the sto - ry: how pleas - ant to re - peat
3 I love to tell the sto - ry, for those who know it best



of Je - sus and his glo - ry, of Je - sus and his love.
what seems, each time I tell it, more won - der - ful - ly sweet!
seem hun - ger - ing and thirst-ing to hear it like the rest.



I love to tell the sto - ry, be - cause I know it's true;
I love to tell the sto - ry, for some have nev - er heard
And when, in scenes of glo - ry, I sing the new, new song,



it sat - is - fies my long-ings as noth - ing else would do.
the mes - sage of sal - va - tion from God's own ho - ly word.
I'll sing the old, old sto - ry that I have loved so long.

Refrain



I love to tell the sto - ry; 'twill be my theme in glo-ry



to tell the old, old sto - ry of Je - sus and his love.

Text: Katherine Hankey, 1834–1911

Music: HANKEY, William E. Fischer, 1849–1936

DISMISSAL Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace. **Thanks be to God.**

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Welcome to all! Please remember to silence pagers and cell phones.

To those who are visiting: Welcome to St. John Immanuel and thank you for joining us! You are welcome to sign our registry in the narthex.

Holy Communion is celebrated every Sunday. All are welcome to Christ's Table.

Reminder! If you are in need of Pastoral care, or if you or a loved one is in the hospital and would like a visit from Pastor Maggie, please contact St. John Immanuel (715) 675-6950

Food Basket. Each week you are invited to bring **non-perishable grocery** items to be given to a local food pantry. Place your gift in the *Shopping Cart*.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wednesday at 8:30 a.m. Quilters meet! (Or whatever time works for you) They will be finishing quilts in preparation for the upcoming deadline (first Saturday in October). You don't need to be able to sew on a sewing machine. Come join us and see what we do!

Sunday, September 27th WORSHIP IS @ 10 AM! Chili Dinner: THANK YOU to everyone who donated chili ingredients, desserts, & fun prizes!! All proceeds from the Chili Dinner will support our Youth Fund. All proceeds from the raffle ticket sales will support Community Dinners that provides meals for people in need in our community.

Monday, September 28th at 6:30 p.m. Adult Study Chapters 6 – 7 of the Book of Acts.

Sunday, October 4th at 10:30 a.m. Youth Gathering Meeting Calling all 8th – 12th graders! Anyone interested or curious about going to the Youth Gathering in Minneapolis summer of 2027. This will be an information session! If you can't make the meeting and want to go to the gathering, please let Pastor Maggie know.

Wednesday, October 7th Youth Group High school students are invited to attend our first Youth Group meeting on Wednesday, October 7th 6:30pm-7:30pm. Please sign-up on the bulletin board in the Narthex if you plan on joining us!

Sunday, October 11th Noisy offering! Bring your coins (bills also accepted 😊). This noisy offering will go to: **“Youth Gathering – We're raising money to support our youth programs, events, and activities. Thank you for helping our youth grow in faith!”** Noisy offering will be the 2nd Sunday of the month. Money will be donated quarterly.

Tuesday, October 13th Pumpkin Carving for Calvary's Luminary Fest Our middle and high school students are invited to carve at 6:30pm-7:30pm at St. John Immanuel. Please sign-up on the bulletin board in the Narthex if you plan on carving! We will be joined by youth from St. Andrews ELCA in Rib Mountain, and all carved pumpkins will be donated to the Annual Fall Luminary Fest at Calvary Lutheran Church ELCA in Merrill. Calvary's Fall Luminary Fest is Fri, Oct 16th and Sat Oct 17th from 5pm-9pm. Hundreds of carved pumpkins will light up their 3/4 mile trail. Free to the public.

Monday, October 26th at 6:30 p.m. Book Club *Theo of Golden* by Allen Levi.

Tuesday, December 8th at 5:45 p.m. Calling all ladies! The Sisterhood Gathering is right around the corner. The sign-up sheet is in the Narthex with additional details.

Thursday, December 17th at 5:30 p.m. Candlelit Shepherds Meal. Save the date! More information to come.

Monday, December 21st at 6:30 p.m. Blue Christmas Service A prayerfully cultivated service for those who have lost loved ones, and for those who find the holidays to be a lonely time.

June 28th – July 2nd 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering 8th to 12th graders fall of 2026, we need to know your commitment by November 8th. Please see flyer for more details.

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 information in the Narthex for details!

Maine School Snack Drive Maine Elementary is looking for our help with donations of snacks to help assist students who are unable to bring their own. Approved snack list: *Fruit pouches, original potato chips, most fruit snacks, fruit leathers, or fruit bars, Skinny pop or Boom Chicka Pop Popcorn, beef sticks or jerky, dried fruits (raisins, mango, etc.), Enjoy Life, Made Good, or Blake's brand snacks, and or Veggie Straws or veggie chips.* Your help will be greatly appreciated! Any questions please reach out to Ann Ohrmundt at stjohnwausau@gmail.com.

Calling all current college students! - Did you know St. John Immanuel now offers scholarships for college? St. John Immanuel is pleased to announce scholarship applications are now open until **Sunday, November 1, 2026** for current college students. Visit <https://stjohnwausau.org/education/scholarships/> for information and application materials. Not yet a college student? Keep watching for further updates.

Parking Lot Update: Please see Flyer in the Narthex for updated information.

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!

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

Live Streaming and Photography Notice. When you enter St. John Immanuel Lutheran Church, 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.

Coming This Week @ St. John Immanuel September 27th – October 4th

Today – Sunday, September 27th

10:00 a.m. Sunday Worship

11:15 a.m. Chili Dinner & Raffle

No Sunday School

Monday, September 28th

6:30 p.m. Adult Bible Study – Book of Acts Chapters 6 & 7

Wednesday, September 30th

8:30 a.m. Quilters Meet

6:30 p.m. Confirmation Class

Thursday, October 1st

5:30 p.m. Bell Choir

6:30 p.m. Council Meeting

Sunday, October 4th

9:00 a.m. Sunday Worship

10:15 a.m. **Coffee Hour / Sunday School – An Angel Frees Peter

****Donations from Coffee hour will go towards a new refrigerator in our Fellowship Hall Kitchen.**