



Illinois Lutheran High School, Junior High and Elementary

Illinois Lutheran Schools provide quality, Christian education to students of the Church and community and the world, nurturing and reaching souls for time and eternity.

Walking Forward in Faith

For this school year, we have been focusing on the theme "Forward in Faith" which has encouraged us to stay focused on the work and mission of Illinois Lutheran Schools. It has reminded us how important it is for Christian education to continue to advance in our community and beyond for the sake of the Kingdom. This effort does not simply rely on one or a few people, but a whole community of Christians to carry out the work to ultimately meet our goals. Over the past few years, we have been able to accomplish a number of things by God's grace while navigating through significant challenges. The future continues to promise more blessings and challenges as there is still much more work to be done. As always, we find confidence that God's will always perseveres. What a blessing it is to know that truth as we continue to walk together Forward in Faith in the years to come!

Next year, the faculty and staff will look a bit different than it did this year. Mr. Josiah Willitz and Mrs. Rebecca Jahns have taken calls into new ministries in Michigan and Wisconsin, respectively. Ms. Amanda Ventura has decided to step aside as our Spanish teacher so that she may move closer to her childhood home with her three children. Mrs. Lisa Rick will temporarily put her ministry on hold as God has so graciously blessed the Rick's with a child due in late August or September. Finally, we are thankful that God has so richly blessed Mr. Scott Sievert with 40 years of ministry to the WELS, much of which has been in service to Illinois Lutheran. These faithful servants will be missed, and we wish them God's blessings into their next chapters in their lives.

God also continues to provide us with new called workers to continue the gospel ministry that has been ongoing for more than 150 years here in Crete. Mrs. Kelly Henning will transition from the public school

system into our full day preschool classroom. Mr. Jonathan Witte will take over our music department as he and his wife, Carly, relocate here from La Crosse, Wisconsin. God has also blessed us with a new elementary school principal in Mr. Zach Seeger. Mr. Seeger, his wife Becky, and their three sons will come to us this summer from South Carolina. Mrs. Seeger will be our 6th grade teacher. Mrs. Laura Biesterfeld has accepted our call to teach 3rd grade. Also, after Martin Luther College's assignment day, we were blessed with three new graduates. Mr. Conor Kopp will teach high school English, Mr. Caleb Paul will teach high school Spanish, and Mr. Noah Van Arnold will teach 5th grade. May God grant them an extra measure of passion towards the gospel ministry as they begin to walk Forward in Faith with us.

Finally, I will be departing this summer to begin training new teachers for ministry at MLC. The three years God has granted me with you has been truly a blessing for my family and me. It has been a privilege and an honor to serve in a ministry that has been around in one shape or another since the 1800s. I will continue to walk together with you Forward in Faith in a new position which will hopefully still allow me to have an impact here in Crete. It is my prayer that God continues to bless our churches and school system as overwhelmingly as he has for so long. Watching ILS achieve its short and long term goals will be a pleasure for me; however, as long as our school continues to preach the gospel to children and their families and ultimately focus on "Time and Eternity," the greatest goal will be met.

Let's continue walking Forward in Faith for the sake of God's Kingdom! God bless you all!

Duane Vance, Executive Director 2020-2023
Illinois Lutheran Schools

Varsity Cheer

Coach: Rebecca Jahns

"We're Back!" That's right. With 7 returning cheerleaders, our team truly was back this year. Returning members included this year's co-captains, junior Kailey Van Es and Sophomore Eliza Jahns, Brittani Richards, Mikah Harris, Camryn Hall, Madelyn Rodrigues, and Hälle McBride. The team welcomed senior Nichole Alexander, junior Marisol Tafolla, and freshman Ava Dulaitis. This group of girls took on learning some new cheers, including the group favorite "We're Back" due to the sharp precision this cheer necessitated, and the girls perfected. In addition, the returning girls taught and guided the new cheerleaders the whole season.

This strong team of ten, even while plagued with illness and injury, performed in the Crete Country Christmas Parade for the second year, wowed fans with a full dance routine, and executed a joint routine for Senior Night/Elementary Night in January which featured all the elementary, junior high and varsity cheerleaders. With two strong tumblers and great dedication from all the cheerleaders, every girl improved their skills this season throwing quadruple back handsprings, round off back handspring back tucks, walkovers, handsprings, and more.

This year, the team progressed in their stunting as well, adding extensions and basket tosses to their skills. The team's greatest achievement goes back to the team objective of getting the crowd excited and supporting our basketball teams, which the girls did with great enthusiasm and persistence.



Book Fair Excitement

Librarian: Stacey Sievert

Every year the children look forward to the school book fair. This year was no exception. There were many books to choose from, such as:

Bad Guys by Aaron Blabey, The Sour Grape by Jory John, The BabySitters Club graphic novels by Ann Martin, Year in Sports 2023, Dairy of a Roblox Pro Monster Escape by Ari Avatar, Escape for East Berlin by Andy Marino, Never After: The Thirteenth Fairy, by Melissa De La Cruz, Freestyle by Gale Galligan, I'm a Frog by Mo Willems, Itty-Bitty Kitty Corn by Shannon Hale and There Was An Old Lady Who Swallowed the A B C s by Lucille Colandro.

I am pleased to say that our book fair was a success. Many children were able to purchase books for their libraries at home. A big thank you to the many people who helped and supported this year's book fair.



Junior High Boys Basketball

Head Coach: Peter Oldenburg

Assistant Coaches: Mike Potempa & Peter Shi

Our boys were able to compete again this year. We had some tough away games against Dolton Roosevelt, Calumet City Schrum, Beecher, Bishop McNamara, and Chicago Heights Middle School and we played in three tournaments.



We were able to dominate portions of these games and represent well while working through pressure situations and manage end of game scenarios. Even though we don't necessarily care about wins and losses, we again cruised through our conference and won the conference tournament while only losing one home game overall.

We worked on building a winner's mentality, staying true to our culture, and we did things the right way. We had as many as 18 boys involved and saw some really nice growth. Along the way, we talked about mentor leadership and continued to encourage our boys to influence others while supporting our 4th -12th grade basketball system.



Junior High Cheerleading

Head Coach: Kyle Wallace

The A Team Cheer squad had a jam packed season. This year's team consisted of seven 7th & 8th grade ladies - many of whom were new to cheerleading and really stepped up to learn jump technique, a catalogue of new cheers and various stunts.

In addition to cheering at all of the A Team boys' basketball home games, the squad was also able to travel to an away game to cheer on our



Chargers. We also enjoyed teaming up with the B Team squad and Varsity squad to represent Illinois Lutheran at the Crete Country Christmas parade. The squads also joined forces to put on a fabulous half time performance during "Elementary School Night" at a Varsity Basketball game in January.

The season culminated in an exciting pep rally for the elementary and junior high kids as well as cheering on our Chargers to a conference tournament victory! Well done, A Team girls!



Varsity Boys Basketball

Head Coach: Nate Hinz

Assistant Coaches: Jeff Rick & Matt Wasson



This season was quite a challenge as we started the year with many young players that had to see a lot of playing time early in the year due to injuries and sickness to start the year off.

The boys learned how to compete from those early losses and started to play with some of the top teams in our conference.

By the end of the year, the boys were starting to put themselves in positions to win games, and they were successful at times; however, they let some games get away from them as well and finished with a 7-22 record for the year. The Chargers will lose 3 seniors for next year, but will reload with several returning players who saw a lot of minutes of varsity basketball. Kobe Johnson, Camden Matthias, and Sam Adeniran led the Chargers offensively, while Xavier Ojeda and Ethan Jolitz prided themselves on the defensive end to help stop the other teams from scoring and disrupting the offense by getting deflections.

B-Team Girls Basketball

Head Coach: Lisa Rick

The B-Team Girls Basketball Team had a wonderful season. The fifth and sixth grade team was a mixture of new and veteran players; however, all of the girls grew individually and as a team throughout the season.

The B-Team Girls finished their basketball season with a well-fought win. The B-Team Girls Basketball Team finished third place in the tournament and second place in the conference. Good work, ladies! Go Chargers!



Elementary Cheerleading

Head Coach: Amy Boomsma



experience for everyone, and we're already planning for next year! We hope to see you in July for our Cheer camp!

Charger B cheerleaders rocked the house again! This season was jam-packed with new experiences for the girls. Most notably, we were excited to participate in the first elementary night with the Junior High and Varsity squads. We got to do a choreographed dance and cheer during the game!

We also learned new cheers, stunts, and jumps and participated in the Crete Country Christmas. This season was a positive



High School Softball

Head Coach: David Kenyon
Assistant Coach: Scott Peters

ILHS softball wrapped up the 2023 season with 17 wins, the second-highest total in program history. The Chargers also finished 12-6 against River Valley Conference teams, ending third in the league. After defeating Grant Park 14-4, the team's successful season ended with a loss to fifth-ranked Marquette Academy in the regional championship.



Junior pitcher Kailey Van Es earned ICA Second-Team All-State honors, along with honorable mention Daily Southtown All-Area and first-team All-RVC. Kailey set multiple ILHS records, including single-season hits (50) and doubles (14) while collecting 11 wins in the circle. Senior Zoe Biesterfeld also received first-team All-RVC recognition, and sophomore Emma Nagle landed special mention All-RVC. The team chose core values of Knowledge, Attitude, Respect and Together, and those principles showed in their baserunning, fielding and support of each other. Thanks to seniors Zoe Biesterfeld, Ryleigh Peters and Kelsey Bruns for all of their contributions.

JV Boys Basketball



Head Coach:
Jeff Rick

The ILHS JV boys basketball team had a learning season this year. The JV boys ended

their season with a 3-18 record (1-7 in conference). Positive growth happened throughout the season as many games were very close. The team consisted of sophomores Michael Adeniran, Michael DeBoer, Asa Holland, Peyton Budlove, Makhi Allen, Josh Ramirez and freshmen Jace Danzy, Tolani Oladipupo, Jared Danzy, Caleb Sutherland, Langdon Oldenburg, Joe Brooks, and Aaron Rhodes.

The highlight of the season came from a close matchup against Families of Faith Christian Academy. The game was back and forth most of the time with the Chargers down by 4 at the end of the first half. The Chargers played with the Screaming Eagles and were still down by 4 going into the 4th quarter, yet some clutch free throws, layups, and key stops allowed the Chargers to finish out on top winning the game 34-28. Their determination showed great promise for Charger basketball. Thank you for the season, men!

A-Team Girls Basketball

Head Coach: Taryn Oldenburg

The Illinois Lutheran Junior High girls basketball team had another successful season this year! Even though being competitive and winning is a part of



sports, success isn't always measured by the number of wins. Success is also about trying something new, practicing hard and implementing what you have been taught. An example of a great accomplishment this season was a player new to basketball, working hard and listening to directions, learning the fundamentals and eventually earning a starting position. Another example of success this season was having players who have never scored a basket, learn proper form and score during a game. We thank God for this opportunity to play with a wonderful group of girls, building upon already strong friendships and learning about the great sport of basketball! Our lady Chargers should be very proud of their effort, hard work, positive attitudes and increasing their love for the game. We look forward to adding new players to the team and having another wonderful, competitive season!

High School Baseball

Head Coach: Dylan Kish
Assistant Coach: Jeff Rick



Illinois Lutheran baseball has had a long history of success. The past few years have not been a reflection of that success. In 2023, the Chargers found themselves back in a regional championship game and though they fell short of winning, the program has a lot of potential with high expectations going forward.

It was a season with a lot of ups and downs. That's the beauty of baseball. Adversity brings out the best in us and we saw that with the team this year. Juniors Jack Callejo, Zach Rodrigues and Tristan Biesterfeld all took huge steps forward in their development. Padraig Hurley was a standout freshman this year and the seniors all had career highs in performance across the board. We had some devastating losses during the season but this team constantly showed resilience and the ability to bounce back from a big blow.

As we say farewell to our seniors; Luke Latzke, Camden Matthias, Tony Trovato and Ethan Jolitz, we see a lot of promise with the upcoming freshman class and believe the groundwork the seniors and coaching staff laid this year will propel this program to another state title in the years to come.



B-Team Boys Basketball

Head Coach:
Rik McGathey

Another season has come and gone. We had a lot of ups and downs, but thankfully mostly

ups. The nine returning players set a high standard for the three new players. The team prided itself on a tough defense. We were able to hold a number of teams to under 15 points. On the scoring side, every player was able to contribute. The new players picked up the offense fairly quickly, so we were able to add new offensive plays and defenses.

Our pass first instead of dribble first frustrated our opponents as they were trying to keep up with our motion up and down the floor. A number of players have started to show great leadership and ownership of the team. The competition within the team was terrific, with five different starting lineups. Our practices were more intense than the games! Players started to team up with partners to work on skills.

Our assistant coaches provided steady tutorship and direction for the boys. We played for the tournament championship which is a great accomplishment. I reminded the boys that even though we didn't win, most people don't even get to play in a championship game. We all have a lot to be thankful for with a great and prosperous year. My thanks to the parents who supported the team.



High School Girls Basketball

Head Coach: Phil Adickes
Assistance Coaches: Chris Caldwell & Julie Schmidt

Back row: Madison Alexander, Ashlyn Gunderson, Kimberly Danielewicz, Aryanna O'Connor
 Front row: Julia Karl, Favour Sokoya, Alissia Sanchez

High School Drama



And that's a wrap! Emma! A Pop Musical by Eric Price wrapped up our high school drama season for 2022-2023. This musical was full of fun songs that had the whole cast grooving (even backstage). The students worked incredibly hard for two months to prepare for this show. To see them grow as actors and actresses was amazing. However, what was even more encouraging was to see them lift each other up, help those who were struggling, and make each other laugh when they were nervous for the performances. They grew together not only as a cast but also as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Not only did they make each other laugh behind the scenes, but they definitely made the audience laugh and groove along to the music with them. Before he performed his Elvis rendition at the Music & Arts night, we saw Sophomore Aiden Bozorov rock his heart out as popstar Frankie Churchill. This production saw the swan song performances of several seniors, Grace Atherton, Kristen Danielewicz, and Madelyn Italiano. We also recognize Leah Foley as another senior that we said a tearful farewell to, though she was not on the stage this time around in the spring. We thank everyone who supported these students in their endeavors in this production, and who continue to support ILHS drama.

High School Track & Field



Head Coach: Anita Willitz

**Assistant Coaches: Blaza Almendarez,
Jacob Lash, Katty Van Arnold**

The ILHS Charger Track and Field Team was back in action this spring for another season! Continuing to grow in size, this from 18 athletes in 2022 to 22 athletes in 2023. The track and field season that started in early February and went all the way through the middle of May held a lot of challenges but also a lot of success for these young athletes. Countless

personal records and improvements continued to show the growth and desire to get better from these 22 athletes.

The girls team this year consisted of two senior girls (our captains), juniors, sophomores. No freshman meant that this girls team did decrease in size just a bit, but grew greatly in experience. While the small numbers proved challenging at times when it came to team scores, each girl made a huge impact on this team. As a group, they set (or reset) 10 of the possible 17 school records. A few girls even came within just a few places of qualifying for state! We think that they have a great chance to make it in the future. While we will miss the two graduating seniors, our team leaders, we look forward to seeing what this core group of girls can do in the next couple years!

Our boys team grew immensely this year. From only seven boys last year to 12 this year, this young group of boys showed an incredible amount of growth over the season. Without any seniors, our one junior took control as the leader of this team and set an example for them to follow. The 11 freshman and sophomores learned a lot about track and field this year, and showed a lot of promise for the future. While this inexperienced team struggled to score points in big meets, they still set (or reset) 4 of 17 possible school records, and showed that this group will be very strong as they get older. With many or all of them returning, we look forward to seeing what they can achieve in the upcoming years! Overall, it was a wonderful season for the Chargers! These athletes scored more points than any team in Charger history, and we eagerly anticipate what they will achieve as they continue to run faster, jump higher, and throw farther!

Save the Date! Upcoming Events:

Monday, August 7 - High School Fall Sports Player/Parent/Coach Meeting (high school)

Tuesday, August 8 - Elementary School Backpack Night @ 2-4 PM & 5-6 PM (elementary school)
- 5th & 6th Grade Orientation @ 3:30 PM & 6:30 PM (elementary school)

Wednesday, August 9 - 7th & 8th Grade Parent & Student Orientation @ 6:30 PM (high school)

Thursday, August 10 - Freshman Student Orientation @ 9-11 AM (high school)

Wednesday, August 16 - First day of school!
- Kindergarten - 6th Grade EARLY RELEASE @ 11:15 AM
- Junior High & High School EARLY RELEASE @ 11:30 AM
- Preschool EARLY RELEASE @ 11:30 AM

Monday, August 28 - Elementary & Junior High Fall Sports Player/Parent/Coach Meeting (high school)

Monday, September 4 - Labor Day NO SCHOOL

Wednesday, September 6 - New Parent Religious Information Night @ 7 PM (high school)

Friday, September 8 - School Picture Day

Tuesday, September 12 - Charger Booster Association Meeting @ 6:30 PM (high school)

Tuesday, September 19 - Kindergarten - 6th Grade EARLY RELEASE @ 11:15 AM
- Junior High & High School EARLY RELEASE @ 11:30 AM
- Preschool EARLY RELEASE @ 11:30 AM

Friday, September 29 - Elementary School Grandparents Day
- Preschool - 6th Grade EARLY RELEASE @ 11:15 AM

Online School Calendar: ilhs.org/school-calendar/



Illinois Lutheran Schools

High School Campus - 1610 Main Street, Crete, IL 60417
Elementary Campus - 448 Cass Street, Crete, IL 60417

Illinois Lutheran High School & Junior High
Joe Archer, Principal & Senior Administrator
708.672.3262 • jearcher@ilhs.org

Illinois Lutheran Elementary School
Zach Seeger, Principal
708.672.5969 • zseeger@illinoislutheran.org

Visit us online at www.ilhs.org



Find us on
Facebook!

www.facebook.com/illinoislutheran

Publisher

ILS Public Relations Committee
Tom Danielewicz

Designer & Editor in Chief

Jessica Bushey

Image Credit

Image Group Photography LLC

© Copyright 2023 Illinois Lutheran
Schools. All Rights Reserved.