



St. John Lutheran Church

FREEDOM TOWNSHIP

16035 CO. RD. U • NAPOLEON, OH 43545

Serving Christ in Freedom

Worship • Stewardship • Mission

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Rev. Stephen J. Niermann, Pastor
Miss Tracy Germann, Principal

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THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

Sermon & Text: "His Arm Laid Bare" *Isaiah 52:10*

Children's Message: "Messengers of Peace"

Order of Service: *See printed Service Folder*

Hymns: 379 ~ 368 ~ 370 ~ 389 ~ 361, vs.4, ~ 364, vs.3 ~ 358, vs.13 ~ 389, vs.6 ~
[Communion: 380, 383] ~ 387

The Lord calls all of us to a new way of living under His wonderful grace in our Savior. If you are our guest, it is a pleasure to have you worshipping with us.

Please help us get to know who you are by filling out the Rite of Fellowship card from the pew rack in front of you and drop it in the baskets at the doors as you leave today.

A SAVIOR IS BORN



SERVING IN GOD'S HOUSE THIS MORNING

- ✘ Renee Petzoldt, Organist ✘ Garrison Kruse, Cayden Ruffer, *Acolytes* ✘
- ✘ Dave VonDeylen, Dennis Showman, Dean Badenhop, Rich Elling, *Ushers* ✘
- ✘ Lou Ann Rosebrock, Diane Von Deylen, *Altar Guild* ✘

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE THANK YOU – Last Sunday evening was a delightful time as the children of our church and school presented the good tidings of the Savior's birth. The children spoke and sang so wonderfully!

Thank you to everyone who ministered to the children in Jesus' name and helped them prepare for this service and present it. Thank you to our primary coordinators, Char Weber, Michelle Weddelman, Haley O'Neil, and Tracy Germann; and Andrea Oyer for lending her aid. Thank you Renee Petzoldt for all the practices you attended to help the children learn the music. Thank you Dan Wachtman and Nathan Nemoyer for your work at the sound board. Thank you to those who helped the little children add their voices to our worship, and to all others who quietly served to help the children. And thank you, parents and families, for having your child(ren) participate in this service and for permitting us time with them. One of the great benefits of the children's Christmas service is that by telling the Christmas story the children also learn the story – God's powerful word of life and salvation! *If you didn't get to attend the service, you can watch the recording any time which is archived on our YouTube channel, SJL SERVICES.*



| Date | Time | Activities |
|-------------|----------------|--|
| Today | 9:30 AM | Christmas Day Festival Service w/Communion; Offering: Home Fund |
| Mon. | 5:30 PM | <i>Bread From Heaven</i> Food Pantry distribution |
| Sun. | 9:00 AM | Communion Service with Installation of Church Officers |

MATTERS FOR PRAYER – Please keep these people in your prayers:

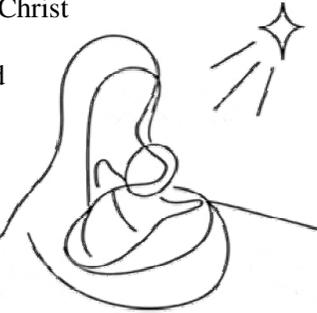
- ❖ *Melba Elling, Lorna Von Deylen, Norma Damman*, at Genacross – Napoleon
- ❖ *Lawrence Behrmann*, at Northcrest Nursing & Rehab
- ❖ *Military: Justin Atkinson, Jason Rohrs, Emily Niermann, Jared Dishop, Jordan Lange*
- ❖ *Sue Hurst and Dave Crandall*, health concerns related to cancer

— MERRY CHRISTMAS —

Greetings in Jesus' name, and welcome! On this Christmas Day, the day we celebrate the birth for our savior and Lord Jesus Christ, we turn to him for the comfort of peace. The world has so much turmoil, as does many of our day-to-day lives. But God gave us His Son to be the "Prince of Peace," and God bestows this peace upon his people gathered in worship as they receive His gifts of Word and Sacrament.

What we receive here today ***IS*** Christmas. The word "Christmas" is a combination of the words 'Christ' and 'Mass.' 'Mass' is the old Latin word for the service of Holy Communion. The 'Mass' that is celebrated on the day commemorating Christ's birth is the "Christ Mass" – hence our word, "Christmas." Just as Jesus came in humble flesh and in lowly manger, He comes to us here in the lowly means of bread and wine. Yet faith sees in these humble wrappings God's gift of salvation!

Without the 'Christ Mass,' is it really even Christmas? We are glad you're here to celebrate this most holy day in the house of God, and at His table. ***This IS*** Christmas!



SUNDAY ADULT BIBLE STUDY will not meet today or next Sunday on New Year's Day. We will resume the Sunday study, "Christians in a Woke World," on Sunday, January 8.

POINSETTIA PLANTS – If you ordered a poinsettia plant, it can be taken home after the Christmas Festival Service today. There will be plastic sleeves to protect them in the side Conference room. Thank you to those who purchased poinsettias to decorate the church during Christmas. Enjoy them!

WEDNESDAY CONFIRMATION CLASS will not meet on Wed., Dec. 28, during the Christmas break. We will resume classes in the New Year on Wed., Jan. 4, at 6:15 PM, on the regular schedule.

THANK YOU from the School Board to Mahnke Orchards (*Richard & Elaine*) for donating all the apples that were put in the Christmas Sacks and to the LYF for their help in filling the sacks with candy, fruit, and peanuts. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

LYDIA SCHROEDER GRADUATION – For the past four years our congregation has been supporting Lydia Schroeder as she pursued her education at Concordia University in Ann Arbor to be an LCMS Lutheran School Teacher. This past Sunday Lydia graduated and is now eligible to receive a call to serve the larger church in the teaching ministry. As a church and school that relies on synodically trained ministers to serve our congregation and school, it is a great thrill whenever we can send one of our own into the ministry.

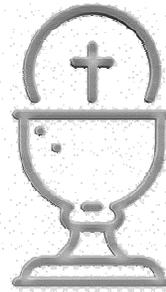


Your gifts to the *St. John Church Vocation Scholarship Fund* have been a tremendous help to Lydia, and today she is with us to offer her gratitude to the congregation, and to fill us in on what's happening next in her life. ***God bless you, Lydia, and give you many years of fruitful labor in the Lord's harvest!***

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION CHANGES - STARTING NEXT SUNDAY

The elders and church council, in discussions with the pastor, have decided to try a new approach for Communion Distribution starting next Sunday. The goals of the new procedure are:

- to restore the practice of giving us a little time to be still before the Lord's altar as we receive the Sacrament (*versus a continuously moving line*);
- to avoid using the steps so that most everyone can participate; and,
- to restore the common cup for those who wish to use it.



To these ends, the distribution of Holy Communion will happen as follows:

- Worshippers on both sides will form two lines in the center aisle, with 10 people or so in the line at all times.
- The first seven (*or so*) people in line will split left and right to form a single line (*a 'table' of 14 people*) on the carpeted area in front of the first chancel step. For a while there will be a line taped to the floor to help.
- This 'table' of communicants will receive the host (*bread*) from the Pastor, followed by assistants with the tray of individual cups, then the common cup.
- The 'table' will be dismissed, and split left and right to the outside aisles where individual cups can be deposited as usual, and to return to the pews.
- The communicants already in line will immediately fill in behind the previous 'table' to form the next 'table.' At the same time, more people can step into the lines in the aisle.

Ushers will be available to help us out for the first few times, but eventually we'd like to use this procedure without having ushers involved. This procedure is a hybrid of our previous and present distribution methods that we hope will be a blessing to us all. ***What does not change, of course, is that we receive in this Holy Supper the very body and blood of our Savior, given and shed for our forgiveness and for the assurance of our salvation!*** Let us know what you think!

2023 OFFERING BOXES AVAILABLE: With gratitude to God for the generous support of our members to the ministry of Word and Sacrament in this place, the 2023 offering envelopes are available today. Please pick yours up, and may God prosper the work of our hands and the giving of His people! If you did not receive a box of envelopes but would like one, please contact *Jerry Langenhop* (419-966-3473).

THE FLOWER CALENDAR for 2023 is posted in the narthex. If you wish to sign up for a certain Sunday to place flowers on the altar or the piano, sign your name on that Sunday and then about two weeks before that date, call *Nancy Glaser* at 419-906-0963 to let her know if you are getting your own flowers or if you want the Women of Freedom to take care of them. **The price for the flowers through the Women of Freedom is \$25.00.** Please remember that it is your responsibility to contact *Nancy Glaser*. Also, please contact the church office with the information for the bulletin before the week you are placing the flowers in church. This will insure that you are not forgotten or overlooked.

INSTALLATION OF CHURCH OFFICERS – We give thanks to God for everyone who submitted their names for nomination to our various church offices. Your servant hearts and willing spirits provide an example for us all! **Those who were elected or appointed to offices for the coming year will be installed into those offices on the first Sunday of the New Year, January 1st.**

Officers to be installed are: **President** – *Dan Wachtman*; **Vice President** – *vacant*;
Treasurer – *Cathy Gerken*; **Financial Trustee** – *Jim Hogrefe*; **Elders** – *Dennis Bockelman, Larry Gerken*; **Stewardship Board** – *Jenelle McCarthy, Rhonda Bockelman*;
Board of Education (installed to take office in July 2023) – *Ben Pescara, vacant*;
Alt. Delegate Syn – *Todd Hesterman*; **Secretary** – *Nicole Stier*; **Church Deacon** – *Greg Kehnast*; **Trustees** – *Scott Van Valkenburg, Eric Weller*; **Sunday School Supt.** – *Jenna Kehnast*; **Asst. Sunday School Supt.** – *Stephanie Damman*; **Cemetery Board** – *Todd Kruse (Kathy), Nick Sonnenberg, Doug Kossow*; **Cemetery Sexton** – *Ben Kruse*.

| FINANCIAL FACTS: | Home Fund | Synod & Missions | Building Fund |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------------|---------------|
| Weekly Need | \$9,792.78 | \$500.00 | \$961.54 |
| Rec'd 12/18/22 | \$27,193.82 | \$1,295.00 | \$640.00 |

ATTENDANCE: Sunday (12/18/22) Service: 140

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM (12/18/22): \$1,164.00 – SW Florida Hurricane Relief;
Attendance: 304

ADVENT SERVICE #3 (12-14-22): \$680.00 – Cherry Street Mission; Attendance: 41

PORTALS OF PRAYER booklets for January, February, and March are on the desk in the back of the church. Pick up a copy today!

FREEDOM FLOCK HELP: The Freedom Flock After School Program is looking for a person(s) to be an aide with our after school program a few days each week. It would be for three hours or less from 3 – 6 PM, (*depending how soon all the children are picked up*). This person must be 18 years old, have a high school diploma, and be willing to be FBI/BCI background checked. If you are interested, please contact the school office at 419-598-8702. This is a great chance for any high school seniors to complete their community service hours for the year.

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Food For Thought...

Who can add to Christmas?

The perfect motive is that God so loved the world!
The perfect gift is that He gave His only Son!

Corrie Ten Boom

