



# St. John Lutheran Church

FREEDOM TOWNSHIP

16035 CO. RD. U ♦ NAPOLEON, OH 43545

**Serving Christ in Freedom**  
*Worship • Stewardship • Mission*

March 10, 2024

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NO. 10

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

Church: 419-598-8961 Home: 419-598-8181  
School: 419-598-8702  
Church Website: [www.sjl.org](http://www.sjl.org)

## **FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT**

Sermon & Text: "Merciful, Not Mean" *Numbers 21:4-9*

Children's Sermon: "No More Hiding"

Order of Service: *Printed Service Folder*

Hymns: **544 ~ 588 ~ 571 ~ (Offering: 781) ~ 430**

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## **WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS**

*Welcome in the name of the Lord. We pray that through this time of stillness and song, prayer and proclamation, you may experience the Spirit of God at work in your life. May God richly bless your worship today! If you do not have a local church home, we extend a warm invitation to you to become a part of our church family. Please fill out the blue Rite of Fellowship card from the pew rack in front of you and drop it into the baskets at the doors as you leave today.*

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## **SERVING IN GOD'S HOUSE THIS MORNING**

- ✠ Bethann Gerken, *Pianist* ✠ Brayden Damman, Cayden Ruffer, *Acolytes* ✠  
✠ Denny Von Deylen, Jerry Short, David Badenhop, Dan Wiechers, *Ushers* ✠  
✠ Elaine Buenger, Teresa Weller, Deb Von Deylen, *Altar Guild* ✠

## **FLOWERS TODAY:**

- ♥ The flowers on the Altar today are in honor of the 40<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary of *Doug & Sandy Dietrich*, which is today, Sunday March 10<sup>th</sup>. Congrats to the Dietrich's...and many more!
- ♥ The flowers on the piano are in memory of *Hildegard "Kate" Ludeman*, who passed away one year ago today, March 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Java Joy TODAY!** We hope you can stop out in the front hallway after worship and spend a little time with one another while enjoying a cup of coffee and a delicious treat or two. Thank you to the **St. John School Board** for hosting Java Joy today.

Thank you to those who have signed up to host. If you, a group of you, or perhaps your church organization, would like to host, please sign up in the narthex! Hosting Java Joy need not cost you anything – money from the kitty is available to cover expenses. The donation box will be on the table each time to replenish the kitty.

In God's House This Week		Online church calendar: <a href="https://74058984.view-events.com">https://74058984.view-events.com</a>
Date	Time	Activities
Today	9:00 AM 10:20AM 11:15AM	<b>Worship Service with Communion following</b> <i>Java Joy</i> ; Adult Bible Study; Sunday School; “The Lamp” Confirmation Class Planning Meeting ( <i>see note</i> )
Tues.	8:35 AM 6:00 PM 7:00 PM	<b>School Chapel</b> Grief Support Ministry at the Youth & Family Center ( <i>ends at 7:30</i> ) Church Council Meeting
Wed.	10:00AM 5:45 PM 7:00 PM  8:00 PM	Women’s Lenten Bible Study ( <i>see note</i> ) Midweek Confirmation Class ( <i>until 6:45 PM</i> ) <b>Lenten Worship Service</b> ; Offering: <i>Lutheran Hour Broadcast</i> Acolyte: Evelyn Szabo Ushers: Denny Von Deylen, Jerry Short, David Badenhop, Dan Wiechers Altar Guild: Elaine Buenger, Teresa Weller, Deb Von Deylen Adult Choir Practice
Thurs.	6:30 AM	Men’s Lenten Bible Breakfast ( <i>see note</i> )
Fri.		End of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter Grading Period
Sun.	9:00 AM 10:20AM 4:00 PM	<b>Communion Service</b> Adult Bible Study; Sunday School LYF Meetings – Jr. Hi @ 4pm; High School @ 5pm ( <i>see bulletin note</i> )

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

- ❖ *Arlene Gerken, Melba Elling, and Norma Damman*, at Genacross – Napoleon
- ❖ *Lawrence Behrmann*, at Northcrest Nursing & Rehab
- ❖ Our Shut-Ins: *Irene Joost, Leona Durham, and Elaine Mahnke*
- ❖ Military: *Justin Atkinson, Jason Rohrs, Emily Carmon, Jared Dishop, Jordan Lange*
- ❖ *Alan Gruenhagen, Lowell Petzoldt, Sue Hurst, Dave Crandall*, dealing with health concerns related to cancer
- ❖ *Rozella Gruenhagen*, transferred to Genacross for continued care
- ❖ *Aimee Naveau*, recovering at home from injuries sustained in a serious car accident
- ❖ *Bob Norden*, who is recovering from recent hip replacement surgery
- ❖ *Bev Elling*, fighting infection as she tries to recover from surgery to fix a hip prosthesis
- ❖ *Diane Meyer* (Nancy Glaser’s sister), recovering at home from a recent outpatient procedure

**2024 CONFIRMATION CLASS PLANNING MEETING** – This Morning

The confirmation class of 2024 and their parents/guardians will have an information and planning meeting today after the Sunday School hour, at 11:15 a.m., in the church lounge. We will be discussing the upcoming schedule of confirmation related events, and laying out all that needs to be accomplished before that day. Confirmation Sunday is May 19, which this year is also The Festival of Pentecost.

**EASTER FLOWER ORDERS:** **Deadline is today!** We cannot take any late orders. Yellow order forms are available on the narthex table. Drop your order form and payment (to **St. John Lutheran Church**) into the container on the narthex table or return it to the church office.

## MUSIC IN OUR WORSHIP

- **Organ Music** --- The organ music you hear this morning is from a *Concordia Publishing House* resource called 'Concordia Organist.' This digital resource is available for all music in our hymnal, including all hymns and liturgies. After the passing of Renee Petzoldt, who served us at the organ for so many years, the church council thought it advisable to have this resource available should we need to fill in the schedule for our worship musicians. This morning we are giving this system a test run.
- **Church Choir next Sunday** --- We are thrilled to have the choir reconstituted and blessing us once again with their anthems of praise to God. The choir will be singing next Sunday and on Good Friday and Easter. We thank those involved for using your gifts and time to serve God in His house of worship.



**SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY – Demons.** We read about them in the Bible, and of God's power over them, but what are they? In a movie, a woman tied to a bed may rise into the air as she speaks in an unnaturally low voice. Her head spins around, and frightening things happen. Does the Bible describe such things? Is this biblical? Children dress up for Halloween wearing red suits with horns, tails, and pitchforks. Does this reflect how demons really look?

What is definitely *not* confusing is that Jesus has complete power over the demons, as He demonstrated many times when He miraculously drove them out of their victims. This morning, in our current study, *Miracles of Jesus*, we will consider Jesus' ***Power Over Demons***. The coffee is on, and we hope you can join us for fellowship and growth in God's Word.

**EASTER BREAKFAST SIGN-UP** – This morning we begin the process of organizing our Easter Fellowship Breakfast. We are looking for people to sign up to supply food items for this annual event. The sign-up sheets are in the narthex now. Thank you for helping in this way!



**ARCHIVES DISPLAY:** The Archives Display has been finished and is showcasing the 2023-2024 St. John School students, teachers, and staff; field trips; St. John high school sports students; and pictures of the Ladies Aid Mother-Daughter Banquets of the past and more. Stop by and enjoy the variety of pictures. Thank you to the Archives Committee for this nice feature!

**WOMEN OF FREEDOM MEETING:** The next Women of Freedom meeting will be held on Tues., March 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM. As always, these meetings are open to any women in the congregation. Hope to see some of you there!

**LYF MEETINGS:** The Jr High and High School LYF members will be having their next meeting on **Sun., March 17<sup>th</sup>** at the Youth & Family Center. The Jr High (Grades 6-8) will meet at 4:00 PM followed by the High School (Grades 9-12) at 5:00 PM. Keep reading...

**NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING MEETING** will be held after church on March 17<sup>th</sup> at the Youth and Family Center. This meeting is for youth participants (*ages 14-19 at the time of event*) and their parents. The meeting is also for those interested in being a Young Adult Volunteer (*19-25 years old*). The LCMS Youth Gathering is July 19-23, 2025 in New Orleans.

**SPECIAL LENT SERVICES** – During Lent we gather for many special worship services as we give homage to our suffering Savior and consider His atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. Midweek Lenten services each begin with a hymn sing, an opportunity for you to choose a beloved hymn to sing with the congregation. All weekday Lenten and Holy Week services begin at 7:00 p.m. The remaining midweek Lenten schedule is as follows:



<u>Midweek</u>	<u>The Passion According to John</u>	<u>Offering</u>
<b>March 13</b>	<b>Wisdom Has a Friend on the Cross</b>	<b>Lutheran Hour broadcast</b>
March 20	Jesus Finishes the Battle for Your Salvation	Mission Acct, SJLC Endowment Fund
<u>Holy Week</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Special Notes</u>
March 24	Palm Sunday – “Glorious Death”	Children’s procession of palms
March 28	Maundy Thursday – “It’s About Jesus”	Holy Communion
March 29	Good Friday – “Real Life after Good Friday”	Tenebrae, service of darkness; adult choir

- **Confirmation Class during Lent** will be held from 5:45 to 6:45 p.m., dismissing in time for students and families to attend the evening service.



### **WOMEN’S LENTEN BIBLE STUDY – “Steps of Faith”**

In this Bible study we are considering how we respond as Christians to life’s many challenges. By looking at the Scripture accounts of Abraham, Miriam, Mary, the Samaritan woman and others, we will also look at the journey of faith we are all traveling and be encouraged for the path ahead.

This Bible study, produced by the *Lutheran Women’s Missionary League*, will be led by Nancy Nemoyer. We meet on the Wednesdays of Lent at 10:00 a.m. in the Church Lounge. Each week is a little study unto itself. No need to sign up. Just show up, and join us.



### **MEN’S LENTEN BREAKFAST AND BIBLE STUDY!**

During Lent we gather each Thursday morning at 6:30 a.m. the men are gathering for breakfast and Bible study. **Currently we are discussing key parts of our faith as outlined in *The Augsburg Confession***, a principal confessional document of our church. This Thursday we will continue our discussion from last Thursday about Article IV of the Augsburg Confession

and how we are justified before God. We had such good discussion that we needed to dedicate more time to this chief article of our Christian faith. We hope you can make it your Lenten commitment to wake up and come each Thursday as we enjoy food and fellowship, and grow together in fellowship, in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord!

<b><u>FINANCIAL FACTS:</u></b>	Home Fund	Synod & Missions	Building Fund
Weekly Need	\$9,792.78	\$500.00	\$961.54
Rec’d 03/03/24	\$10,039.00	\$220.00	\$325.00

**ATTENDANCE:** Sunday – 156

**LENTEN SERVICE (2/28/24):** *Financial Aid for Youth Conferences - \$915.00; Attendance: 60*

**EASTER AT ST. JOHN** – This morning we are just three weeks away from the celebration of Easter. Throughout that morning the Stewardship Board will have Easter treat bags available for the children. The two Easter services are entirely different, so plan to make a morning of it, celebrating the greatest miracle of God for our salvation. The schedule for Easter morning is as follows:

- 7:00 a.m. Easter Sunrise Service “*I is the Biggest Number*”
- 8:15 a.m. Fellowship Breakfast
- 9:30 a.m. Easter Festival Service, Holy Communion “*A Jarring New Reality*”



**PALM SUNDAY CHILDREN’S PROCESSION** – Parents, please note that two weeks from today on Palm Sunday, March 24, the children will process into the sanctuary at the beginning of the service with palm branches in hand. There will also be a children’s message while the children are up front in the chancel. Children should arrive ten or fifteen minutes before the service and head to the fellowship hall for their palm branches and instructions.



**GRIEF SHARE** is underway.

**Are you grieving a loss?** Find help, hope, and healing through the **GriefShare** classes being held Tuesdays from 6:00-7:30 p.m. in the *Youth & Family Center*. It’s never too late to join! The class is being led by the team of Nancy Nemoyer and Rev. Robert Bartz, interim pastor of Emmaus,

Wauseon. Whether your loss is recent or more distant, the learning, insights, opportunity to talk and listen, video presentations and study guide have proven valuable in the grieving process. More information in brochures on the back table. To learn more, and to sign up, please visit our **GriefShare** webpage at [www.griefshare.org/groups/177431](http://www.griefshare.org/groups/177431). But wait! There’s more! Keep reading...

**"COMFORT COOKIES?"** - For those of you wanting to help out with the GriefShare ministry, how do "comfort cookies" sound? You can be a part of our St John grief ministry by providing one dozen "comfort cookies" on any Tuesday between now and May 21st. Try out a new recipe or bring an old favorite? Either way, a dozen "comfort cookies" will go a long way in creating a welcoming environment for the Tuesday night GriefShare group. A sign-up sheet is located on the narthex table. Pick a Tuesday, bring the cookies on Sunday and Nancy will be sure the Tuesday night group enjoys them. Remember...just a dozen! Help be God's instrument in bringing comfort to those dealing with grief or loss in their lives. Thank you!

**CHOICE DOLLARS:** Keep up the good work! Your designations are making a difference here at St. John. You have until March 31, 2024 to designate your 2023 Choice Dollars. Some of you may still have Choice Dollars to designate, so give Mary Kossow (at the Ridgeville Thrivent Office) a call to check on your Choice Dollars. If you have an online account with Thrivent, please log on and check to see if you have Choice Dollars to designate. The phone number is 419-267-0113. Thank You!

**LWML QUARTERLIES & ODES** – Please pick up the LWML Quarterly magazine and Ode publication for Spring 2024 in the tract rack in the narthex today. These are available to all women of the church and always have very interesting articles.

**MY DEVOTION BOOKLETS** for of March, April, and May are available on the desk in the narthex.

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL – IT’S TIME TO PLAN**

It’s time to begin thinking about plans for Vacation Bible School this summer, which we typically schedule for mid-June. First on the VBS to-do list is to identify a director to work with the pastor to coordinate plans this year. If you might be interested in serving the children in this way, please speak with Pastor Niermann ASAP, and we’ll get the ball rolling. Thank you!



**KINDERGARTEN CLINIC & ELIGIBILITY:** For students entering Kindergarten in the fall of 2024, our Kindergarten clinic will be held on Thursday, April 4<sup>th</sup> with the time TBD. There WILL BE Kindergarten class as usual on the 4<sup>th</sup>. **St. John Lutheran School’s eligibility date for entering Kindergarten is that a child must be five years old on or before September 30<sup>th</sup> to enroll in Kindergarten.** Items needed for our St. John clinic are: An original and/or certified copy of their birth certificate; a physical dated after August 2023 (*if available*); immunization records; Social Security number; child custody documents if applicable; and the baptism date or dedication date. If applying for the EdChoice Expansion Scholarship, please bring a current utility bill to confirm your permanent residence. *NOTE: If your child is enrolled in our Preschool program, we already have the items listed above and you will not need to bring them the day of the clinic.*

**PROJECT CONNECT** – There are many free booklets in the rack in the narthex. Be sure to check for some informative reading. Some titles are: “*Alzheimer’s: Facing the Loss of a Lifetime*,” “*Talking with God*,” “*Forgiveness is a Choice*,” “*Talking Openly with Kids*,” “*Setting Priorities*,” “*Your Place in God’s Plan*,” “*Stressed but Connected*,” “*Beyond Divorce*,” “*For Better, For Worse*,” “*What Is Faith in Jesus?*” and many more. These booklets are furnished through the Lutheran Hour Ministries.

**HEARING ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE:** If hearing in worship has been a problem for you, pick up one of the receiver units for our hearing assistance system. An usher will assist you and you’ll hear much more clearly. (*Also, please let us know how the system is working for you.*)

For those who use the hearing assistance system regularly and for the sake of hygiene, we ask that you claim one of the ear buds as your own and keep it with you in your purse, pocket, etc. Bring it with you when you come to church, and simply plug it into one the receivers. At the end of the service, unplug the ear bud to take with you until the next time.

**KANTOREI LENTEN TOUR:** On Sun., March 17<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 PM, the Kantorei of Concordia Seminary, Fort Wayne will be leading a Lenten Evening Prayer service. This will be held in Kramer Chapel on the Fort Wayne campus. For more info, go to [www.ctsfw.edu/ctsfw-events](http://www.ctsfw.edu/ctsfw-events)

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**Food For Thought...**

**If God is all you have, you have all you need.**

*“And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”*

*(Philippians 4:19)*