



# St. John Lutheran Church

FREEDOM TOWNSHIP

16-035 CO. RD. U • NAPOLEON, OH 43545

## Serving Christ in Freedom

*Worship • Stewardship • Mission*

December 20, 2015

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NO. 51

Rev. Stephen J. Niermann, Pastor  
Mr. Aaron Yaeger, Vicar  
Miss Mary K. Rettig, Interim Principal

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### FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Sermon & Text: "The Visitation" *Luke 1:39-56*  
Order of Service: *Divine Service, Setting 4 (LSB pg. 203)*  
Hymns: 331 ~ 346 ~ [Communion: 356, 352] ~ 353  
Adult Bell Choir: "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly"

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### **WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS**

*Advent is a season of repentance and preparation for the Coming of Christ. We warmly welcome all who have come to worship our God with us today! Each day we live is a priceless gift from God, loaded with possibilities to learn something new, to gain fresh insights into His great truths. If you are a visitor, please fill out the Rite of Fellowship card from the pew rack in front of you and pass it to the center aisle during the offering this morning.*

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

- ✠ Renee Petzoldt, *Organist* ✠ Emily Bostelman & Maggie Weller, *Acolytes* ✠
- ✠ Bob & Diane Norden, *Greeters* ✠
- ✠ Delbert & Marian Damman, *Visitation* ✠
- ✠ Dave VonDeylen, Dennis Showman, Dean Badenhop, Rich Elling, *Ushers* ✠
- ✠ Karan Niebergall, Ronda & Kaylee Wentworth, Karen Lulfs, *Altar Guild* ✠

**THE FLOWERS ON THE ALTAR** are placed in celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary of *Bob & Diane Norden*, which is tomorrow, Dec. 21<sup>st</sup>. Congratulations on this milestone, and may you celebrate many more years together!

**IN HEAVEN FOR CHRISTMAS:** We mourn the sudden loss of *Roger Mahnke*, 76, this past Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2015 at his home. Roger's funeral was held here at St. John Lutheran Church on Sat., Dec. 19, 2015 at 11:00 AM and burial followed in the St. John's Cemetery. Whenever you saw Roger, you could always be guaranteed to get a pleasant smile from him. Please pray for strength for Ruth, Kelly, Mike, Amy, and their families as they grieve the loss of Roger.

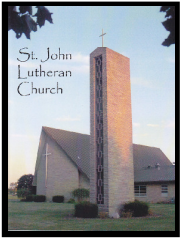
**In God's House This Week**Online church calendar: [www.DynaCal.com/sjl](http://www.DynaCal.com/sjl)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Activities</b>
Today	9:00 AM 10:20AM 10:20AM 7:00 PM	<b>Communion Service</b> Adult Bible Class; Children's Christmas Program practice (Gr. PS – 8 until 11:30 AM) Sweets & Treats Bake Shop; LYF & School Board sacking candy Children's Christmas Program ( <i>see bulletin note</i> )
Mon.		NO SCHOOL – Christmas Break ( <i>classes resume on Mon., Jan. 4, 2016</i> )
Thurs.	7:00 PM	<b>Christmas Eve Service of Carols &amp; Candles</b> ; Offering: <i>Home Fund</i> Adult Choir: "Away in a Manger" and "Where Is He?" Greeters: <i>The Niermann Family</i> Ushers: <i>Al Damman, Andy Damman, Tim Hodson</i> Altar Guild: <i>Karan Niebergall, Kaylee &amp; Ronda Wentworth, Karen Lulfs</i>
Fri.	9:30 AM	<b>Christmas Day Festival Service w/Communion</b> ; Offering: <i>Home Fund</i> Acolytes: <i>Maggie Weller &amp; Abby Weller</i> Greeters: <i>Jerry &amp; Nancy Short</i> Ushers: <i>Carey Damman, Craig Drewes, Scott VanValkenburg</i> Altar Guild: <i>Karan Niebergall, Kaylee &amp; Ronda Wentworth, Karen Lulfs</i>
Sun.	9:00 AM 10:20AM	<b>Worship Service</b> Adult Bible Class; Sunday School; "Time To Spare"
Mon.- Sat.	7:30 AM	Morning Meditations, WONW 1280 AM Speaker: <i>Rev. Willie Stottlemyer, St. Stephen Lutheran – Defiance</i>

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

- ❖ Our Shut-Ins: *Stan Moll, Marian Fitzenreiter, Norma Damman, and Don Dickmann*
- ❖ *Pauline Dishop, Marie Damman, and Delora Winkelman*, at The Lutheran Home, Napoleon
- ❖ *Magdalena Volkman*, residing at Heartland Nursing Home, Wauseon
- ❖ *Anna Brodman and Marian Buchhop* residing at Country View Haven
- ❖ *Donald Landry*, residing at the Orchards of Northcrest - Napoleon
- ❖ *Helen Norden*, residing at Greenbriar Assisted Living in Birmingham, AL
- ❖ Servicemen and women *Justin Atkinson, Jason Rohrs, Emily Schroeder, and Connor Gerken*
- ❖ *Delores Badenhop*, recuperating at The Lutheran Home following her surgery
- ❖ *Kyle Elling*, now deployed overseas, that God would guard him and his comrades against all harm and danger
- ❖ *Simon Robeson*, still in critical condition after the car accident that took the life of his fiancée
- ❖ *David Niebergall*, now in hospice care for his failing health due to cancer

**TODAY IS CHRISTMAS SWEETS & TREATS!** The Christmas Sweets & Treats Shop will be open today after the worship service. You can make a freewill donation and receive a small or large gift box, after which you will go to tables, set up in the hallway and pick out any of the baked goods to fill your box with Christmas goodies. All money raised will be given toward the Right Hand of Fellowship campaign – Fellowship Hall debt reduction. Stop by and let us brighten your Christmas season with a handpicked box of sweets and treats!



**THE CHURCH DIRECTORIES ARE HERE:** The church directories are available for pick up today, for those who had their picture taken or submitted a picture for this directory. They are arranged in alphabetical order with your name label on the back side. Anyone wishing to have a directory who did not have their picture taken or submit a picture, may purchase a copy of the directory for \$3.00. These "for purchase copies" are also available today. Please put your \$3 in the "honesty" collection envelope with the box. Thank you!

**POINSETTIA PLANTS** – The poinsettias are adorning the sanctuary this morning and will be used for the various Christmas Services. Please see the insert in today’s bulletin for a listing of those who purchased these poinsettias. If you ordered a poinsettia plant, it can be taken home after the Christmas Day Festival Service. 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.

**A BIG THANK YOU** to all who helped make Advent By Candlelight a special evening. Thank you committee ladies, table hostesses, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Girls (*set-up*), Pastor (*sound and audio*), Bethann Gerken (*piano*), Music by Nostalgia (*entertainment group*), and all the ladies who came with their delicious potluck dishes. It was great!!

**ADVENT & CHRISTMAS NOTES** – This is a summary list. More details about many of these events can be found elsewhere in today’s bulletin.

- 🎄 **The final Children’s Christmas Service rehearsal** is taking place this morning during the Sunday School hour. We ask that everyone please clear the sanctuary after worship and try to keep the sound level to a minimum.
- 🎄 **The Children’s Christmas Service** will be held today at 7:00 p.m.
- 🎄 **Christmas Sweets & Treats is today.** Make a freewill donation and receive a small or large gift box, after which you will go to tables, set up in the hallway and pick out any of the baked goods to fill your box with Christmas goodies. All money raised will be given toward the RHF campaign.
- 🎄 **Christmas Eve Service of Carols & Candles** - Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.
- 🎄 **Christmas Day Festival Service** – Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> 9:30 a.m.

**SR. LYF STICKY BUNS FUNDRAISER: Selling Today!!!** This fundraiser is to help our Sr. High LYF raise money for their trip to the National Youth Gathering this July. If not able to buy them today, plan to buy more sticky buns on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in January. We will have extras available on these Sundays as well. Thank you for supporting St. John's LYF!

**OFFERING ENVELOPES FOR CHILDREN’S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM**

Please note that there is no offering envelope in your boxes for the Children’s Christmas Program tonight at 7:00 PM. If you wish for your offering at that service to be recorded, use any spare Sunday envelope in your set. Regardless of which envelope you use, unless you specify something in writing on the envelope, we will assume it should go to the Home Fund as designated.



## CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM PRACTICES:

**TODAY** Grades PS – 8 (10:20-11:30 AM or until we are done)

**TONIGHT** at 7:00 PM Christmas Program – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade ushers should arrive at 6:00 PM.

All other children should arrive at 6:30 PM (*Meet in the Fellowship Hall*)

**DRESS CODE FOR CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM:** Girls should wear either a dress or dress pants and a blouse or sweater. Boys should wear dress pants or khakis (*no cargo pants*) and a sweater or dress shirt (*any color*) and tie (*optional*). **No jeans or athletic shoes.**

<u>FINANCIAL FACTS:</u>	Home Fund	Synod & Missions	Building Fund
Weekly Need	\$9,792.78	\$500.00	\$961.54
Rec'd 12/13/15	\$31,666.00	\$212.00	\$663.00

**ATTENDANCE:** 12/13/15 Service: 292

**ADVENT SERVICE #3 (12-16-15):** \$731.00 – LCMS Fund – Christ Care; Attendance: 114

**2016 OFFERING ENVELOPES** – With gratitude to God for the generous support of our members of the ministry of Word and Sacrament in this place, the 2016 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 *Kathy Behnfeldt* (419-598-8682) until Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>. After Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>, please contact *Sara Myles* (419-966-1335).

**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 3<sup>rd</sup>.**

Officers to be installed are: **President** – *Bob Norden*; **Vice President** – *Tom VonDeyley*; **Treasurer** – *Cathy Gerken*; **Financial Trustee** – *Kathy Gruenhagen*; **Elder** – *David Damman, Jerry Short*; **Stewardship Board** – *Cheryl Sausser, Nate Bickel*; **Board of Education** (installed to take office in July 2016) – *Derek Damman, Jenelle Hesterman*; **Secretary** – *Lori Bickel*; **Church Deacon** – *David Badenhop*; **Trustees** – *Scott Speiser, Dennis Showman*; **Sunday School Supt.** – *Sarah Rosebrock*; **Asst. Sunday School Supt.** – *vacant*; **Cemetery Board** – *Logan Kossow, Clay Badenhop, Joe Hesterman*; **Cemetery Sexton** – *Ben Kruse*.

## SERVANT SUNDAY – STARTING A NEW TRADITION

TWO WEEKS FROM TODAY the Stewardship Board is planning our very first ***Servant Sunday***. **The date is Sunday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>.** On that day in worship we will install the newly elected and appointed officers, and offer prayers of thanks for the service of those who are vacating their offices. Then at **11:30 a.m.** after the Sunday School hour, we will gather for a **congregational potluck dinner**, followed by a brief and less formal time to say our thanks to all who serve us. Mark your calendar for this day!

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

**WOMEN OF FREEDOM** – The Program Booklets for 2016 are in a box on the table in the back of the church. They are in alphabetical order. Be sure to pick yours up today. Also included in the envelope are the updated By-Laws. Some of you have already received one at the last (November) meeting. The main update is that next year our meetings will be on the 3RD TUESDAY OF THE MONTH instead of the 4th Tuesday. Also be sure to check to see what month you are on for serving. If that time does not work out for you, you can switch with someone.

**MITE-Y-SOCKS**: Anyone that filled a Mite-Y Sock for Missions this year, should turn them in this month. A box is placed on the table in the back of the church labeled Mite-y-Socks with a picture of a sock on it.

### **A NEW YEAR, A NEW WEEKDAY BIBLE STUDY**

Starting in January, Pastor and Vicar will offer a new Bible study titled, “**Triune God.**” We are offering a choice of two different times: **Monday evenings, 7-8:15pm**, or **Tuesday mornings, 10-11:15am**. The first sessions will be on January 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. There will be three sessions each month.

Have you ever wondered what the bible actually says about the Trinity?

Do Christians worship three 'Gods,' as *Jehovah's Witnesses* sometimes accuse? Why do we have the creeds? Can't I just believe the Bible? Is there a good way to symbolize the Trinity? Is the Trinity revealed in the Old Testament? How does our understanding of the Trinity help us understand our own salvation? Join us for our study of our Triune God.

This study is from the *LifeLight* series published by CPH. It is excellent material, and you will “know your stuff” when you’re done.

This study invites you to read your Bible at home in preparation for each session. Each student guide costs about \$10 (or less if we order 10 or more), so we need people to sign up to participate. Also, as you are able, we would ask each participant to help cover the cost of these materials. Details of how you can do that will be discussed at the first session.

**Sign up today in the narthex**, and let us together “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 3:18)



**SERVING THEIR COUNTRY**: With Christmas just around the corner, and Christmas cards being sent to family and friends, why not take a few extra minutes to remember our St. John servicemen and women with a card too. Here are the current addresses we have for them:

*JUSTIN ATKINSON*  
17 Sugar Cane Drive  
Savannah, GA 31419

*JASON ROHRS*  
11601 Gun Powder Drive  
Fort Washington, MD 20744

*CONNOR GERKEN*  
3656 Kershaw Avenue  
Toledo, OH 43613

*EMILY SCHROEDER*  
9401 Wilson Blvd., Lot 38  
Columbia, SC 29203

*KYLE ELLING*  
1556 Ripple Court  
Gulf Breeze, FL 32563

**COMMUNITY CHOIR CONCERT**: For those interested, there is now a link on the main page of the church website to a TV26 YouTube video of the 2015 Ridgeville Community Choir Concert held at St. John on Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>.

**CHURCH LIBRARY UPDATE:** Over 50 new books have been added to our church library, bringing the total number of books available to well over 300. Many of the recent additions are children's books which can give young parents an opportunity to nurture their little ones on these cold winter days with truths from God's Word. Other books range from autobiographies, to church history, to Christian fiction for young adults, to in depth studies into Lutheran theology and Bible commentary. The library, located in the hallway just west of the sanctuary, is self-serve, or you can ask Pastor, Vicar, or Darrel Behrmann for assistance in locating a book or CD on a specific subject. The library inventory is also available at [wp.sjl.org/church-library](http://wp.sjl.org/church-library)

**CHOICE DOLLARS RECAP:** Thanks to everyone who continue to designate their Choice Dollars deposits through Thrivent Financial. Because of your initiative the church, school, and preschool have benefited in 2015. Here are the individual year-to-date deposits for 2015: St. John Church - \$11,103.00; St. John School - \$2,067.00; St. John Preschool - \$697.00. A well-deserved “thank you” to Thrivent for providing these funds throughout the year.

**PTL COOKBOOKS:** Don't forget a cookbook for someone on your Christmas list! This cookbook would make a great gift for that “hard to buy” family member. At a cost of only \$10, check out the display in the side hallway and pick up and pay for your copy today.

**CHURCH HISTORY BOOKS** – If at any time during the year (*and why not at Christmas time*) you need a gift for a current or former member of St. John, why not consider one of our Church History Books. This book is full of interesting facts about St. John's and is available in the church office at a cost of \$12.00.

**Vacation Bible School 2016** – Believe it or not, it's time to think about VBS. This year the theme of the CPH curriculum is one that we know a thing or two about in these parts – “Barnyard Roundup – Jesus Gathers His People Together.” At this time we would like to identify a VBS director (or maybe co-directors) to work with Pastor in making some of the initial plans. Please speak with *Pastor Niermann* if you are interested in serving the children in this way.



**EXTENSION FUND** – As God gave us the gift of His only Son, so too do we give gifts to others during the Christmas season. As nice as our gifts to each other are, seldom do they impact anyone beyond those that receive them. However, by investing in Church Extension, you can make a significant impact on the local Lutheran community. Individual investments are pooled to provide low-cost loans to Ohio District congregations and missions for building, expansion and renovation projects. To learn more about investment opportunities call 1-800-901-2297 for current rates of interest and application forms.

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### FOOD FOR THOUGHT...

**This Christmas, don't just open your presents; open your heart!**

*“Where meek souls will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in.” (LSB 361)*