



# 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  
Rev. Charles Kramer, Principal

Church: 419-598-8961 Home: 419-598-8181  
School: 419-598-8702 Cell: 567-277-1339  
Church Website: www.sjl.org

### FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Sermon & Text: "Reliable Unpredictability" *Matthew 24:36-44*

Order of Service: *See printed Service Folder*

Hymns: 333 ~ 336 ~ [Communion: 348, 349] ~ 331

St. John School & Preschool Children's Choir: "Advent Song", and "O Come, O Come"

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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* ✠ Emersyn Gerken & Devin Dietrich, *Acolytes* ✠
- ✠ Jerry & Nancy Short, *Greeters* ✠
- ✠ Dean Badenhop, Dave Von Deylen, Dennis Showman, Richard Elling *Ushers* ✠
- ✠ Mary Kossow, Karen Germann, Diana Kruse, *Altar Guild* ✠



**THE FLOWERS ON THE ALTAR** today are placed by the family of *Irene Bickel* who went home to her heavenly Father 20 years ago, Nov. 27, 1999. She lives on in their hearts and they thank God today for her Christ-centered legacy of faith, patience, and love and anxiously await a joyful reunion in heaven someday.

**THANKSGIVING THANK YOU** – Thank you to everyone who brought food items to our Thanksgiving Eve service to help supply our ***Bread From Heaven Food Pantry***. Your kind generosity will be a blessing to many families. And while we're at it, thank you to everyone who supports our congregation's ministries of mercy throughout the year by your gifts to the ***Good Neighbor Fund***. By means of this fund we are able to help people in various needs, as well as stock our food pantry for monthly distributions. How welcome will be those words of Jesus, "I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat." *Matt 25:35*

**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	<b>9:00 AM</b> 10:20AM 10:30AM	<b>Communion Service</b> Adult Bible Class; "The Lamp"; Children's Christmas Program practice (Gr. PS – 8 until 11:30 AM) Decorate Church for Christmas ( <i>see bulletin note</i> )
Tue.	<b>8:35 AM</b> 7:00 PM	<b>School Chapel</b> Stewardship and School Board Meetings
Wed.	5:45 PM 6:00 PM <b>7:00 PM</b>       <b>8:00 PM</b>	Midweek Confirmation Class ( <i>until 6:45 PM</i> ) Adult Bell Choir practice <b>Advent Service 1</b> ; Offering: <i>Worship Anew</i> Acolytes: <i>Parker Woods &amp; Brooks Behnfeldt</i> Greeters: <i>Tom &amp; Sandy Von Deylen</i> Ushers: <i>Tom Von Deylen, Doug Dietrich, Neil Badenhop</i> Altar Guild: <i>Karen Germann, Diana Kruse, Mary Kossow</i> Adult Choir practice
Thurs.	6:30 AM 2:00 PM	Men's Bible Breakfast at Hill's Restaurant Church Directory picture taking by appointment only ( <i>until 8:00 PM</i> )
Fri.	2:00 PM	Church Directory picture taking by appointment only ( <i>until 8:00 PM</i> )
Sat.	10:00AM          10:30AM	B-ball: 4-6 Girls; 11:15 AM Gr. 4-6 Boys; 12:30 PM Gr. 7&8 Girls; 1:45 PM Gr. 7&8 Boys @ Trinity – Toledo Church Directory picture taking by appointment only ( <i>until 5:00 PM</i> )
Sun.	<b>9:00 AM</b> 10:20AM	<b>Worship Service w/Communion following</b> Voters' Meeting; Children's Christmas Program practice ( <i>Gr. PS – 8</i> )
Mon.- Sat.	7:30 AM	Morning Meditations, WONW 1280 AM Speaker: <i>Rev. Donald Luhring</i> , St. John Lutheran, Defiance

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

- ❖ Shut-Ins: *Norma Damman, Renetta Homan, Willie Gerken and Lester Rabe*
- ❖ *Delora Winkelman, Dorothy Gerken, Melba Elling, Eldor Gruenhagen, and Lorna Von Deylen*, at Genacross Lutheran Home
- ❖ *Evelyn Rohrs*, and *Ruth Mahnke*, in Assisted Living at Genacross Lutheran Home
- ❖ *Donald Landry*, residing at the Ohio Veteran's Home, Sandusky
- ❖ Armed Services: *Justin Atkinson, Jason Rohrs, Emily Schroeder, Connor Gerken, Seth Handy*
- ❖ *Rose Leonard* (daughter of *Brad & Kailee Leonard*), dealing with significant health issues
- ❖ *Florence Jones*, recovering at home after recent hospitalization
- ❖ *Judy Okuly*, home now and recovering after heart bypass surgery
- ❖ *Harvey Russell* (Dorinda Damman's father), who is fighting pancreatic cancer

**MIDWEEK CONFIRMATION CLASS REVISED SCHEDULE** – During Advent in December, the midweek confirmation class on Wednesday evenings will meet from **5:45 to 6:45 p.m.** The regular schedule (6:15-7:30 p.m.) will resume on Wednesday, January 8.

**VOTERS' MEETING** will be Sunday, December 8 after the Worship Service, and will be held in the Fellowship Hall. On the agenda as of today is: 1) *Election of Officers*; 3) *Approval of 2020 Budget*.

Bible Study



**MEN'S BREAKFAST BIBLE STUDY** – Join us bright and early this Thursday morning at 6:30 AM in the fellowship hall. It's a great way to start your day! Good food, good friends, and a good Word from God!

**ADVENT AT ST. JOHN** – This morning we begin a new church year and the season of Advent. Here's what's going on...

- **SANCTUARY DECORATING FOR CHRISTMAS** will take place this morning after the worship service. It's a wonderful opportunity for you and your family to serve by preparing God's house for our Christmas celebration. All are welcome, but it would be great to have the Sunday School parents come down to help while your children are in class today! Many hands make light work. Hoping to have some good help again, as we did last year!



- **MIDWEEK ADVENT VESPERS** will be held each Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m. Our theme is, "Impossible Birth!" In preparation for the celebration of Jesus' birth, we will be considering the impossible births in Scripture:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>THEME</u>	<u>OFFERING</u>
Dec. 4	<b>Sarah, Mother of Isaac</b> "Is Anything To Hard for the Lord?"	<i>Worship Anew</i>
Dec. 11	<b>Wife of Manoah, Mother of Samson</b> "His Name is Wonderful"	<i>Missionary Work in Kenya</i>
Dec. 18	<b>Hannah, Mother of Samuel</b> "Heard by God"	<i>Church Vocation Students</i>



### **CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE NOTES**

- This year the Children's Christmas Service will be at 7:00 on **Sunday evening, Dec 22<sup>nd</sup>**.
- **Parts have been assigned.** Our first practice is this morning in the fellowship hall. Rehearsal schedules will be handed out.
- **Our theme this year is, "We Sing of His Glory."** The students will help us explore the humble and surprising ways God reveals His glory.

**SACKING CANDY:** The School Board and Sr. High LYF members will be assembling the Christmas sacks on Sun., Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup> during the Sunday School hour.

**ADVENT DEVOTIONS FROM L.H.M.** – Lutheran Hour Ministries has made available their 2019 Advent Devotions, on the theme, "Call His Name Jesus." To access these devotions, go to [www.lhm.org/advent](http://www.lhm.org/advent). Large print copies are available on the narthex table today. Light up an Advent Wreath at home and make these devotions part of your daily household routine!

**NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICES** – The Stewardship Board is trying to wrap up its work with preparing nominations for congregational offices for the coming year. We still need some people to step up to serve on the School Board and as Church Deacon. Please speak with Pastor Niermann or Dave Von Deylen if you would be interested in serving in either of these positions! Thank you!

**LIST OF 2020 CHURCH OFFICE NOMINATIONS:** *(as of the printing of this bulletin)*

**ELECTED:** Vice Pres. – Neil Badenhop; Treasurer – Cathy Gerken\*;  
Financial Trustee – Jim Hogrefe; Elder – Steve Gruenhagen, Larry Gerken\*

Stewardship Board – Hannah Montana, vacant

Board of Education – vacant, vacant

Alt. Delegate Synod – Peter Gerken\*, Dean Maassel

**APPOINTED:** Secretary – Deb Durham\*; Church Deacon – vacant

Trustee – Mike Dietrich, Greg Kehnast; Cemetery Sexton – Ben Kruse\*

Cemetery Board – Jake Myles, Joe Badenhop, Brady Gerken

Asst. Sunday School Supt. – Todd Wachtman

**NOTE:** The \* indicates current office holder. As you can see, there are still ballot spots that need filled, so please consider serving in any one of these offices and contact Pastor Niermann or call the church office. The installation of newly elected or appointed officers for 2020 will be conducted in the Jan. 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Service.

**150<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY PICTORIAL DIRECTORY** – The early bird photography sessions took place this past week, but more appointments are still available for this coming week, Thursday through Saturday, as follows:

- December 5-6 (Thr-Fri) from 2:00-8:00 p.m.
- December 7 (Saturday) from 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Everyone who participates will receive a free 8x10 portrait, and there will be the opportunity to purchase additional portraits, or even a CD with ALL of you pictures and permission to print.

Here are a few things to note for your appointment:

- Photography sessions are 10 minutes each; larger families (6 or more) should schedule two back-to-back appointments.
- Photography backdrop will be blue.
- In addition to household photos, extended families may also schedule photography sessions. Families who wish to take advantage may want to consider grouping their individual appointments close together.
- If you are widowed, or have lost a child, consider bringing a framed photo of your loved one to be held by you in your portrait, if you wish.
- Photographs with pets may also be taken.



**OUR CHURCH FAMILY  
DIRECTORY**

To sign up, head to the **church directory in the narthex**, pick your date and time and sign your name. Then fill out a reminder slip to take home with you to get it on your calendar.

<u>FINANCIAL FACTS:</u>	Home Fund	Synod & Missions	Building Fund
Weekly Need	\$9,792.78	\$500.00	\$961.54
Rec'd 11/24/19	\$10,568.63	\$114.00	\$392.00

**ATTENDANCE:** Sunday – 11/24/19 – 217

**LADIES CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION:** A special event is being planned for all women of the congregation on Monday, December 9 at 7:00 pm. In celebration of the birth of Jesus we are having a Christmas Baby Shower. **Suggested donation items are: *Baby wipes/shampoo/bibs/socks, Books, Onesies (size M or L), Boy sleepers, Small toys, Crib sheets, Burp cloths, Sippy cups, Bottles, Baby thermometer, or Baby quilts.*** Light supper and dessert will be served. *Matt Richardson*, local musician, will provide musical entertainment. Plan to come and invite a friend! (No RSVP necessary.)



**CHRISTMAS SWEETS-~~n~~-TREATS** – Two Weeks from Today!

**Make your best Christmas treats and bring them to church with you on Sunday, December 15.** We will set them out on tables, where everyone can fill a box with their favorites to take home. Donations will be applied to the old school renovation project.

**GREETER, USHER, AND ALTAR GUILD SIGN-UP** – We are preparing the 2020 greeter, usher, and altar guild schedules so this is the time to sign-up at the table in the narthex. If you are interested in serving God's people here at St. John in a way that is much needed and appreciated, would you consider joining a team? A few people have dropped out over the past year and so we ask you to consider signing up for one of these teams. The sign-up deadline is Sunday, Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>. *You do not need to sign up again if you are currently serving as a greeter, usher or are on an altar guild team.*

**SCRIP FOR THE HOLIDAYS:** **The last SCRIP orders accepted for Christmas will be Thurs., Dec. 12.** SCRIP orders will resume when school is back in session on Mon., Jan. 6. Think ahead...if you give out gift cards for Christmas consider purchasing them from PTL. Order forms and program information are posted on FastDirect under 'Links,' titled SCRIP Order Forms and SCRIP Program Info. There are also hard copies in the 'School Info' rack outside the office and on the table in the narthex. Please feel free to share with family and friends. Payment must accompany orders. **Any questions about SCRIP can be directed to the SCRIP Coordinator Kristyn Honemann at 419-966-0207 or email at [honemann@embarqmail.com](mailto:honemann@embarqmail.com).**

**2020 OFFERING BOXES:** Offering envelope boxes will be available soon. The financial commitments you make as well as how you contribute are between you and God. The church provides offering envelopes to our members in order to promote faithful and joyful giving as well as to serve as a means to record member contributions throughout the year for charitable tax purposes. Due to the costs of these envelope boxes, members who elect to not use their envelopes over the course of two years (*for whatever reason*) will no longer be issued a box of envelopes. If at any time such a member would like to resume using envelopes, please contact *Cheryl Dietrich*, Finance Trustee.

**CHRISTMAS CHEER BOX!** – A box is now in the narthex marked “Christmas Cheer” for the collection of canned goods, dry goods and paper products. You may also leave your donations by the desk in the narthex. No Microwave items! Please watch expiration dates on your donations. The campaign runs from now through Tues., December 10<sup>th</sup>. Thank you!

**HELP US KEEP UPDATED RECORDS** – With the advent of cell phones, keeping current contact information is an issue for every organization these days, including the church. When people move or get a new phone number, they often don’t think to update that information with us, often leaving us with no way to contact them for ministry related matters. So please, if you move, get a new phone number, or eliminate your landline, contact the church office or make a note of it on the *Rite of Fellowship Card* and help us keep our records as up-to-date as possible.

**ATHLETIC BOOSTER MEMBERSHIP:** Sign up deadline is Mon., Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>. Prices are \$20.00 for a couple and \$10.00 for an individual. Make checks payable to St. John Boosters. Forms are available in the “School Info” rack outside the school office or on the narthex table.

**ST. JOHN MINI EAGLES:** Practices are on Fridays from 3:00 – 4:30 PM. St. John members in Grades PreK-3 are eligible to participate. During the practice we will have emergency medical forms for the parents to complete. The goal of the program is to develop a love of basketball, make friends, and grow in faith. Practices are skill based and run in “stations”. We are looking for opportunities to demonstrate our skills during halftime of some of the home games. T-shirt order forms will be available for your child. We will have practice and game schedules coming out soon. The coaches this year will be Amy Kramer and Joel Stier. Amy’s cell is 419-297-6998 for questions.

#### **AREA EVENTS**

- ◆ **CHRISTMAS VILLAGE CRAFT SHOW** will be held at the Ridgeville Legion Hall today from 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM. Lunch is available. Come and browse the shops!
- ◆ **RIDGEVILLE LEGION BLOOD DRIVE** on Mon., Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup> from noon – 6:00 PM at the Legion. Call 800-733-2767 to schedule an appointment. Walk-ins also welcome!
- ◆ **CHRISTMAS TREE OF LIGHTS** will be lit on Thurs., Dec. 5<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 PM at Genacross Lutheran Home – Napoleon Campus. Please call 419-592-1688 for information on how to donate in order to honor or memorialize someone.
- ◆ **THE TOLEDO SYMPHONY** will perform a Christmas Concert at St. Paul Lutheran Church – Napoleon Township, on Wed., Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> beginning at 7:30 PM. Tickets on sale thru their church office at 419-758-3522. See flyer!

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#### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT...**

**“Aren’t we forgetting the true meaning of Christmas? You know, the birth of Santa.”**

*Bart Simpson*

*“An ox knows its owner, and a donkey its master's manger,  
but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.” Isaiah 1:3*