



# 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

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School: 419-598-8702 Cell: 567-277-1339  
Church Website: [www.sjl.org](http://www.sjl.org)

### FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Sermon & Text: "Clean Hands" *Psalm 24*  
Order of Service: Morning Prayer (LSB pg. 235)  
Hymns: 358 ~ 339 ~ 341

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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* ✘ Cal Bickel & Emersyn Gerken, *Acolytes* ✘
- ✘ Richard & Bev Elling, *Greeters* ✘
- ✘ Dean Badenhop, Dave Von Deylen, Dennis Showman, Richard Elling *Ushers* ✘
- ✘ Lou Ann Rosebrock, Diane Von Deylen, *Altar Guild* ✘

**THE FLOWERS ON THE ALTAR** are placed in loving memory by Mitch and Anika Rosebrock. They are in memory of their Bomba, Mary Seibert. Mary is the mother of Sarah Rosebrock and was called home to heaven with our Lord and our Grandpa Mark on December 24, 2017.

**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 on Wednesday. There will be plastic sleeves to protect them in the side Conference room. Thank you to those who purchased poinsettias this Christmas Season.

In God's House This Week		Online church calendar: <a href="http://www.DynaCal.com/sjl">www.DynaCal.com/sjl</a>
Date	Time	Activities
Today	9:00 AM 10:20AM 10:30AM 7:00 PM	<b>Worship Service</b> Adult Bible Study; "The Lamp"; Final Children's Christmas Service Practice for Gr. PS – 8 ( <i>until done</i> ) School Board & LYF sacking candy for Christmas Service <b>Children's Christmas Service</b> ( <i>see bulletin note</i> )
Tue.	7:00 PM	<b>Christmas Eve Service of Carols &amp; Candles</b> ; Offering: <i>Home Fund</i> Acolytes: <i>Parker Woods &amp; Brooklyn Bostelman</i> Greeters: <i>Elmer &amp; Pat Maassel</i> Ushers: <i>Denny Bockelman, Tim Badenhop, Dave Myles</i> Altar Guild: <i>Diane Von Deylen, LouAnn Rosebrock</i>
Wed.	9:30 AM	<b>Christmas Day Festival Service w/Communion</b> ; Offering: <i>Home Fund</i> Acolyte: <i>Colton Kruse &amp; Landen Kruse</i> Greeters: <i>Esther Layton &amp; Linda Meyer</i> Ushers: <i>Carey Damman, Scott Van Valkenburg</i> Altar Guild: <i>Diane Von Deylen, LouAnn Rosebrock</i>
Sun.	9:00 AM 10:20AM	<b>Worship Service</b> Adult Bible Class; Sunday School; "The Lamp"
Mon.- Sat.	7:30 AM	Morning Meditations, WONW 1280 AM Speaker: <i>Rev. Dale Kern, Retired, St. John Lutheran – Stryker</i>

**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,* 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, Judy Okuly, Ruth Mahnke, and Harvey Russell,* with various health issues

**MIDWEEK CONFIRMATION CLASS** will reconvene in the New Year on Wednesday, January 8<sup>th</sup> at the regular time, 6:15 – 7:30 p.m.

**SACKING CANDY**: The School Board and Sr. High LYF members will be assembling the Christmas sacks today during the Sunday School hour.

**CHRISTMAS SWEETS-n-TREATS THANKS** – Thank you to all the bakers and takers at last Sunday's

Sweets-n-Treats fundraiser for the Youth Center. There was approximately \$450 raised in a very short period of time that morning. We look forward to future fundraising in 2020. Thanks again!

## CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE NOTES

- **Join us this evening at 7:00 p.m.** for a very special hour with the children of our Sunday School and school as they lead us in worship under the theme, "We Sing of His Glory!"
- **Children in Preschool thru Grade 7 should arrive at church about 15 minutes before the service (6:45)** and gather in the fellowship hall.
- **Parents, please do not leave your children with us prior to 6:45** – we don't have enough adult help to keep an eye on all the children before then. Thank you!
- **After worship the children will receive the traditional Christmas treat bag.** Thank you to the school board for preparing these.



**DRESS CODE** for the Christmas Service is as follows: 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.

## OFFERING ENVELOPES FOR THE CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Please note that there are no offering envelope in your boxes for the Children's Christmas Service tonight. If you wish for your offering 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 apply your contribution to the Home Fund as designated.

# Christmas at St. John

Oh Come, Let Us Adore Him, Christ the Lord!



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|---------------------------------|---|
| • <b>TODAY – 7:00 pm</b>        | <b>Children's Christmas Service "We Sing of His Glory"</b><br><i>Children gather at 6:45 in the fellowship hall</i> |
| • <b>Tue. Dec. 24 – 7:00 pm</b> | <b>Christmas Eve Service of Carols &amp; Candles</b><br><i>"Silent Night, Holy Night"</i>                           |
| • <b>Wed. Dec. 25 – 9:30 am</b> | <b>Christmas Day Festival Service, with Holy Communion</b><br><i>The meal that puts the feast in the festival!</i>  |

**A BIG THANK YOU** to all who came to the Ladies Christmas Baby Shower for Jesus on Mon., Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> and brought donations for the Women's Resource Center in Napoleon. The committee for the evening did a fine job preparing and serving a light supper and dessert. Musical entertainment by Matt Richardson was enjoyed throughout the evening. Lowell Petzoldt and Sarah Bartok portrayed Joseph and Mary's journey to Bethlehem, along with Bible readings and songs that told the Christmas story. Thanks for a very nice evening.

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

**PICTORIAL DIRECTORY PHOTO SUBMISSION** – Recently we completed photography sessions for our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary pictorial directory. **If you did not have your picture taken and you would still like to have your photo in the directory, as well as receive a copy of the directory, please submit a photograph to Joyce along with \$10.00** (make checks payable to St. John Lutheran Church; write ‘Photo Submission’ on memo line). **The deadline for submitting your own photographs is Wed., Jan. 8, 2020.** Just to reemphasize, those who submit their own photographs (and \$10.00) will also receive a copy of the directory when it is published.



**OUR CHURCH FAMILY  
DIRECTORY**

**OLD SCHOOL RENOVATION BROCHURES** – Recently the *Old School Renovation Finance Committee* sent out a mailing to St. John Lutheran Church members and to SJLS Alumni with an informational brochure about the Old School renovation into a Youth Center, and the opportunity to participate in this project through monetary gifts. If you would expect to have received this mailing but for some reason did not, please accept our apology (*nothing is perfect in this world*), and pick up one of these brochures in the narthex. **Thank you to everyone for your gifts and donations that are moving this project forward!**

**2020 OFFERING ENVELOPES** – With gratitude to God for the generous support of our members of the ministry of Word and Sacrament in this place, the 2020 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 *Cheryl Dietrich* (419-592-9792) until Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>. After Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>, please contact *Mary Kossow* (419-599-0011).

<b><u>FINANCIAL FACTS:</u></b>	Home Fund	Synod & Missions	Building Fund
Weekly Need	\$9,792.78	\$500.00	\$961.54
Rec'd 12/15/19	\$9,794.64	\$254.00	\$570.00

**ATTENDANCE:** Sunday – 12/15/19 – 270

**3<sup>RD</sup> ADVENT SERVICE:** \$655.00 – *Church Vocation Students*; Attendance: 68

**INSTALLATION OF 2020 CHURCH OFFICERS (JAN. 5<sup>TH</sup>)** – 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 2020 will be **installed into those offices during worship on Sun., Jan. 5<sup>th</sup>**.

Officers to be installed are: **President** – *Richard Elling*; **Vice President** – *Neil Badenhop*; **Treasurer** – *Cathy Gerken*; **Financial Trustee** – *Jim Hogrefe*; **Elders** – *Steve Gruenhagen, Jeremy Honemann*; **Stewardship Board** – *Hannah Montana, Mary Kay Rettig*; **Alt. Delegate Synod** – *Peter Gerken*; **Board of Education** (installed to take office in July 2020) – *Ashley Crall, Marlea Myles*; **Secretary** – *Deb Durham*; **Church Deacon** – *Carey Damman*; **Trustees** – *Mike Dietrich, Greg Kehnast*; **Sunday School Supt.** – *Stephanie Damman*; **Asst. Sunday School Supt.** – *Todd Wachtman*; **Cemetery Board** – *Jake Myles, Joe Badenhop, Brady Gerken*; **Cemetery Sexton** – *Ben Kruse*.

**CHOICE DOLLARS RECAP:** Thanks to everyone who continues to designate their Choice Dollars through Thrivent Financial. Because of your initiative the church and school have benefited in 2019. Here are the individual year-to-date deposits for 2019: St. John Church - \$15,935.00; St. John School - \$4,921.00; St. John Preschool \$-0-. A well-deserved thank you to Thrivent for providing these funds.

**TEACHING POSITION:** St. John Lutheran School is seeking applications for a dynamic third and fourth grade teacher for the 2020-21 school year. Requirements are a Bachelor degree in education, a background check, 3 references, and subscribing to the St. John Lutheran Church and School religious beliefs. If you have questions please call the school office at 419-598-8702. Applicants can mail a resume' to St. John Lutheran School, 16035 County Road U, Napoleon, OH 43545.

**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.

**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.

**PROJECT CONNECT** – There are many free booklets in the rack in the narthex. Be sure to check for some good reading. Some titles are: “*Why Do Bad Things Happen To Me,*” “*Has God Abandoned Me,*” “*Dealing with Depression,*” “*Coping with Cancer,*” “*Who Is Jesus,*” “*Just Stress?*”, “*Overcoming A Painful Childhood,*” “*Where's God in All of This?*”, “*Why Should I go to Church?*” and many more. These booklets are furnished through the Lutheran Hour Ministries.

**OHIO ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN:** The Ohio Division OGT is located in the north end of the Culligan Water Conditioning building on Independence Drive in Napoleon. Someone is usually there to receive items on the first Tuesday of the month from 9:00-11:00 AM. If you need to drop off items at another time, please contact *Nancy Helmke* (419-758-3539), *Diann Meyer-Grieser* (419-267-3485), or *Vicki Grieser* (419-445-2986) and they will be happy to meet you and open the facility to receive your donations! PLEASE do not drop off items at the warehouse when it is closed. Thank you!

**IF YOU'RE EVER IN A PINCH** and could use a little help, the *Good Neighbor Fund* is there to assist you too! Please don't be bashful about asking – everything is strictly confidential. Just give Pastor Niermann a call, and we'll see what we can do!

**ST. JOHN CHURCH HISTORY BOOKS** – Need a last minute Christmas 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.

**GERALD HISTORY BOOKS** – If you didn’t get one yet, you can still do so. Stop in at the church office to purchase your copy or you can also send \$12 to Robert L. Stockman, 1218 Spoonbill Landing Circle, Bradenton, FL 34209, and he will mail your copy to you via USPS.

If at any time during the year you need a gift for a current or former member of St. John, why not consider this history book about the development of Gerald? This book is full of interesting facts about Gerald, Freedom Township, and St. John Church. Get your copy today!

**STAMP COLLECTING:** The LWML is collecting “Stamps For Missions.” Here is what you do: Cut the stamps from the envelopes allowing ¼ inch margin or more around the stamp. The stamp may not be damaged and the perforations around the stamp must be perfect. Regular stamps are no longer accepted. You need not trim the stamp; we have someone who trims and sorts the stamps. Do not remove stamps from envelopes, albums, and older postcards. An “old” postcard is usually from 1930 or before. The most valuable stamps are commemorative and foreign. Collecting stamps is an easy way to participate in a mission project sponsored by the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League. A yellow box is on the table in the narthex.

**ST. JOHN WEBSITE:** Did you know you can listen to *Pastor Niermann’s* sermons on the internet? Just click on the “Media” tab on our website, [www.sjl.org](http://www.sjl.org).

**LARGE PRINT & CHILDREN’S ACTIVITY BULLETINS** are available on the table in the narthex. The Children’s Bulletins are coordinated with the Bible texts for each Sunday, and provide activities that tie in with the weekly themes. Pick one up today for your child.

**WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA** – Sons of the American Legion (SAL) Squadron 454, Ridgeville Corners, has ordered nine wreaths for each of the area cemeteries that the Ridgeville Legion supports (with patriotic flags during the summer months). One wreath will be placed at each cemetery. This is the SAL’s first step to expand this program for next year. In 2020, the SAL will ask Veteran’s families or other interested people to purchase and place these wreaths on Veteran’s graves at this time of year. The cost for each wreath will be \$15. Person to contact is Tom Hurst. For more information on the Wreaths Across America program, please go to: <https://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/>

**RELAY FOR LIFE:** There will be a Relay For Life Kick Off Party on Mon., Jan. 6, 2020 from 6-8 pm at the Napoleon Moose Lodge, 1381 Oakwood Ave. Open to the public! See flyer for more info.

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

**The hinge of history is on the door of a Bethlehem stable.**

*“He [Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.  
All things were created through Him and for Him.” Col 1:15-16*