



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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School: 419-598-8702 Cell: 419-270-8863
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FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

Sermon & Text: "Blessè Disciples" *Matthew 5:1-12*

Order of Service: *See printed Service Folder*

Hymns: 904 ~ 932 ~ 953 ~ "Once, a Long, Long time Ago"

WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS

Welcome to St. John Church! We pray that the grace of God will heal your hurts; that the strength of God will give you courage to face the work before you; and that the peace of God will keep you secure and steady in Christ Jesus. Please introduce yourself to our pastor and also fill out the blue 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.



SERVING IN GOD'S HOUSE THIS MORNING

- ✠ Sharon Damman, *Organist* ✠ Cayden Ruffer, Maddox Oyer, *Acolytes* ✠
- ✠ Dave Von Deylen, Dennis Showman, Dean Badenhop, Rich Elling, *Ushers* ✠
- ✠ Diana Kruse, Mary Kossow, Karen Germann, *Altar Guild* ✠

NEW ARRIVAL: *Andrew & Jessica (Weller) Allen* are proud to announce the arrival of their daughter, **McKenna Rae Allen**, on Wed., Jan. 25th at Fulton County Health Center, Wauseon. Mother and daughter are doing great! Big brother, Jarrett, is sure to be a big help for mom and dad with his new baby sister, and grandparents Eric & Teresa Weller are very happy for McKenna's safe arrival.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY – Today's Old Testament Reading (Micah 6:1-8) is the basis for the reproaches, traditionally spoken on Good Friday: "*Thus says the LORD: What have I done to you, O My people . . .*" We know that, like ancient Israel, we well deserve such reproaches. In terms of the Epistle, we reflect the world around us in its false wisdom, rather than rejoicing in God's great folly in sacrificing His Son for us. And so, we pay more attention to the beginning of each Beatitude rather than finding solace in the reason for the blessing coming with that circumstance or action. But the Law-filled "do" in that list is covered by the "done" in the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord. He is the only One who fulfilled all our heavenly Father's will. And the Good News is that He did it in our place! He took all the Father's reproaches, all our worldliness, and all our failures to the cross. The great epiphany there was our Lord's showing the world God's boundless love for us. How shall we respond?

In God's House This Week*Online church calendar: www.DynaCal.com/sjl*

Date	Time	Activities
Today	9:00 AM 10:20AM	National Lutheran Schools Sunday Service Sunday School; <i>"The Lamp"</i> ; Adult Bible Class
Tues.	8:35 AM	School Chapel
Wed.	6:15 PM	Jr. High Confirmation Class (6:15 – 7:30 PM)
Thurs	6:30 AM	Men's Bible Study Breakfast
Sat.		Gr. 4-6 Girls Basketball Tournament – Ann Arbor, MI
Sun.	9:00 AM 10:20AM	Communion Service Sunday School; <i>"The Lamp"</i> ; Adult Bible Class

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
- ❖ *Kathy Behnfeldt, Denny Damman, and Brian Bickel*, for recent medical procedures

NATIONAL LUTHERAN SCHOOLS SUNDAY

Throughout this week, LCMS Lutheran Schools across the nation, St. John included, have been celebrating *National Lutheran Schools Week*. To wrap up this celebration, we mark today as *National Lutheran Schools Sunday*. It has been our congregation's great privilege over the past 150 years to touch the lives of thousands of people through a program of Lutheran School education. Here is a quick review of what took place this past week at St. John Lutheran School:

- Monday – We joined Pastor Niermann in the sanctuary and he told us about Baptism and the meanings of the different parts of a Baptismal ceremony
- Tuesday – We hosted a combined chapel service with St. Paul, Napoleon
- Wednesday – There was NO SCHOOL due to a Snow Day!
- Thursday – Live radio interviews with Dave Kleck (WNDH); a trip to St. Paul Lutheran School for a Servant Event for Phil's Friends Charity
- Friday – To Genacross Lutheran Home to visit with the residents (Cancelled due to weather)

THANK YOU'S! Inside today's bulletin you will notice a half sheet of paper with a hand written thank you. St. John students wrote their own "thank you" to the congregation as part of National Lutheran Schools Week. These thank you's were randomly inserted into today's bulletins so every bulletin will have a thank you from a different student. The students hope you appreciate them!

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION CHANGES – After two Sundays using the new approach to Communion Distribution, we have generally heard positive comments. One thing that has come to our attention is that it can be difficult or daunting for some to stand during Communion without anything around them to steady themselves. So starting next Sunday, we will tweak our new distribution method by removing the taped line and having communicants stand directly in front of the front pew panel so that the panel can be used to steady oneself if desired. We will try this out, and would appreciate your comments and evaluations.

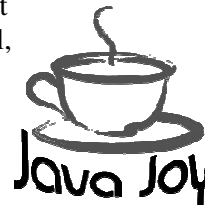
2022 END OF YEAR CONTRIBUTIONS – The 2022 individual offering totals (green sheets) are available on the narthex table. These will also be printed in the Church Annual Report. We hope this helps those members in need of this information for tax purposes. If you have any questions on your yearly contribution information, please call Financial Trustee, *Jerry Langenhop* at 419-966-3473.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL & BIBLE STUDY

We have been discussing a phenomenon in our Western civilization called ‘Cultural Marxism,’ a.k.a ‘Woke-ism.’ We’ve been hearing a lot these days about CRT – *Critical Race Theory*. The idea of CRT is that if you criticize something ruthlessly and for long enough, whether warranted or not, people will eventually become unhappy with it and demand something different. The goal of CRT is to wake people to their miserable lot in life as those oppressed by racist systems, so that they will rise up against the circumstances that enslave them. Come on down to the fellowship hall and join us this morning for our Sunday study...**Christians in a Woke World - A Call to Courage, Confession and LOVE**



Gearing Up for JAVA JOY – It’s been a while since we shared **Java Joy** together. It was Covid that put the kibosh on our coffee clutch each second Sunday. The council, however, decided it’s time to bring **Java Joy** back to St. John. **Would you, or a group of you, or perhaps your church organization, please consider hosting?** If we had six regular host groups, for example, each would host just twice per year. And the more the merrier!



Here’s what you need to know.

- **Java Joy** will be held after worship on the second Sunday of each month, starting Feb. 12.
- A sign-up sheet for the rest of the year is in the narthex.
- Hosting Guidelines are available right next to the sign-up sheet to answer your questions about what is involved when you host.
- Hosting **Java Joy** does not need to cost you anything – money from the Java Joy kitty is available for you to cover expenses. The donation box will be on the table each time to replenish the kitty.

Bible Study



MEN’S BIBLE BREAKFAST THIS THURSDAY – It has been said that music is man’s best attempt to express the inexpressible. What is more inexpressible than God’s love in giving His only Son to die for us? And what is man’s best attempt to express this inexpressible love than the rich and beautiful hymns of Lent?

This Thursday we will have a trial run of a new study titled, “**THE WORD IN SONG – Hymn Studies for Lent.**” The idea is that each Thursday morning we study the ‘Hymn of the Day’ for the following Sunday in Lent, when we will actually sing that hymn in worship. This Thursday we will look at the ‘Hymn of the Day’ for the first Sunday in Lent, “*From Depths of Woe I Cry to Thee*” (LSB 607). **Men’s Bible Breakfast is this Thursday, February 2, at 6:30 a.m. Please join us for a breakfast of good food and a good word from God!** The best part of waking up is a delicious breakfast, great fellowship, and the Word of God!

2022 CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT – It’s time to start getting your reports ready for the 2022 Church Annual. The secretaries of the different organizations are asked to write up a summary of the year’s activities and treasurers should submit their financial report for their organization. If you need your offering contribution information prior to the distribution of the Annual Report, please call Financial Trustee, *Jerry Langenhop*, at 419-966-3473. **Please turn your reports in to Joyce Wiechers by Tues., Jan. 31.**

VOTERS’ MEETING – The first Voters’ meeting of 2023 will be held on Sun., Feb. 12th after the worship service. Items on the agenda to date are: 1) Annual school report; 2) Audit Committee report; 3) Endowment Fund distribution; 4) Status of 7th & 8th Grade. Please mark your calendar and plan on attending!

PREVIEW! “*Many hands make light work.*” A ‘service day’ to do a mission project has been scheduled for Tuesday, February 21st. All ladies are invited to lend a helping hand at the Grain Train from 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. A Dutch treat lunch will be optional and transportation will be provided as needed. Watch the bulletin for final itinerary and sign-up sheet.

ARCHIVES DISPLAY: The Archives Display has been changed and is now highlighting the 2022-2023 school pictures of the students and staff of St. John Lutheran School. Please stop down and check them out at your leisure.

<u>FINANCIAL FACTS:</u>	Home Fund	Synod & Missions	Building Fund
Weekly Need	\$9,792.78	\$500.00	\$961.54
Rec’d 1/22/23	\$5,515.00	\$65.00	\$362.00

ATTENDANCE – Sunday: 152

MEMORIALS for *Marvin Gruenhagen*: St. John Lutheran Church - \$1,667.50; St. John Lutheran School - \$1,122.50; LWML Mites - \$10.00; St. John Endowment – School Fund - \$89.00

EAGLE NEWS : The January Eagle News publication will be passed out today. Extra copies are available on the narthex table and also online via FastDirect Communication. Go to <http://www.fastdir.com/stjohnfreedom/>, click on “Links” at the top of the page, then click on “Eagle News - January” in the “Everybody” column.

SAVE THE DATE! LYF SUPER BOWL SUB SALE – Get ready!!! It’s that time of year again! The LYF Super Bowl Sub Sale is quickly approaching and it’s time to get ready for the big game. On Sun., Feb. 12th, the LYF will be selling Super Bowl subs to help raise money for their youth group. These will be pre-order only, so watch for more information coming in the weeks ahead!



LOST AND FOUND: There are several jackets and coats that have accumulated over the past months in the side coat room off the narthex. Please check to see if anything belongs to you. These items will be donated to the Orphan Grain Train if they are not claimed by Sun., Feb. 5th.

ST. JOHN SCRIP CONTINUES: You may begin ordering SCRIP again. Please turn those orders in on Wednesdays, with payment to *St. John School PTL Scrip Program*. The gift cards will be sent home the following week on Tuesday. Payment must accompany orders. **Any questions about SCRIP can be directed to SCRIP Coordinator Kristyn Honemann at 419-966-0207 or email at honemann@embarqmail.com.**

MISSION SUNDAY – FEBRUARY 19

Sunday, February 19 is Transfiguration Sunday and will also be a Mission Sunday as we receive our special guest preacher, **Rev. Robert Rahn**, from the *Lutheran Heritage Foundation (LHF)*. You may recall that Rev. Rahn was last here at St. John at the end of our 150th anniversary year to receive our year-long anniversary thank offering in support of *LHF* for their work in translating, publishing and distributing Bible-based, Christ-centered, Reformation-driven books around the world. It will be our pleasure to welcome him back. Mark it on your calendar!



LENTEN MIDWEEK TEASER – Today is the Fourth Sunday of Epiphany, and Pastor Niermann is making plans for Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 22nd. ***So, what do you know about the Kings of Judah?*** Can you imagine one of the Lords’s anointed kings robbing the temple treasury to pay a bribe to a rival power? That’s what King Asa did! He took temple money to pay the king of Syria for protection from the northern kingdom of Israel – like a protection racket when you pay money

to a gang for their protection – or else! Despite this, the people of Judah honored Asa in death and regarded him as a ***mostly*** good king. If nothing else, Asa reminds us just how good King Jesus really is, as the One whose life was not protected by temple money, but traded for it! Thus died for us! Our Lenten midweek series this year is titled:

“CHRONICLES OF THE *(mostly)* GOOD KINGS OF JUDAH.” They fell short. King Jesus does not!

ST. JOHN OPEN HOUSE REGISTRATION – An **Open House** is planned for grade levels PS-8 at St. John School on Wed., Feb. 8th, from 6:30 – 7:30 PM. This Open House is for families who would like to come and look at our school and discuss the possibility of sending their child(ren) to St. John for their education and to grow their faith. If anyone in the school and/or congregation might know of prospective students for Grades PS-8, be sure to pass this information on to them.

PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT – St. John Lutheran Preschool is now accepting enrollment applications for the 2023-24 school year. Anyone interested in enrolling your child in our preschool program should contact the school office at 419-598-8702 to request an enrollment packet and/or turn in their registration form. We will be opening the registration up to the public as of Feb. 3, 2023, so be sure to register soon. Current preschool students must complete new registration forms if they will be returning next school year. **NOTE:** The child must be 3 or 4 years old by September 30 of the year applying for preschool. The child must be completely toilet trained. There is a non-refundable \$30 registration fee that must accompany your registration paperwork.

POSITION OPENING: St. John Lutheran School is seeking names for filling the position of Kindergarten Teacher for the 2023-2024 school year. Requirements for the position are: Must have a Bachelor's degree in education, obtain a background check, supply three references, and adhere to the St. John Lutheran Church & School religious beliefs. If you know of anyone interested, please call the school office or reach out to Miss Germann at tgermann@sjl.org.

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 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.

COUNCIL MINUTES – This is just a reminder that council meeting minutes are not published until they are approved a month later. If you would like to read about the most recent council meeting, an unofficial and unapproved copy of the minutes is available for viewing in the church office, usually within a week after the meeting.

COLLECTING STAMPS: The LWML is collecting stamps “For Missions.” A box is on the table in the narthex. 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. 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, foreign, and stamp denominations larger than 46 cents. When purchasing stamps, ask the post office staff for commemorative stamps. Colorful and large stamps are desirable. Collecting stamps is an easy way to participate in a mission project sponsored by the Lutheran Women's Missionary League.

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!

DRIVE-THRU SWISS STEAK DINNER: The Ridgeville American Legion is hosting a Swiss Steak Dinner (drive-thru) today at the Legion Hall, with serving from 11 a.m. until gone. The cost is \$12. The menu is: Swiss steak, mashed potatoes w/gravy, green beans, and dinner roll.

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Food For Thought...

What the church needs is more calloused hands and fewer calloused hearts.

“I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them..” (Ezekiel 11:19-20)