



# St. John Lutheran Church

FREEDOM TOWNSHIP

16035 CO. RD. U • NAPOLEON, OH 43545

## Serving Christ in Freedom

*Worship • Stewardship • Mission*

March 26, 2023

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

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### FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Sermon & Text: "Gathering Storm Clouds" *John 8:59*

Order of Service: *Matins --- LSB page. 219*

Hymns: **454 ~ 655 ~ 666 ~ (941, Te Deum hymn) ~ 661**

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**WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS** *Welcome to every member, friend, and visitor. You have entered this church, not as a stranger, but as a guest of God. May you who enter here find rest, forgiveness, and strength. May your worship here enable you to see your Savior more clearly, love Him more dearly, follow Him more nearly, and serve Him more sincerely. If you have no church home of your own, we invite you to join the St. John family. Simply fill out the blue Rite of Fellowship card from the pew rack and drop it in the baskets at the doors as you leave.*

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

- ✠ Renee Petzoldt, *Organist* ✠ Cayden Ruffer, Maddox Oyer, *Acolytes* ✠
- ✠ Denny Von Deylen, Jerry Short, Dan Wiechers, Dave Badenhop, *Ushers* ✠
- ✠ Pat Maassel, Kathy Behnfeldt, Anita Badenhop, *Altar Guild* ✠

**ALTAR FLOWERS** today are in celebration of the 66<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary of **Dick & Elaine Mahnke**. The Mahnke's actual anniversary was this past Thurs., March 23<sup>rd</sup>. We congratulate them on this occasion and wish them many more years together. Please be sure to congratulate them when you see them. God's blessings to Dick & Elaine today and always!

**BREAKFAST HELP** – Thank you to everyone who signed up to bring food donations for the Easter Breakfast. The donation items are all filled. Church Council and the LYF are being asked to come and help with preparing and serving this year's Easter Breakfast. Anyone else wanting to help with prep and serving are welcome help also.


**NOTE:** Some of the food items such as **EGGS, TATER TOTS, or MILK will need to be at the church by 8:00am Sat., April 8<sup>th</sup>** so they can be prepped for Sunday's breakfast. If you signed up for baked goods or juice, please have it to the kitchen either on Saturday or by 8 AM Easter morning.

<b>In God's House This Week</b>		<i>Online church calendar: <a href="https://74058984.view-events.com">https://74058984.view-events.com</a></i>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Activities</b>
Today	<b>9:00 AM</b> 10:20AM 1:30 PM	<b>Worship Service</b> Sunday School; "The Lamp"; Adult Bible Class 4-H Meetings – Gerald Busy Fingers & Cloverbuds
Mon.	5:30 PM	<i>Bread From Heaven</i> Food Pantry distribution
Tues.	<b>8:35 AM</b> 6:00 PM 7:00 PM	<b>School Chapel</b> Church Cleaning Group #2 ( <i>see bulletin note</i> ) Combined meeting of Stewardship & Board of Elders
Wed.	5:30 PM 5:45 PM <b>7:00 PM</b>	Lenten Supper Jr. High Confirmation Class ( <i>until 6:45 PM</i> ) <b>Lenten Service</b> ; Offering: <i>Sufficient Grace Ministries</i> Acolyte: Brice Baumert Ushers: Denny Von Deylen, Jerry Short, Dan Wiechers, Dave Badenhop Altar Guild: Pat Maassel, Kathy Behnfeldt, Anita Badenhop
Thurs.	6:30 AM	Men's Lenten Bible Breakfast
Sat.	12:00PM	Church Cleaning Group #3 ( <i>see bulletin note</i> )
Sun.	<b>9:00 AM</b> 10:20AM  1:30 PM	<b>Communion Service – PALM SUNDAY</b> Sunday School; Adult Bible Class "The Lamp" cancelled for today 4-H Meetings – Gerald Busy Fingers & Cloverbuds

**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
- ❖ Our Shut-Ins: *Leona Durham* and *Elaine Mahnke*,
- ❖ Military: *Justin Atkinson, Jason Rohrs, Emily Carmon, Jared Dishop, Jordan Lange*
- ❖ *Alan Gruenhagen, Sue Hurst* and *Dave Crandall*, health concerns related to cancer

**A THANKS:** The Family of *Hildegard (Kate) Ludeman* would like to thank everyone for the cards/memorials/visits/kind words/Pastor's visit to the hospital/Pastor's beautiful service that several complimented on/the organist Diane Rohrs/Pete Gerken singing the Lord's Prayer, and to the women of the church for the wonderful meal that was served. Can't thank everyone enough! God's Blessings  
~ *Family of Hildegard (Kate) Cudeman*



**PALM SUNDAY CHILDREN'S PROCESSIONAL** – Next Sunday is Palm Sunday, and as always, we will start the morning with a *Children's Procession of Palms* and a children's sermon. We ask that the adults in the children's lives please have the children to the fellowship hall 10 or 15 minutes prior to 9:00 am so that we can be organized and ready to process when worship begins.

**PORTALS OF PRAYER BOOKLETS** for the next quarter, *April, May, June*, are on the desk in the narthex. There are also large print booklets available for anybody to pick up.

## CLEANING GROUPS SCHEDULED:

**GROUP #2** (Cry Room & hallway area) will be cleaning their area on **Tues., March 28<sup>th</sup>** at **6:00 PM**. Please bring your own bucket and rags. Cleaning solutions will be provided.

**GROUP #3** (Fellowship Hall area) will be cleaning their area on **Sat., April 1<sup>st</sup>** from **noon – 3 PM**. Please bring your own bucket and rags. Cleaning solutions will be provided.

**A COMBINED MEETING OF THE ELDERS AND STEWARDSHIP BOARD** will be held this Tuesday evening at 7:00 pm to discuss ideas related to restructuring the governance of our congregation. Elder and Stewardship Board members should carefully familiarize themselves with the congregational constitution prior to this meeting.

**MIDWEEK CONFIRMATION CLASS** is meeting each Wednesday during Lent from 5:45 to 6:45 p.m., dismissing in time for the midweek Lenten service at 7:00. *Please note, this Wednesday will be the last time we gather on the Lenten schedule. The following Wednesday during Holy Week we will resume our regular schedule, from 6:15 to 7:30 p.m.*

## ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL & BIBLE STUDY

We have been discussing a phenomenon in our Western civilization called ‘Cultural Marxism,’ a.k.a ‘Woke-ism.’ These days our youth in universities are being required to learn about “anti-racism” as the cure for ‘racism.’ Woke orthodoxy holds that people of “oppressor groups” (like whites) are inherently racist *until* they become “anti-racist” by actively opposing racism. What does Scripture have to say about race and racism? Come on down to the fellowship hall – **the coffee is on** – and join us this morning for our Sunday study...



**Christians in a Woke World - A Call to Courage, Confession and LOVE**

**A QUESTION ABOUT LARGE-PRINT HYMNALS** – The publishing arm of our church body, *Concordia Publishing House*, has recently made available a large-print version of our hymnal. It is exactly the same as the hymnal in the pews, but a little heavier and easier to read. They sell for \$49.99 per copy. We are probably not talking about having these in the pews, but most likely having copies available in the narthex for those who wish to use them.



The Church Council discussed the possibility of purchasing some copies, but first wanted to gauge interest. If you would appreciate having some of these available, or if you think you might like to purchase a personal copy, please speak with Pastor Niermann or congregational president Dan Wachtman.

**LWML SPRING RALLY** - The Napoleon Zone Spring Rally will be held here at St. John on Saturday, April 15th with registration at 8:30 AM followed by the program at 9 AM. The speaker will be Michael Nicol, Bible translator of the Gokana language. The ingathering will be a monetary donation toward the work of translating the Bible and catechism into the Gokana language. See flyer!

**LENTEN MIDWEEK SERVICES** are being held each Wednesday evening during the Lenten season at 7:00 p.m. *Each service starts with a hymn sing.* Then our theme, “*The (mostly) Good Kings of Judah,*” will continue into our Holy Week services. The remaining midweek schedule is as follows:

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Theme</u></b>	<b><u>Offering</u></b>
<b>Mar. 29</b>	<b>“King Josiah – Our Last Hope”</b>	<b><i>Sufficient Grace Ministries</i></b>
Apr. 6	Maundy Thursday (with Communion) “King Hezekiah – Prepared Food”	<i>Home Fund</i>
Apr. 7	Good Friday Tenebrae Service “King Manasseh – <del>Worst.</del> Best. King. Ever.	<i>Home Fund</i>

To prepare for our final midweek Lent service, read **2 Chronicles chapters 34 and 35**, about Judah’s ‘good’ **King Josiah**. At a time when Judah had become altogether corrupt and idolatrous, King Josiah ascended to the throne as a beacon of hope and of faithfulness to the Lord. He tried his best to save Judah, but too bad it was too little too late. Judah was too far gone! Despite his best efforts, Josiah could not stave off God’s impending judgment. In this way he fell short.



Thankfully we have a better King who does not fall short, who saved us at just the right time, and finished the job so that we need fear no enemy. Our King gave His life to stave off death and hell forever! Join us this Wednesday evening for the continuing saga of the...

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

**LENTEN SUPPERS:** Each Wednesday evening, the LYF or Church Council will be hosting a Lenten Supper in the fellowship hall. Your free-will donations will benefit the LYF and also help finance the sanctuary lighting project. Suppers start at 5:30. *This week’s menu is Spaghetti, Garlic Bread, Salad, Vegetable, Hotdogs, Dessert, and Drink.*



**HOLY WEEK BEGINS NEXT SUNDAY**

Join us for all the services of God’s house this holiest of weeks!

<b>Sunday, April 2</b>	<b>Palm Sunday service</b> at 9:00 am <i>Children gather before service for Processional of Palms</i>
<b>Thursday, April 6</b>	<b>Maundy Thursday at 7:00 pm</b> with Communion
<b>Friday, April 7</b>	<b>Good Friday Tenebrae Service</b> at 7:00 pm
<b>Sunday, April 9</b>	<b>Easter Sunrise Service</b> at 7:00 am (with Communion) <b>Easter Fellowship Breakfast</b> at 8:00 <i>Easter Bags-kets for the children</i> <b>Easter Festival Service</b> at 9:30 am (with Communion)

*The two Easter services are entirely different sermons and services! Join us for a full morning*

**DESSERTS FOR SUPPERS:** Anyone willing and able to donate desserts for the Lenten Suppers is asked to do so. We could use about 4 desserts each week and a sign-up sheet is on the narthex table. Please join us for some delicious food each Wednesday before going to the Lenten Services. Thanks for taking the time to help out.



**CHILDREN’S EASTER ‘BAG-SKETS’** – The Stewardship Board is planning something special for Easter morning for the children of the congregation and any friends they may like to invite. Much as we hand out treat bags at Christmas, we will have *Easter Bag-skets* to give to the children on Easter morning! Join us Easter morning for worship, breakfast, and a little something special for the young ones!

**FINANCIAL FACTS:**

	Home Fund	Synod & Missions	Building Fund
Weekly Need	\$9,792.78	\$500.00	\$961.54
Rec’d 3/19/23	\$4,845.00	\$340.00	\$135.00

ATTENDANCE – Sunday: 153

**LENTEN SERVICE (3/15/23):** Worship Anew - \$820.00      Attendance: 72

**Bible Study**



**MEN’S LENT BIBLE BREAKFAST – THURSDAYS DURING LENT**

**Men’s Bible Breakfast will be meeting at 6:30 a.m. each Thursday morning during the season of Lent.** We are engaging in a study titled, “The Bible on Trial” which asks whether or not the Bible is reliable. The verdict we reach is crucial for us personally, since the Bible is the foundation of our Christian hope, the assurance of our eternal salvation, and the light by which we live. It is also crucial for us to be

able to answer others when they express doubts about the Bible, and whether they can trust it. **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!

**PLANS FOR AN ALTAR CRUCIFIX** – **Just a few weeks left to donate!**

Soon we will acquire a crucifix for the altar, to stand between the two altar candles. A crucifix (a cross upon which the body of Christ) is a powerful visual representation of the core message of our faith – “*Christ, and Him crucified.*” (1 Cor. 2:2) Pastor has prepared a paper with a fuller explanation, available now in the narthex.

Our plan is to have the cross portion of the crucifix built locally, and to order the corpus (body) from carvers in Europe who specialize in this kind of artwork. A donor has offered to provide this for the congregation, but would also like to give everyone the opportunity, if desired, to be part of this special project. During lent, a resin crucifix that pastor normally has in his study is on the altar so that you can get a feel for its visual impact. If you care to make a gift to this project, a receptacle has been placed in the narthex to receive it. *Thank you!*



**CHURCH JANITOR POSITION:** At the March Council meeting, it was announced that Dan & Kim Damman would like to step down from cleaning the church. We would like to first offer this position to anyone within the congregation (or *school*) that may be interested in taking over this job. This is a paid position. If after several weeks there is no response, we will search for someone outside the church/school. Please contact the church office at 419-598-8961 to leave your name and number.

**LIBRARY COMPUTERS & SMARTBOARDS:** With the increased use of Chromebooks by students in the school classrooms, the need for the computers in the Library has greatly decreased. In an effort to de-clutter the Library, we are offering these used computers and a few Smart Boards to anyone interested in them. We would ask for a small donation in exchange. What's available...PC's, towers, monitors, keyboards, etc. We have set a deadline of Mon., April 3<sup>rd</sup> to conclude this offer.

**ST. JOHN SCHOLARSHIP:** With the decision made to reinstate 7th and 8th grade here at St. John, I have had alumni of the school reach out to me. They are offering a scholarship of \$500 for any current sixth grade students that re-enroll at St. John for their 7th grade year. **They are also offering one “new student” scholarship in the amount of \$500 for next school year.** We are very grateful to have supportive alumni here at St. John, whose mission is focused on growing His kingdom. If you know of anyone who is interested in St. John, have them call the school at 419-598-8702 or email me, Tracy Germann at [tgermann@sjl.org](mailto:tgermann@sjl.org).

**PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT** – The St. John Lutheran Preschool is now accepting enrollment applications for 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.

**KINDERGARTEN CLINIC & ELIGIBILITY** for students entering Kindergarten in the fall of 2023! The K-clinic will be held on Tuesday, April 18<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 – 11:30 AM. **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 2022 (*if available*); immunization records; Social Security number; child custody documents if applicable; and the baptism date or dedication date. *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.*

**POSITION OPENINGS:** St. John Lutheran School is seeking names for filling the position of **Kindergarten Teacher** and **7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher for the 2023-2024 school year.** Requirements for the positions 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](mailto:tgermann@sjl.org).

**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.

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### **Food For Thought...**

**“Don't think there are no crocodiles because the water is calm.”** — *Malayan proverb*

*“The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While they are saying, ‘Peace and safety!’ then destruction will come upon them suddenly.” (1 Thess 5:2-3)*