



FREEDOM TOWNSHIP

16035 Co. Rd. U ♦ NAPOLEON, OH 43545

Serving Christ in Freedom
Worship • Stewardship • Mission

May 12, 2024

VOL. 89

NO. 19

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

Church: 419-598-8961 Home: 419-598-8181
School: 419-598-8702
Church Website: www.sjl.org

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Sermon & Text: “The Greater Testimony” 1 John 5:9-15

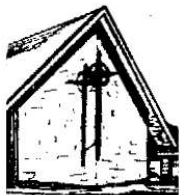
Children’s Sermon: “True Testimony – Tell It Like It Is”

Order of Service: See printed Service Folder

Hymns: 832 ~ 705 ~ 829 ~ “Oh, Blest the House” (revised)

WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS AND ALL MOTHERS

God speaks to us and we listen and respond with our hymns, prayers, and praises. Together we bless the Lord, whose purpose is to save us and keep us in His faithful flock. He is the God of Grace and the God of Glory. We also ask His blessing on all the mothers who are with us today. If you are visiting with us this morning, please fill out the Rite of Fellowship card from the pew rack and drop it in the baskets at the doors as you leave today.



SERVING IN GOD’S HOUSE THIS MORNING

- ✘ Bethann Gerken, *Pianist* ✘ Anna Sausser, Anika Rosebrock, *Acolytes* ✘
- ✘ Mike Maassel, Scott Van Valkenburg, Ian Rosebrook, Carey Damman, *Ushers* ✘
- ✘ Anita Badenhop, Pat Maassel, Kathy Behnfeldt, *Altar Guild* ✘



MOTHER’S DAY JAVA JOY

– Today we celebrate godly mothers and the role they play in bearing testimony to us of our one Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Truly, they are more precious than rubies! (Prov. 3:15) After worship, be sure to pick up a little token of our thanks as you exit the sanctuary, a little bag of M&M’s (that stands for ‘Marvelous & Magnificent’ mothers). Also, the Stewardship Board is hosting a *Mother’s Day Java Joy* after the service. There will be some special coffees and treats for all of our moms and for all of us who love our moms and are grateful to God for the blessing of godly mothers.

SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY is cancelled on this Mother’s Day morning as many families take time over the lunch hour to visit or to treat the mother’s in their lives to a special meal or celebration.

WOMEN OF FREEDOM: The next Women of Freedom meeting will be held on Tues., May 21st at 7:00 PM. All women are encouraged to come to our meetings. We look forward to seeing you there.

In God's House This WeekOnline church calendar: <https://74058984.view-events.com>

Date	Time	Activities
Today	9:00 AM 10:20AM	Worship Service w/Communion following <i>Java Joy</i> ; Sunday School; "The Lamp"
Tues.	8:35 AM 6:00 PM 7:00 PM	School Chapel <i>GriefShare</i> Ministry Support Group (<i>until 7:30 PM</i>) Church Council Meeting
Wed.	6:15 PM 7:00 PM	Confirmation Final Preparation (<i>6:15 – 7:30 PM</i>) Adult Choir Practice
Thurs.	6:30 AM 7:00 PM 7:00 PM	Men's Bible Breakfast Confirmation Questioning in Fellowship Hall – North End Thursday Evening Worship with Communion
Sun.	9:00 AM 10:20AM 1:30 PM	Confirmation and Communion Service Adult Bible Study; Sunday School; "The Lamp" Gerald Busy Fingers & Cloverbuds 4-H Meetings

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

- ❖ *Melba Elling, Norma Damman, and Elaine Hesterman (rehabbing)*, at Genacross
- ❖ *Lawrence Behrmann*, at Northcrest Nursing & Rehab
- ❖ Our Shut-Ins: *Irene Joost, Leona Durham, and Elaine Mahnke*
- ❖ Military: *Justin Atkinson, Jason Rohrs, Emily Carmon, Jared Dishop, Jordan Lange*
- ❖ *Alan Gruenhagen and Lowell Petzoldt*, dealing with health concerns related to cancer
- ❖ *Steve Miller*, scheduled for back surgery at Univ. of Michigan Hospital on Thurs., May 16th
- ❖ *The Family of Sue Hurst*, as they grieve the (*still too soon*) passing of Sue this past Wednesday, May 8th. May God grant them comfort as they mourn Sue's passing!

**MEN'S BREAKFAST AND BIBLE STUDY!**

The men's Breakfast Bible Study will meet this Thursday morning, May 2, at 6:30 a.m. We hope you can make it as we enjoy a wonderful breakfast menu, and grow together in fellowship, in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord!

PUBLIC EXAMINATION OF 2024 CATECHUMENS – This Thursday evening the pastor will publicly examine our 2024 catechumens: *Nolan Bickel, Cayden Ruffer, and Evelyn Szabo*. We will gather in the fellowship hall at 7:00 p.m. while worship is taking place in the sanctuary (led by Rev. Kramer). Then next Sunday, as we celebrate The Festival of Pentecost, we will witness the confirmation of these young individuals and their first Communion. Please keep them in your prayers as they prepare to make the good confession of faith and to participate with us at the Lord's Table.

THURSDAY EVENING SERVICES – Thursday evening services are underway. Each Thursday services is a preview the coming Sunday service, with Communion on the Thursdays prior to Communion Sundays. ***Special notes:***

- 1) *Thursday, May 30, the Thursday prior to Pastor Niermann's retirement day, there will be no Thursday evening service.*
- 2) *It looks like there will be Thursday services during June and July, with the possible exception of the first Thursday of June.*

<u>FINANCIAL FACTS:</u>	Home Fund	Synod & Missions	Building Fund
Weekly Need	\$9,792.78	\$500.00	\$961.54
Rec'd 05/05/24	\$8,828.00	\$252.00	\$238.00
ATTENDANCE: Thursday (5/2/24) – 23; Sunday (5/5/24) – 147			

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE RECOGNITION – On Sunday, May 26th we invite all of you high school graduates to gather with us in the worship service for graduate recognition. We'll remember your confirmation theme, we'll ask you about your plans for the future, and commend those plans to God in prayer. In the meantime, we'd appreciate having a picture of each graduate that we can project during the recognition. Email them to *Pastor Niermann* at pastor@sjl.org or drop a picture off in the office during the school day.



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL has been set for June 3-7 from 9:00 to 11:30 each morning, Monday through Friday. Our theme this year is, ***CELEBRATE THE SAVIOR***. In a fair-like setting we will learn about lots of people who celebrated Jesus: the wise men, the healed paralytic, the witnesses of the resurrection, and more. Of all the blessings God gives us,

His Son, Jesus is the biggest reason to celebrate. Join us for the best fair of them all! To enroll a student, or to volunteer as a helper, please visit our VBS website at

vbsmate.com/stjohnfreedomvbs24

- A link for our VBS website is also provided on our homepage at sjl.org.
- If you prefer, you can register a student using the paper forms available in the narthex.



GRIEF SHARE is a class offered at St. John for those grieving the loss of a loved one, meets on Tuesday evenings 6 - 7:30 p.m. from now until May 21. It is led by the team of Nancy Nemoyer, a member of St. John and Rev. Robert Bartz, interim pastor of Emmaus, Wauseon. You are invited to pray each week for the comfort of participants and the wisdom of the leaders.

THIS WEEK'S TOPIC is *Hope & Resilience*. Finding ways to press on after loss, knowing that the loss will always be in my life. One interviewee says it changed from a heavy backpack that weighed me down to a little handbag that was always with me, but didn't stop me. Feasting on God's Word may feel like eating cardboard at first, but later becomes the food of life.

SAFETY FEATURES ADDED: You may notice a few safety upgrades recently at St. John. One is that the main school doors, which are locked during school hours, are now locked before school hours as well. All visitors will need to buzz in and be let in by the office. Reminder that all visitors should report to the office upon entering the building to sign in.

Another safety precaution you will notice is that there are barriers in place on both sides of the playground area to prevent cars from driving into the playground area during the school day. This change is an added way to keep children safe while on the playground during the school week. We appreciate your patience and support as we work to do everything possible to keep the students safe during the school day.

PASTOR'S RETIREMENT – Three weeks from this morning Pastor Niermann will be retiring from full-time ministry and from the pastoral office at St. John Lutheran. **Sunday, June 2** will be his final Sunday. Pastor will preach his farewell sermon and administer the sacrament for us one last time. Worship that morning will be an hour later than normal, at 10:00 a.m. A retirement dinner will follow at the Ridgeville Legion Hall at 12:00 noon.

INTERIM PASTOR HOUSING – The pastoral call committee has had contact with a number of *Transitional Interim Ministry (TIM)* pastors who could potentially serve St. John as our interim pastor, and next Sunday will have a specific recommendation for the voters. TIM pastors are specially trained to guide congregations through an interim period until such time as a new settled pastor is called and installed. Please keep this matter in your prayers.

One of the more pressing matters is to identify housing for this pastor and possibly also his wife. If you know of a place that might be suitable – an apartment, a rental house, or even a mother-in-law suite – contact the church office, or Elder Mike Maassel, chairman of the call committee.

FULL-TIME SCHOOL SECRETARIAL POSITION: **We are now accepting résumés from anyone interested in applying for the full-time position of School Secretary.** This is a fulltime position, working year-round. Requirements are a high school diploma, an accounting background, a good familiarity with Word, Excel, and Google Drive, computer use, and the ability to maintain a strict confidence. An Associate Degree in the secretarial field is a bonus. Applicants must be willing to submit a résumé, obtain a background check, supply three references, and must adhere to the religious beliefs of St. John Lutheran Church. Resumes should be emailed to tgermann@sjl.org, or dropped off at the school office. Deadline for submissions is May 15, 2024.

PART-TIME CHURCH SECRETARY POSITION – **We are currently seeking applicants for a part-time church secretary.** This job would involve working two days per week (probably later in the week). Required are a high school diploma, an accounting background, a good familiarity with word processing, data base and computer use, and the ability to maintain a strict confidence. An Associate Degree in the secretarial field is a bonus. Applicants must be willing to submit a résumé, obtain a background check, supply three references, and must adhere to the religious beliefs of St. John Lutheran Church. If you know someone interested, please call the church office at 419-598-8961.

LUTHERAN WITNESS RENEWAL – It's time to renew your subscription to the Lutheran Witness for this year. To subscribe or renew your subscription, **simply place \$20.75 in an envelope**, along with your name and address, and place it in the Sunday collection plate or bring it to the church office. **Deadline for subscriptions is May 26th.**

WORSHIP ANEW: Lutheran Ministries Media, Inc. produces a weekly, 30-minute Lutheran broadcast worship service called *Worship Anew (formerly Worship For Shut-Ins)*. Each service includes music, scripture readings, prayers, and a pastor delivering a message that is designed to feel one-on-one to the viewer. They look forward to the continuation and expansion of this ministry in the years to come. Lutheran Ministries Media would like to thank you for your prayers and support of God's work through *Worship Anew*. Broadcasts can be viewed every Sunday on: *Toledo's WTVG (CW) Channel 13.2 at 10:30 AM.*

SCRIP FOR GRADUATION: Why not use the PTL SCRIP Program to order gift cards for those graduating seniors in your lives. Order forms are available online via FastDirect or in the tract rack at the narthex table. 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.**

INTERESTED IN A CHURCH PROFESSION? WE'D LIKE TO HELP! Over the years a number of young people from St. John have pursued educational goals to prepare them for full-time service as teachers and pastors. If you are interested in a church profession (*as a pastor, deaconess, teacher, lay minister, or a Director of Christian Education, Christian Outreach, Parish Music, or Family Life Ministry*), our congregation would like to support you by offering a tuition gift. An application for this gift is available online --- type **www.sjl.org/student_gift_app.pdf** into your browser (*there is no link*) and fill out the application. Deadline for fall enrollment is June 1st.

WOMEN OF FREEDOM SCHOLARSHIPS: Here is another opportunity to encourage and help young people prepare for service to the church as pastors, teachers, lay workers, deaconesses, etc. \$500 per year Women of Freedom Scholarships are available to any young person attending one of our synodical schools. Simply contact any Women of Freedom member for more details about this.

PIERSTORF COLLEGE FUND: The Pierstorf College Fund is a one-of-a-kind pan Lutheran financial aid program that provides interest-free loans to all Lutherans pursuing a higher education who live in the State of Ohio. These loans are specific to students who are or will be enrolled full time in a four-year undergraduate program at any accredited college or university. For information, visit www.Pierstorf.org to complete the online 2024-2025 application. Application deadline is June 30, 2024. Questions can be emailed to Pierstorf@messiahfp.org.

LAST DAY OF SCHOOL AT ST. JOHN FOR GRADES K-7 is Fri., **May 24th** with early dismissal at 2:00 PM. Closing Day festivities include: Chapel at 12:45 PM; Presidential academic awards; and attendance and AR awards. Classroom awards will be handed out in the classrooms earlier in the day. All parents are welcome and encouraged to come.

PRESCHOOL GRADUATION: This year our 4-yr preschool graduation will be held on Wed., May 22nd at 6:30 PM in the sanctuary, with a reception to follow. Everyone is invited to this big day for the 4-year olds. The next day on Thursday, May 23, the 4-year old preschool class will have their last day of school. School for them will dismiss at 11:30 following an end of the year celebration.

PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT – The St. John Lutheran Preschool is now accepting enrollment applications for 2024-25 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.

LIONS RECYCLE FOR SIGHT – If you have used **prescription or nonprescription** glasses or sunglasses lying around at home, you can donate them now! Children's glasses are especially needed. There is a box under the table in the narthex for the collection of these used glasses.

EAGLE NEWS: The Eagle News publication will be passed out today as you leave the service. It is also available online via FastDirect. Just go to <http://www.fastdir.com/stjohnfreedom/>, click on “Links” at the top of the page, then click on “Eagle News-May” in the “Everybody” column. Enjoy!

ST. JOHN GIRLS B-BALL OPEN GYMS: Coach Schroeder will be holding open gyms for girls who are going into Grades K-6 next school year. These will be held at St. John from 10 – 11:30 AM on the following dates: July 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27. Informational flyers are available on the narthex table. Any questions...call Coach Schroeder at 419-591-6655.

‘BREAD FROM HEAVEN’ – A note to St. John members needing food assistance – If you could use food assistance from our food pantry, please speak with *Pastor Niermann*. We are required by the *Northwestern Ohio Food Bank* to keep a record with your name, but pastor will keep your record separate and absolutely confidential.

Contributions can be made at any time. Monetary gifts can be given to the *Good Neighbor Fund* (note it on your offering envelope). Food donations for our pantry can be dropped off in the box by the Archives display cases. **Food items especially needed at this time are: spaghetti sauce, noodles, soup, saltines and any crackers.** Any and all contributions are always greatly appreciated. Thank you so much!

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.

LUTHERAN CHORALAIRES ANNUAL SPRING CONCERT will be held on Sat., May 18th at 4:00 PM at Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church, 14175 Farmington Rd., Livonia, MI. Freewill donations will be accepted, with all proceeds to support Concordia University – Ann Arbor’s Dept. of Music and Student In Need Fund.

DRIVE-THRU CHICKEN BBQ: On Sun., May 19th from 11 a.m. until gone, the Ridgeville Volunteer Fire Dept will be hosting a Drive-thru Chicken BBQ at the fire station. The menu is: ½ Brookview Chicken, Twice-baked Potato, and Dessert. Freewill donation!

MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE: The Ridgeville Corners Memorial Day service to remember those who served our country will be held on **Mon., May 27 at 10:30 AM** at the Ridgeville American Legion. **Flag Drill**: Children age PreK thru 4th Grade are invited to participate in the flag drill during the Ridgeville Memorial Day service. Practices will be held on Tues., May 21 & Thurs., May 23 at 6:30 PM. Call *Laura Bickel* at 419-267-5203 or *Jenny Behnfeldt* at 419-267-5636 for questions or more info on the flag drill.

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Food For Thought...

The best gift a mother can give is time spent on her knees.

“The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.” (James 5:16)