



# St. John Lutheran Church

FREEDOM TOWNSHIP

16035 Co. Rd. U ♦ NAPOLEON, OH 43545

## Serving Christ in Freedom

Worship • Stewardship • Mission

December 8, 2024

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Rev. Gary Bender, TIM Pastor  
Miss Tracy Germann, Principal

Cell: 989-770-0005; Church: 419-598-8961  
School: 419-598-8702  
Church Website: [www.sjl.org](http://www.sjl.org)

### Second Sunday in Advent

Sermon & Text: "The Messenger of the Covenant" *Malachi 3:1-7b*

Order of Service: Prayer and Preaching - LSB pg. 260

Hymns: **349 ~ Adult Choir: Will We Know Him? ~ 354 ~ 359**

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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 and 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 drop it in the baskets at the doors as you leave today.*

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

- ✠ Elaine Buenger *Organist* ✠ Brynnleigh Kehnast, Piper Speiser *Acolytes* ✠
- ✠ Dennis Showman, Dean Badenhop, Rich Elling *Ushers* ✠
- ✠ Deb Wachtman, Nancy Short, Kathy Gruenhagen *Altar Guild* ✠

**JAVA JOY TODAY!** It's the second Sunday of the month, and that means **Java Joy** after worship. Take a little time to enjoy a bite to eat and some fellowship. A table is set up in the front hallway. We thank *Kathy Behnfeldt* and *Janice Rabe* for hosting Java Joy for December.



**BE A JAVA JOY HOST IN 2025!** Make 2025 your year for giving by being a JAVA JOY host on the second Sunday of one of the months of 2025. Sign up now at the narthex table! Please remember that hosting does not need to cost you anything – you may reimburse yourself from the Java Joy kitty. Hosting guidelines are available with the sign-up sheet in the narthex. Thank you for providing this wonderful service for the fellowship and enjoyment of your church family and starting 2025 off "just" right!

## In God's House This Week

Online church calendar: <https://74058984.view-events.com>

Date	Time	Activities
Today	9:00 AM	<b>Worship Service with Communion Following</b>
	10:20 AM	Adult Bible Study; "The Lamp"
	10:20 AM	Children's Christmas Service Practice
Mon.	5:00 PM	Basketball: Gr 4-6 Girls.; 6 p.m. Gr 4-6 Boys –at Monclova Christian
Tues.	8:35 AM	<b>School Chapel</b>
	7:00 PM	Church Council Meeting
Wed.	5:45 PM	Midweek Confirmation Class (until 6:45 PM)
	7:00 PM	<b>Advent Midweek Service- offering to benefit Cherry Street Missions</b> Acolyte: <i>Brayden Damman</i> Ushers: <i>Denny Bockelman, Dave Myles, Tim Badenhop, Derek Damman</i> Altar Guild: <i>Deb Wachtman, Nancy Short, Kathy Gruenhagen</i>
	8:00 PM	Adult Choir Practice
Thurs.	6:00 PM	Basketball: Gr. 4-6 Girls; 7:00 p.m. Gr 4-6 Boys – Away at Solomon Woodville
Sun.	9:00 AM	<b>Communion Service</b>
	10:20 AM	<b>Voters' Meeting</b>
	10:20 AM	"The Lamp"; Children's Christmas Service Practice
	4:00 PM	Caroling to Shut-Ins
	5:00 PM	J.H. and H.S. LYF Gathering

**PASTORAL EMERGENCIES – In the event you require emergency pastoral care, please call Pastor Gary at 989-770-0005. NOTE ABOUT HOSPITALIZATION:** If you are planning to spend time in a hospital (more than just out-patient) for surgery or other issues, please notify the Church Office or Pastor Gary so he can arrange to visit you while you are there. He will need to know the dates involved and which hospital you will be staying at (preferably in writing). Thank you for your help and cooperation in this matter.

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

- ❖ *Melba Elling, Norma Damman, Elaine Mahnke, and Rozella Gruenhagen* at Genacross
- ❖ *Lawrence Behrmann*, at Northcrest Nursing & Rehab
- ❖ Our Shut-Ins: *Irene Joost and Leona Durham*
- ❖ Military: *Justin Atkinson, Jason Rohrs, Emily Carmon, Jordan Lange, and Cody Hoffman*
- ❖ *Lowell Petzoldt and Cheryl Yaw*, for health concerns related to cancer
- ❖ *Willie Joost*, dealing with health related concerns
- ❖ *Marietta Damman* recuperating from hip surgery this past week

<b>FINANCIAL FACTS:</b>	Home Fund	Synod & Missions	Building Fund
Weekly Need	\$9,792.78	\$500.00	\$961.54
Rec'd 11/24/24	\$8,056.52	\$250.00	\$235.00
<b>ATTENDANCE: 180</b>			
Rec'd 12/1/24	\$6,532.00	\$225.00	\$245.00

**ATTENDANCE: 185**

**Thanksgiving Eve Service:** \$2,073.00 - Henry County Christmas Cheer; Attendance: 87

**PREPARING OUR EARS TO HEAR** – In today’s Scripture readings we hear that *The Preaching of Repentance Prepares Us for the Coming of the Lord.*

The preaching and Baptism “of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Luke 3:3) prepare us for the coming of the Lord, Jesus Christ. The historic work of John the Baptist was completed with the first advent of our Lord Jesus in the flesh, but the ministry of the forerunner continues in the preaching of Law and Gospel and in Holy Baptism. Through His messengers, the Lord calls people of all nations to “see the salvation of God” (Luke 3:6). Our haughtiness is removed and our mountains of pride are brought low, but the Lord humbles us in order to exalt us in His mercy. As the Lord has begun this good work of repentance in us, so also does He perfect it by His Word and Holy Spirit, and He “will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6). He purifies us to be His priestly people, precious in His sight and abounding in faith and love, so that we offer our very lives in righteousness to the Lord (Mal. 3:3–4) ***“He who has ears to hear, let him hear” (Matt. 11:15).***

**VOTERS’ MEETING**– After worship next Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, the voters will meet in the fellowship hall to discuss the business of God’s house, including: 1) the 2025 budget; 2) election/appointment of officers

**LIST OF 2025 CHURCH OFFICE NOMINATIONS:** *(as of today)*

**ELECTED:** **Vice Pres.** – *Mark Elling*

**Treasurer** – *Cathy Gerken*; **Financial Trustee** – *Krista Gerken*

**Elder** – *Denny Damman, Rich Elling*

**Board of Education** – *Sarah Rosebrock, Deb VonDeylen, Teresa Weller*

**Stewardship Board** – *Anita Badenhop, Jackie Rosebrock*

**Alt. Delegate Syn** – *vacant*

**APPOINTED:** **Secretary** – *Sara Myles* **Church Deacon** – *Pete Gerken*

**Trustee** – *Denny VonDeylen, vacant* **Cemetery Sexton** – *Ben Kruse*

**Cemetery Board** – *Dave Rohrs, Mike (Amy) Dietrich, vacant*

**Asst. Sunday School Supt.** – *vacant*

**NOTE:** The installation of our newly elected and appointed officers for the year 2025 will be conducted in the regular Sunday service on January 5<sup>th</sup>.

**ADULT BIBLE CLASS** - This morning we will take “A Longer Look at the Lessons.” These week-by-week studies take a more in-depth look at the Scripture readings that are read in worship that morning. Each Sunday is a study unto itself, so that if you have to miss one Sunday, you can easily pick up again the following Sunday.

**JR HIGH AND HIGH SCHOOL LYF** – Both groups will be meeting Sunday, Dec. 15th, at 5:00 PM at the Youth Center. There will be food, cookie decorating, and gifts. Bring a friend!

**LYF is looking for 2 individuals to get a Thrivent Action Card** for the Super Bowl Sub fundraiser. If you are able, please contact Todd or Tina Wachtman at 419-591-6403. Thank you!

**CHILDREN’S CHRISTMAS SERVICE** – The Children’s Christmas service will be held on Sun., Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 PM. This is a combined church/school event, with practices being held on Sundays after church during the Sunday School hour Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**OFFERING ENVELOPES FOR CHILDREN’S CHRISTMAS SERVICE** –

Please note that there is no offering envelope in your boxes for the upcoming Children’s Christmas Service. If you wish for your offering at that service to be recorded, use any spare Sunday envelope in your set. Regardless of which envelope you use, unless you specify otherwise on the envelope, your offering will go to the *Church Vocational Student Fund*.



**“HERE WE COME A-CAROLING”** – Next Sunday, **December 15<sup>th</sup>**, we will go a-caroling the old fashioned way and make our way around to our shut-ins at home and in nursing care facilities to bless them with companionship and the carols of Christmas. Touching their lives in this simple way means the world to them! Join us at 4:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall. We’ll warm up our voices and then get on the way!



**MIDWEEK ADVENT SERVICES** will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesdays Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. Our midweek Advent theme this year is ***“Preparing for CHRISTmas.”*** Join us for these special evening worship services as we prepare our hearts and minds for the celebration of Christ’s birth!

**2025 OFFERING BOXES** – Offering envelope boxes are available to pick up in the back of the church. 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 a member would like to resume using envelopes, please contact Jerry Langenhop, Finance Trustee ([419-966-3473](tel:419-966-3473)).

**BULLETIN STUFFER VOLUNTEERS** – Want to get involved? Why not try volunteering to help with stuffing the bulletins for worship services. It’s not too difficult and can be done either at church or in the comfort of your own home. The bulletins are pre-folded. We are looking for about 11-12 couples/families to sign up for this task for 2025. Those interested can sign up for the month that works best for them on the sheet at the narthex table. **NOTE:** *If you have stuffed bulletins in the past year, thank you for your service. We ask that you please sign up again and choose your month. You can also call Lori Langenhop at 419-966-3472 or email her at [lahop@bright.net](mailto:lahop@bright.net).*

**MY DEVOTION AND ADVENT DEVOTION BOOKLETS** are available on the desk in the narthex. “My Devotions” are nice, kid-friendly family devotions. The Advent devotions are titled *Come, Let us Adore Him* and are provided to us through Lutheran Hour Ministries. You may also access the Advent devotionals online by visiting [lhm.org/advent](http://lhm.org/advent). Pick up a copy today!

**GRIEFSHARE** – Grieving the loss of someone close to you? Start the new year with new hope. Find comfort and support at GriefShare. Sundays, January 5<sup>th</sup> - March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025, 2:30 - 4:00 p.m. in the Youth & Family Center. Weekly meetings include a video, discussion, and a helpful book with more ways to navigate your personal grief journey. Topics include ways to cope with loneliness, anxiety, sadness, anger and regret, changes to relationships, recognizing what's normal or not, and what to do if you feel stuck or hopeless.

If you know someone who might benefit from the class, share this information and consider coming with them for the first week or two. It can be difficult to come to a grief group the first time when you already feel so afraid and alone. For more details and to register for the next class visit [www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org).

(Or call Nancy Nemoyer at 717-421-5741.) Brochures with more information are on the back table.



**USHER AND ALTAR GUILD SIGN-UP** – 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 an usher or altar guild team? The demand on your time in either area is minimal, but the blessing of rendering service to the LORD is tremendous. We are preparing the 2025 usher and altar guild schedules, so this is the time to sign-up at the table in the narthex. **The sign-up deadline is Friday, Dec. 20<sup>th</sup>.**

**AN EASY OPPORTUNITY TO BENEFIT ST. JOHN SCHOOL:** What if you could give more without it costing more? What if that giving helped St. John School? Learn how you can do both by contributing to the Lutheran Scholarship Granting Organization (LSGO), recognized as a charitable organization by the IRS. For more information about LSGO, see the purple insert in today's bulletin or go to <https://www.lsgoohio.org/>.

#### **SCHOOL POSITION OPENING**

- **Music Teacher:** If you know of anyone interested in taking on the role as music teacher, please let Miss Germann know. Position is open as of November 1<sup>st</sup>. This is a one day a week position responsible for teaching children in grades K-5 music according to the state standards. If you know of anyone for this position, please contact Miss Germann at [tgermann@sjl.org](mailto:tgermann@sjl.org).

**WOMEN OF FREEDOM CUTLERY FOR SALE** – If you are interested in purchasing any Rada cutlery items such as: Paring Knives, Stubby Butcher Knives, Pie Servers, Vegetable Peelers, Slicer Knives, Granny Forks, Carving Forks, Pizza Cutters, Tomato Slicer, and Small Spatula, please contact *Linda Meyer or Deb Wachtman* to purchase these.

**SCRIP FOR CHRISTMAS** – Do Christmas shopping the easy way this year— pick up a form at the narthex table and shop in the comfort of your home. Additional SCRIP order forms are available in the "School Info" rack outside the school office. Thank you and happy shopping! Any questions about SCRIP can be directed to SCRIP Coordinator Kristyn Honemann at 419-966-0207 or email at [honemann@embarqmail.com](mailto:honemann@embarqmail.com).

**CHURCH HISTORY BOOKS** – If you need a 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.

**BASKETBALL SCHEDULES** – The 2024-2025 St. John Eagle basketball schedules are printed and available on the narthex table for anyone interested. GO EAGLES!

**CHURCH SECRETARY DAYS** – Please note that going forward, Leah Saylor will be in the church office on Wednesdays and Thursdays. She can be reached by e-mail at: [churchsecretary@sjl.org](mailto:churchsecretary@sjl.org). Bulletin submissions will now need to be turned in to the office by end-of-day *Tuesday* of each week in order to be included in the Sunday bulletin. Thank you for your patience as we make this transition.

**ALTAR FLOWERS** – For anyone wishing to place flowers on the altar for Sunday worship, please contact *Nancy Glaser* at 419-906-0963. **NOTE: The price for flowers through the Women of Freedom is now \$30.00.** Please make checks payable to Women of Freedom. Remember that it is your responsibility to call Nancy either way; if you would like the Women of Freedom to order flowers or if you are going to take care of ordering them yourself. This will alleviate any confusion.

**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 the church office a call, and we’ll see what we can do!

### **AREA EVENTS**

- ◆ **CHRISTMAS VILLAGE CRAFT SHOW TODAY** (Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>) will be held at the Ridgeville Legion Hall, **from 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM.** Come and browse the shops!
- ◆ **DRIVE THRU LIVE NATIVITY TODAY** (Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>) at St. Paul Lutheran Church- Napoleon Twp. **from 6:00 PM-7:00 PM.** Participants can enter through the back parking lot from Q1, and tune their radios to the station posted at the entrance. The event is free and open to the public. A freewill donation will be taken for LifeWise.
- ◆ **THE TOLEDO SYMPHONY** will perform a Christmas Concert at St. Paul Lutheran Church – Napoleon Township, on **Wed., Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM.** Tickets are on sale thru their church office at 419-758-3522. See flyer!

**VENMO IS HERE!** Exciting News...St. John now accepts donations via Venmo! If you need internet access, you may use our guest wifi **SJL Open** and use password **sjleagles##** . Then scan the QR code beside this announcement to go directly to our donation page.



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*Thought for the Week...*

**Pride brings shame; humility brings wisdom.**