



St. John Lutheran Church

FREEDOM TOWNSHIP

16035 Co. Rd. U ♦ NAPOLEON, OH 43545

Serving Christ in Freedom

Worship • Stewardship • Mission

December 15, 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

Third Sunday in Advent

Sermon & Text: "The King of Israel" *Zephaniah 3:14-20*
Order of Service: Divine Service Setting Four ~ LSB pg. 203
Hymns: **515 ~ 331 ~ 333 ~ 384 ~ 849**

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.



SERVING IN GOD'S HOUSE THIS MORNING

- ✠ Sharon Damman *Organist* ✠ Alana Naveau, Erin Damman *Acolytes* ✠
- ✠ Dennis Showman, Dean Badenhop, Rich Elling *Ushers* ✠
- ✠ Deb Wachtman, Nancy Short, Kathy Gruenhagen *Altar Guild* ✠

POINSETTIA PLANTS – The poinsettias are adorning the sanctuary this morning and will be used for the various upcoming 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 9:30 AM Christmas Day Festival Service. There will be plastic sleeves to protect them in the side conference room. Thank you to those who purchased poinsettias to decorate the church this year.

"HERE WE COME A-CAROLING" – Today, December 15th, 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!



In God's House This Week

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

Date	Time	Activities
Today	9:00 AM	Communion Service
	10:20 AM	Voters' Meeting
	10:20 AM	Children's Christmas Service Practice
	4:00 PM	Caroling to Shut-Ins
	5:00 PM	J.H. and H.S. LYF Gathering
Mon.	5:30 PM	Basketball: Gr 4-6 Girls.; 6:30 p.m. Gr 4-6 Boys – home vs. Trinity
Tues.	8:35 AM	School Chapel
Wed.	5:45 PM	Midweek Confirmation Class (until 6:45 PM)
	7:00 PM	Advent Midweek Service- offering to benefit Good Shepherd Acolyte: <i>Brayden Damman and Kenlee Coressel</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.	6:30 AM	Men's Bible Breakfast
Sat.	9:00 AM	Basketball: Gr 4-6 Boys; 10:00 AM Gr 4-6 Girls at St. Mary's Edgerton
Sun.	9:00 AM	Worship Service with Communion Following
	10:20 AM	Adult Bible Study; "The Lamp"; Children's Christmas Service Practice
	7:00 PM	Children's Christmas Service

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

<u>FINANCIAL FACTS:</u>	Home Fund	Synod & Missions	Building Fund
Weekly Need	\$9,792.78	\$500.00	\$961.54
Rec'd 12/8/24	\$8,815.00	\$542.00	\$358.00

ATTENDANCE: 178

Advent 1 (12/4): \$1,092.00 – Orphan Grain Train (Hurricane Helene Relief); Attendance: 51

PREPARING OUR EARS TO HEAR – In today’s Scripture readings we hear that *The Coming of Jesus Enables Us to Rejoice*.

The Third Sunday in Advent has traditionally been called by the Latin word Gaudete, meaning “Rejoice!” For as you are called to repentance, so also are you urged to rejoice in the coming of the Lord, Jesus Christ. By His own cross, He has accomplished salvation for you; “he has cleared away your enemies,” “taken away the judgments against you” and come to reign in your midst. Indeed, He rejoices over you with gladness and song (Zeph. 3:15–17)! Therefore, even from prison St. Paul encourages us to “rejoice in the Lord always,” knowing that the peace of God will guard and keep us in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:4, 7). We find an example and encouragement in the case of John the Baptist. As he languishes in prison, he calls upon Jesus and is strengthened by the Word of the Gospel that he receives. The same good news is preached to you, by which all things are made new and even “the dead are raised up” (Luke 7:22). Do not be offended by the cross, therefore, but let your life be one of prayer and thanksgiving (Luke 7:23; Phil. 4:6). ***“He who has ears to hear, let him hear” (Matt. 11:15).***

VOTERS’ MEETING– After worship **today**, December 15th, 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; 3) Ed Choice Funds

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

Delegate to Synod – Todd Hesterman; **Alt. Delegate to Synod** – Mike Maassel

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

Trustee – Denny VonDeylen, Scott Speiser **Cemetery Sexton** – Ben Kruse

Cemetery Board – Dave Rohrs, Mike (Amy) Dietrich, Joel Stier

Asst. Sunday School Supt. – Samatha Cohrs

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

ADULT BIBLE CLASS - This morning, we will cancel Adult Bible Class due to the Voters’ meeting taking place in the fellowship hall after the worship service. We will resume our Bible class next Sunday.

JR HIGH AND HIGH SCHOOL LYF – Both groups will be meeting **TODAY**, 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!

MANY CONGRATULATIONS! –

- ❖ On Saturday, Dec. 7th, **Bryant Dachenhaus** and **Brittany Boysel** were united in marriage at St. John. May God bless the new Mr. and Mrs. Dachenhaus!
- ❖ During last Sunday's service (Dec. 8th), we welcomed three new members to our congregation: **Alison Burch**, **Scarlette Gerken**, and **Mitchell Hogrefe**. Please give them a warm St. John welcome!

EAGLE NEWS: The Eagle News publication for December will be available today. The ushers will be passing them out as you leave today's service.

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

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*.



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. 20th.**

BULLETIN STUFFER VOLUNTEERS – Want to get involved? There are a two spots left for bulletin stuffing in 2025. Check your calendars and see if you can help out...then sign up at the narthex table. Thank you much to everyone who has already signed up to help.

SAVE THE DATE! On Sun., Jan. 12th after the worship service, we will have a retirement reception for our church/school secretary, Joyce Wiechers in the fellowship hall. More details to follow after Christmas.

BE A JAVA JOY HOST IN 2025! Would you like to be 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. Thank you for providing this service for the fellowship and enjoyment of your church family!

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

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 about contributing to the Lutheran Scholarship Granting Organization (LSGO), recognized as a charitable organization by the IRS, by seeing the purple sheet on the narthex table or going to <https://www.lsgoohio.org/>

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 envelopes to our members in order to promote faithful and joyful giving as well as to serve as a means to record contributions throughout the year for charitable tax purposes. Due to the costs of these envelopes, 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)).

GRIEFSHARE – Grieving the loss of someone close to you? Start the new year with new hope. Find comfort and support at GriefShare. Sundays, January 5th - March 30th, 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. (Or call Nancy Nemoyer at 717-421-5741.) Brochures with more information are on the back table.

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 1st. 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.

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. 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.

WHY NOT CONSIDER ST. JOHN? Saint John Lutheran School offers preschool to 6th grade Lutheran education. Students are taught the Word of God. In addition, all the other subjects are taught. Students have the opportunity to participate in a variety of athletics. Bus transportation is available to students in all the local school districts. If you have any questions about enrollment or would like a tour of the school, please call the church office for an appointment.

CHURCH HISTORY BOOKS – If at any time during the year 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.

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.

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.

DECEMBER RECAP – Please make note of these important events and happenings at St. John this month.

- **Wednesday, Dec. 18 ♦ 7:00 p.m. The final midweek Advent service**
- **Sunday, Dec. 22 ♦ 9:00 a.m. Worship Service**
- **Sunday, Dec. 22 ♦ 7:00 p.m. Children’s Christmas Service**
- **Tuesday, Dec. 24 ♦ 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**
- **Wednesday Dec. 25 ♦ 9:30 a.m. Christmas Day Festival Service and Holy Communion**
- **Sunday, Dec. 29 ♦ 9:00 a.m. Worship Service**

THE TOLEDO SYMPHONY will perform a Christmas Concert at St. Paul Lutheran Church – Napoleon Township, on **Wed., Dec. 18th 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...

The greatest joy on earth is the sure hope of Heaven.