



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. 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

Fourth Sunday in Advent

Sermon & Text: “The Shepherd” *Micah 5:2-5a*

Order of Service: Divine Service Setting Three ~ LSB pg. 184

Hymns: **346 ~ Choir Anthem: “Waiting for Bethlehem’s Light” ~ 710 ~**
“Oh Come Little Children” (projected)

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

- ✘ Elaine Buenger *Organist* ✘ Brynnleigh Kehnast, Anna Sausser *Acolyte* ✘
- ✘ Dennis Showman, Dean Badenhop, Rich Elling *Ushers* ✘
- ✘ Deb Wachtman, Nancy Short, Kathy Gruenhagen *Altar Guild* ✘

FLOWERS ON CHRISTMAS EVE will be provided by Brad & Sarah Rosebrock and family.

Thank you to the Rosebrocks!

POINSETTIA PLANTS – The poinsettias are adorning the sanctuary this morning and will be used for the various upcoming Christmas Services. 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.

SAVE THE DATE! On Sun., Jan. 12th after 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.

In God's House This Week

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

Date	Time	Activities
Today	9:00 AM 10:20 AM 7:00 PM	Worship Service Adult Bible Study; "The Lamp"; Children's Christmas Service Practice Children's Christmas Service
Mon.	5:30 PM	NO SCHOOL: Christmas Break from 12/23 through 1/3 Bread from Heaven Food Pantry Distribution
Tues.	7:00 PM	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service — <i>there will be 15-20 minutes of preservice music to be enjoyed on Christmas Eve.</i> Offering: <i>St. John Home Fund</i> Acolytes: <i>Anika Rosebrock & Anna Sausser</i> Ushers: <i>Carey Damman, Mike Maassel, Scott Van Valkenburg, Ian Rosebrook</i> Altar Guild: <i>Deb Wachtman, Nancy Short, Kathy Gruenhagen</i>
Wed.	9:30 AM	Christmas Day Festival Service with Communion Offering: <i>St. John Home Fund</i> Acolyte: <i>Alana Naveau</i> Ushers: <i>Dennis Showman, Dean Badenhop, Rich Elling</i> Altar Guild: <i>Deb Wachtman, Nancy Short, Kathy Gruenhagen</i>
Sun.	9:00 AM 10:20 AM	Worship Service Adult Bible Study; Sunday School

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

FINANCIAL FACTS:

	Home Fund	Synod & Missions	Building Fund
Weekly Need	\$9,792.78	\$500.00	\$961.54
Rec'd 12/15/24	\$9,135.00	\$255.00	\$190.00

ATTENDANCE: 159

Advent 2 (12/11): \$750.00 – Orphan Grain Train (\$45), Christmas Cheer (\$10), Cherry Street Mission (\$695); Attendance: 55



CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE – Please join us this evening at 7:00 p.m. as our youth present: *“The Light of Jesus: A Nativity Story”* at their Christmas Program. This is a combined church/school event. We will have one last practice after church during the Sunday School hour today.

ENDOWMENT FUND ACHIEVEMENT – The Endowment Fund has officially reached a major milestone since its inception. As of this printing, the Fund is sitting in excess of \$1 million— a huge accomplishment as gifts continue to accumulate! We continue to hope for a strong finish to the year but feel this accomplishment is worthy to be recognized and conveyed to everyone. God has blessed St. John not only through the Endowment Fund, but in so many other ways.

PREPARING OUR EARS TO HEAR – In today's Scripture readings we hear that *The Lord Comes to Visit Us in Peace*.

The Fourth Sunday in Advent turns our attention toward the nativity of our Lord. With Mary, we await the coming of the Christ, her Son, conceived in her womb by the Spirit of God. As the Lord dealt graciously with her and did great things for her (Luke 1:48–49), so also He manifests Himself and His glory to us in mercy and gentleness. He comes to rule His people in peace, to “shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD.” He comes forth not from the great capital city of Rome or Jerusalem, but from lowly little Bethlehem (Micah 5:2, 4). He comes to sacrifice Himself, in fulfillment of His Father's will, for the salvation and sanctification of His people (Heb. 10:10). He who once visited Elizabeth while hidden in the womb of Mary (Luke 1:39–45) now comes to visit us today, hidden in the lowliness of simple water, bread and wine. *“He who has ears to hear, let him hear” (Matt. 11:15).*

INSTALLATION OF 2025 CHURCH OFFICERS – We give thanks to God for everyone who submitted their names for nomination to our various church offices. Your servant hearts and willing spirits provide an example for us all! **Those who were elected or appointed to offices for the coming year will be installed into those offices on the first Sunday of the New Year, January 5th.**

LIST OF 2025 CHURCH OFFICERS TO BE INSTALLED:

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

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.

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!

OFFERING ENVELOPES FOR CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE –

Please note that there is no offering envelope in your boxes for tonight's 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.

WOMEN OF FREEDOM – The 2025 Women of Freedom program booklets are available at the narthex table. Please pick up your copy today.

TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE – St. John School is helping the organization, Together We Can Make a Difference, located in Napoleon. This organization has a mission to assist people of all ages in Northwest Ohio with basic needs and resources that are not available with any government assistance programs. They are in need of egg cartons. We are asking for donations of empty egg cartons that hold a dozen eggs. Please make sure the egg carton is clean and not damaged. Children will also be working on a service project to help this organization in their classrooms later this month, truly showing that TOGETHER we can make a difference.

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!

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.

THE FLOWER CALENDAR for 2025 is posted in the narthex. If you wish to sign up for a certain Sunday to place flowers on the altar or the piano, sign your name on that Sunday and then about two weeks before that date, call *Nancy Glaser* at 419-906-0963 to let her know if you are getting your own flowers or if you want the Women of Freedom to take care of them. **The price for the flowers through the Women of Freedom is \$30.00.** Remember that it is your responsibility to contact *Nancy Glaser*. Also, please contact the church office with the information for the bulletin before the week you are placing the flowers in church. This will ensure that you are not forgotten or overlooked.

2025 OFFERING BOXES – There are still several boxes that need to be picked up by members. Please pick yours up, and may God prosper the work of our hands and the giving of His people! If you did not receive a box but would like one, contact Jerry Langenhop (419-966-3473).

CHURCH SECRETARY DAYS – Please note that 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.

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/>

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.

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.

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...

You can have true peace when you know the Prince of Peace.

The celebration of Christ's birth has only just begun!
Please come back and join us for our Christmas services.

Children's Christmas Service (Tonight)
"The Light of Jesus: A Nativity Story" – 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve (Tuesday)
Candlelight Service – 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Day (Wednesday)
Christmas Festival Service – 9:30 a.m.

