



FREEDOM TOWNSHIP

16035 CO. RD. U ♦ NAPOLEON, OH 43545

Serving Christ in Freedom  
Worship • Stewardship • Mission

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VOL. 89

NO. 8

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

**SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT**

Sermon & Text: "More Profound Than We'll Ever Know" *Romans 5:6*

Children Sermon: "From Hurt to Help to Hope"

Order of Service: Matins *LSB pg. 219*

Hymns: 437 ~ 763 ~ 611 ~ 563

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**WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS**

*We invite you to celebrate God's love as we pray to a Heavenly Father who cares for us, and as we hear His powerful Word to us. May God richly bless your worship today! If you do not have a local church home, we extend a warm invitation to you to become a part of our church family. Simply fill out the blue Rite of Fellowship card in front of you and drop it into the baskets at the doors as you leave today.*

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

- ✦ Elaine Buenger, *Organist* ✦ Anna Sausser, Anika Rosebrock, *Acolytes* ✦
- ✦ Dave Myles, Denny Bockelman, Derek Damman, Tim Badenhop, *Ushers* ✦
- ✦ Kaylee Buchhop, Ronda Wentworth, Karen Lulfs, Karan Niebergall, *Altar Guild* ✦

**VOTERS' MEETING** – Today, the voters' assembly will meet in the fellowship hall after worship. A primary piece of business will be to receive the report of the endowment fund committee and vote on the disbursement of this year's endowment earnings. In addition, the annual school report will be given; the Audit Committee report; and there will be an update from the Call Committee.

**SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY** is cancelled this morning to allow for the voters' meeting. We will resume our study, *Miracles of Jesus*, next Sunday as we look at the miracle of Jesus walking on the water, which took place immediately after the feeding of the five thousand. We hope you'll join us next Sunday after worship!

**MY DEVOTION BOOKLETS** for of March, April, and May are available on the desk in the narthex.

<b>In God's House This Week</b>		Online church calendar: <a href="https://74058984.view-events.com">https://74058984.view-events.com</a>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Activities</b>
Today	<b>9:00 AM</b> 10:20AM	<b>Worship Service</b> Voters' Meeting; Sunday School; "The Lamp"
Mon.	5:30 PM	<i>Bread From Heaven</i> Food Pantry distribution
Tues.	<b>8:35 AM</b> 6:00 PM	<b>School Chapel</b> Grief Support Ministry at the Youth & Family Center ( <i>ends at 7:30</i> )
Wed.	10:00AM 5:45 PM <b>7:00 PM</b>  8:00 PM	Women's Lenten Bible Study ( <i>see note</i> ) Midweek Confirmation Class ( <i>until 6:45 PM</i> ) <b>Lenten Worship Service</b> ; Offering: <i>National Youth Gathering</i> Acolyte: Maxton Howard Ushers: Carey Damman, Scott Van Valkenburg, Mike Maassel, Ian Rosebrook Altar Guild: Kaylee Buchhop, Karan Niebergall, Ronda Wentworth, Karen Lulfs Adult Choir Practice
Thurs.	6:30 AM	Men's Lenten Bible Breakfast ( <i>see note</i> ) Yummy Fundraiser ends today
Fri.	6:15 PM	Girls Basketball Team Lock-In ( <i>Fellowship Hall &amp; Gym</i> ) until Sat. @ noon
Sun.	<b>9:00 AM</b> 10:20AM 1:30 PM	<b>Communion Service</b> Adult Bible Study; Sunday School; "The Lamp" Gerald Busy Fingers and Cloverbuds 4-H Meetings

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

- ❖ *Melba Elling, Norma Damman, and Arlene Gerken*, at Genacross – Napoleon
- ❖ *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*
- ❖ *Lowell Petzoldt, Sue Hurst, Dave Crandall*, dealing with health concerns related to cancer
- ❖ *Pamala Reeves*, recovering from recent abdominal surgery
- ❖ *Bev Elling and Marian Damman*, recuperating at home
- ❖ *Rozella Gruenhagen*, transferred to Genacross for continued care
- ❖ *Alan Gruenhagen*, who had surgery to remove a neck tumor that was creating imbalance
- ❖ *Aimee Naveau*, whose life God spared in a serious car accident, as she recovers from her injuries

**EASTER FLOWER ORDERS**: It's time again to order your Easter flowers. We are now taking orders for the various flowers to purchase "in memory of" or "in honor of" someone special in your life. Yellow order forms are available on the narthex table. Drop your order form and payment (to **St. John Lutheran Church**) into the container on the narthex table or return it to the church office. **Order deadline is Sun., March 10<sup>th</sup>**. No later orders!

**ANNUAL CHURCH CLEANING** – The list of the people for this year's annual church cleaning are printed and available on the narthex table. If you feel you are not physically able to help with the cleaning for whatever reason, let your co-chair know and we'll make a note of that. Thank you to everyone who volunteers and/or shows up to do this each year!

**LENTEN DEVOTIONS** are available on the narthex table. In this year's booklet titled "Lamb of God," we see Jesus as both human and divine. These devotions are furnished through Lutheran Hour Ministries. Pick up a copy today!

**LENT MIDWEEK SERVICES** – During Lent we gather for special midweek services each Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m. In readings, hymns and sermons we will use these moments of worship to meditate on *The Passion According to John*. The remaining midweek Lenten schedule is as follows:



<u>Date</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Offering</u>
<b>Feb. 28</b>	<b>What Kind of King Is This?</b>	<b>Youth Conferences for SJLC Youth</b>
March 6	Whom Do We Follow?	Worship Anew broadcast
March 13	Wisdom Has a Friend on the Cross	Lutheran Hour broadcast
March 20	Jesus Finishes the Battle for Your Salvation	Mission Account, SJLC Endowment Fund

- **Confirmation Class during Lent** will be held from 5:45 to 6:45 p.m., dismissing in time for students and families to attend the evening service.

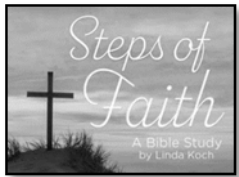


**MEN'S LENTEN BREAKFAST AND BIBLE STUDY!**

Join us each Thursday during Lent for some **MLB** --- not Major League Baseball, but even better, **Men's Lenten Breakfast and Bible Study**. We gather Thursday mornings at 6:30 a.m. for breakfast and Bible study.

**Currently we are discussing key parts of our faith as outlined in *The Augsburg Confession***, a principal confessional document of our church. This

Thursday we will consider the chief article of faith that sets Christianity apart from all other religions – justification, and our righteousness before God through faith in Christ. We hope you can make it your Lenten commitment to wake up and come each Thursday as we enjoy food and fellowship, and grow together in fellowship, in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord!



**WOMEN'S LENTEN BIBLE STUDY – "Steps of Faith"**

In this Bible study we are considering how we respond as Christians to life's many challenges. By looking at the Scripture accounts of Abraham, Miriam, Mary, the Samaritan woman and others, we will also look at the journey of faith we are all traveling and be encouraged for the path ahead.

This Bible study, produced by the *Lutheran Women's Missionary League*, will be led by Nancy Nemoyer. We meet on the Wednesdays of Lent at 10:00 a.m. in the Church Lounge. Each week is a little study unto itself. No need to sign up. Just show up, and join us.

<u>FINANCIAL FACTS:</u>	Home Fund	Synod & Missions	Building Fund
Weekly Need	\$9,792.78	\$500.00	\$961.54
Rec'd 02/18/24	\$13,953.11	\$710.00	\$465.00

**ATTENDANCE:** Sunday – 142

**ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE (2/14/24):** *Church Vocation Scholarship - \$986.00; Attendance: 86*

**EASTER BREAKFAST SIGN-UP** – This morning we begin the process of organizing our Easter Fellowship Breakfast. We are looking for people to sign up to supply food items for this annual event. The sign-up sheets are in the narthex now. Thank you for helping in this way!



**LWML QUARTERLIES & ODES** – Please pick up the LWML Quarterly magazine and Ode publication for Spring 2024 in the tract rack in the narthex today. These are available to all women of the church and always have very interesting articles.

**PASTOR'S RETIREMENT LETTER** – A number of individuals have requested a copy of pastor's retirement letter that was read for the congregation in December. This morning, copies of this letter are available on the table in the narthex, if you care to pick one up.



**GRIEF SHARE** is underway.

**Are you grieving a loss?** Find help, hope, and healing through the *GriefShare* classes being held Tuesdays from 6:00-7:30 p.m. in the *Youth & Family Center*. We are one week into this 13 week series, and it's never too late to join! The class is being led by the team of Nancy Nemoyer and Rev.

Robert Bartz, interim pastor of Emmaus, Wauseon. Whether your loss is recent or more distant, the learning, insights, opportunity to talk and listen, video presentations and study guide have proven valuable in the grieving process. More information in brochures on the back table. To learn more, and to sign up, please visit our *GriefShare* webpage at [www.griefshare.org/groups/177431](http://www.griefshare.org/groups/177431).

**"YUMMY" FUNDRAISER:** The Stoller "Yummy" Fundraiser is underway!! St. John School is having this fundraiser which runs through Feb. 29<sup>th</sup>. We did very well last year selling the Butter Braid pastries, Amish pretzels, Mrs. Fields cookies, Puff Crust Pizza, and Joyful Traditions cake rolls! Ordering instructions are available on the narthex table. Pick yours up today!

**2023 CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT** – Please be sure to get your reports turned in. The secretaries of the different organizations are asked to write up a summary of the year's activities and treasurers should submit their financial report for their organization. **Turn your reports in to Joyce Wiechers.**

**TIME TO UPDATE OUR DIRECTORY:** With the Annual Report being updated for the year, now is the time to update your address or phone number for either yourself or your adult children. There are many addresses and phone numbers in the Annual Report directory that need updated. If you have eliminated your land line telephone and only have cell phone numbers, **please call or email** the church office at 419-598-8961 or email [jwiechers@sjl.org](mailto:jwiechers@sjl.org) with updated information. It will be very helpful to have current information on file. Thank you!

**COOK POSITION NEEDED:** We continue to search for a **School Cook**. If you know of anyone interested, please have them contact Miss Germann by calling the school office at 419-598-8702 or by emailing [tgermann@sjl.org](mailto:tgermann@sjl.org). We thank all the school families for their patience in continuing to pack lunches for their children. Milk will always be available for purchase with a packed lunch.

**PROJECT CONNECT** – There are many free booklets in the rack in the narthex. Be sure to check for some informative reading. Some titles are: “*Alzheimer’s: Facing the Loss of a Lifetime*,” “*Talking with God*,” “*Forgiveness is a Choice*,” “*Talking Openly with Kids*,” “*Setting Priorities*,” “*Your Place in God’s Plan*,” “*Stressed but Connected*,” “*Beyond Divorce*,” “*For Better, For Worse*,” “*What Is Faith in Jesus?*” and many more. These booklets are furnished through the Lutheran Hour Ministries.

**SGO 2023 DONATION WINDOW STILL OPEN:** At the recent Principal’s Conference, we were informed that congregation members and school families are still able to donate to the Lutheran Scholarship Granting Organization (LSGO) for the 2023 tax year in the first quarter of 2024. The deadline to make a donation is the last week of March (25-29). So if time got away from you in December, please take time now to make your donation which will benefit St. John School.

- The LSGO’s purpose is to raise scholarship dollars for students to attend Lutheran schools throughout Ohio, with priority given to students from low-income households.
- Contributors to the LSGO of Ohio qualify for a non-refundable tax credit for their donations; the tax credit will be able to be applied to their Ohio state income tax liability, dollar-for-dollar, up to \$750. Couples filing jointly may donate a total of \$1,500, where each person separately donates \$750.
- When you specify St. John School on your form, your entire donation will be used to benefit our students in Preschool thru Grade 8.

For more information about LSGO, please go to <https://www.lsgoohio.org/>. Lutheran Scholarship Granting Organization (LSGO), is recognized as a charitable organization by the IRS.

**PART-TIME CHURCH SECRETARY POSITION** – With the announcement of Joyce’s retirement at the end of this year, church council has decided to break out this position into two positions, a part-time church secretary and a full-time school secretary. **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 are interested, or you know someone who may be interested, please call the church office at 419-598-8961.

**PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT** – St. John Lutheran Preschool is now accepting enrollment applications for the 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 and/or turn in their registration form. Registration is now open to the public. Be sure to register soon. **Current preschool students must complete new registration forms if they will be returning next school year.** The child must be 3 or 4 years old by September 30 of the year applying for preschool. The child must be completely toilet trained. There is a non-refundable \$30 registration fee that must accompany your registration paperwork. Refer a family to our preschool and your \$30 registration fee will be refunded.

**HEARING ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE:** If hearing in worship has been a problem for you, pick up one of the receiver units for our hearing assistance system. An usher will assist you and you'll hear much more clearly. (*Also, please let us know how the system is working for you.*)

For those who use the hearing assistance system regularly and for the sake of hygiene, we ask that you claim one of the ear buds as your own and keep it with you in your purse, pocket, etc. Bring it with you when you come to church, and simply plug it into one of the receivers. At the end of the service, unplug the ear bud to take with you until the next time.

**ST. JOHN WEBSITE:** Did you know you can listen to *Pastor Niermann's* sermons on the internet? Just click on "St. John YouTube Channel" or "Worship Service Resources" on the Home Page. There is also a "For Kids" tab which allows you to listen to previous Children's Sermons at St. John.

**USE OF THE FELLOWSHIP HALL OR YOUTH CENTER** – If you would like to use the Fellowship Hall or Youth Center for any occasion on a certain date this year, **please contact the church/school office at 419-598-8961 or 419-598-8702.** In addition to calling the office, you may want to check the online church calendar at [www.sjl.org](http://www.sjl.org) and click on "Calendar."

**COLLECTING STAMPS:** The LWML is collecting stamps "For Missions." A box is on the table in the narthex. Here is what you do: Cut the stamps from the envelopes allowing ¼ inch margin or more around the stamp. The stamp may not be damaged and the perforations around the stamp must be perfect. You need not trim the stamp; we have someone who trims and sorts the stamps. Do not remove stamps from envelopes, albums, and older postcards. An "old" postcard is usually from 1930 or before. The most valuable stamps are commemorative, foreign, and stamp denominations larger than 46 cents. When purchasing stamps, ask the post office staff for commemorative stamps. Colorful and large stamps are desirable. Collecting stamps is an easy way to participate in a mission project sponsored by the Lutheran Women's Missionary League.

**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. For over 50+ years, the ministry's dedicated staff and supporters have touched the lives of countless viewers around the world. 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.*

**PANCAKE-SAUSAGE BREAKFAST** – The Ridgeville Township Fire & Rescue will be hosting this breakfast on Sun., March 3<sup>rd</sup> with serving from 7AM – 1PM at the Ridgeville American Legion Hall. Carryout or Dine in. Free will donation! See flyer!

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

**Not all storms come to disrupt your life. Some come to clear your path.**

*"We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope." (Romans 5:3-4)*