St. John Lutheran Church

FREEDOM TOWNSHIP 16035 CO. RD. U ◆ NAPOLEON, OH 43545

Serving Christ in Freedom

Worship ◆ Stewardship ◆ Mission

December 29, 2024

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Rev. Gary Bender, TIM Pastor — Cell: 989-770-0005; Church: 419-598-8961

Miss Tracy Germann, Principal — School: 419-598-8702

Church Website: www.sjl.org

First Sunday After Christmas

Sermon & Text: "Remember the Firstborn" *Exodus 13:1-3a, 11-15*

Order of Service: Printed Insert

Hymns: **376 (v. 1, 2, 4) ~ 375 (v. 1, 4-6) ~ 333 ~ 352 ~ 374 ~ 358 (v. 1, 3, 14, 15) ~ 390**

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A WARM WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS

Welcome to our worship service here at St. John. If we can be of service to you in any way, please speak to our Pastor. If you are looking for a church to call home, please consider joining this church where we seek to help each other grow in faith, in love, and in service. Simply fill out the blue Rite of Fellowship card from the pew rack in front of you and drop it in the baskets at the door as you leave.

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SERVING IN GOD'S HOUSE THIS MORNING

✠ Bethann Gerken *Pianist* ✠ Zeek Kramer, Westen Cowell *Acolytes* ✠

✠ Dennis Showman, Dean Badenhop, Rich Elling *Ushers* ✠

✠ Diane Von Deylen, Lou Ann Rosebrock *Altar Guild* ✠

PORTALS OF PRAYER booklets for January, February, and March are on the desk in the back of the church. Pick up a copy today!

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 come!

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.

"THE LAMP" – Will not be meeting today. We will resume again next Sunday.

In God's House This Week		*Online church calendar: https://74058984.view-events.com*
Date	***Time***	***Activities***
Today	**9:00 AM** 10:20 AM	**Worship Service** Adult Bible Study; Sunday School
Mon.		NO SCHOOL: Christmas Break through 1/3
Sun.	**9:00 AM** 10:20 AM 2:30 PM	**Communion Service and Installation of Officers** Adult Bible Study; Sunday School; "The Lamp" GriefShare Support Group

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 12/22/24	$19,153.76	$185.00	$1,938.00

ATTENDANCE: 185

Advent 3 (12/18): Good Shepherd Church for the Deaf— $1,400.00; Attendance: 60
Children's Christmas Program (12/22): Home Fund— $15,143.00; Church Vocational Student Fund— $915.00; Attendance: 259

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.

PREPARING OUR EARS TO HEAR – In today's Scripture readings we hear that ***The Firstborn Son of God Is Our Redemption from Sin and Death.***

When the Lord destroyed the firstborn sons of Egypt, He spared the sons of Israel by providing a lamb in their stead. Hence, all the firstborn sons belong to Him. Every firstborn male animal was sacrificed, and every firstborn son of man was redeemed (Ex. 13:12–13). Therefore, the parents of Jesus "brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord" (Luke 2:22). However, He is not redeemed from priestly service but is consecrated for "the redemption of Jerusalem" and "the consolation of Israel" (Luke 2:25, 38). For God the Father did not spare His only begotten Son, but offered Him up as the true Passover Lamb, in order to redeem His people from bondage. His cross has caused many to stumble and fall, but His blood atoned for the sins of the world and delivers us from death. We now depart in the peace of Christ because we are also raised with Him. As we receive His body and blood, we join Simeon and Anna in "giving thanks to God the Father through him," "singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," including the Nunc Dimittis, with thankfulness in our hearts (Luke 2:28–32, 38; Col. 3:15–17). ***"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.** *Please note that if you are currently serving a multi-year term of office, you have already been installed and do not need to present yourself for installation again.*

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*

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.

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!

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

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 – There are still a few who have not picked up their 2025 offering envelopes. Be sure to pick yours up today!

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 in order to be included in the following Sunday's bulletin.

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. Most months are still available, so you can take your pick! 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!

LARGE PRINT & CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY BULLETINS are always available on the table in the narthex on Sunday mornings. The children's bulletins are coordinated with the Bible texts for each Sunday and provide activities that tie in with the weekly themes. Pick one up today for your child.

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…

Christ was born below that we might be born above.