



St. John Lutheran Church

FREEDOM TOWNSHIP

16035 Co. Rd. U ♦ NAPOLEON, OH 43545

Serving Christ in Freedom

Worship • Stewardship • Mission

January 5, 2025

VOL. 91

NO. 1

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

Epiphany Sunday

Sermon & Text: “The Light Shining in the Darkness” *Isaiah 60:1-6*

Order of Service: Divine Service Setting One ~ LSB pg. 151

Hymns: **610 ~ 396 ~ 639 ~ Blessed Assurance (projected) ~ 395 ~ 839**

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.



SERVING IN GOD'S HOUSE THIS MORNING

- ✠ Elaine Buenger *Organist* ✠ Piper Speiser and Kenlee Coressel *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! Join us next Sun., Jan. 12th, after worship service as we host a retirement celebration for our church/school secretary, Joyce Wiechers. We will gather in the fellowship hall for a time of coffee and conversation followed by a meal and cake. Thank you, Joyce, for your 18 years of service to St. John!

LYF SPONSOR BOARD – The LCMS National Youth Gathering is coming up this summer, and the participants are looking for sponsors. There will be a Sponsor Board (envelope fundraiser) in the back of the church during the month of January. Sponsors can choose an envelope that suits them and contribute the corresponding amount. Your support is greatly appreciated!

In God's House This WeekOnline church calendar: <https://74058984.view-events.com>

Date	Time	Activities
Today	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
Mon.	8:20 AM 6:00 PM	SCHOOL RESUMES Basketball: Gr 4-6 Girls.; 7:00 p.m. Gr 4-6 Boys – home vs. Solomon
Tues.	8:35 AM 5:15 PM 7:00 PM	School Chapel School Board Meeting Transition Task Force Meeting
Wed.	6:15 PM	Jr. High Confirmation Class
Thurs.	5:00 PM	Basketball: Gr 4-6 Girls.; 6:00 p.m. Gr 4-6 Boys – home vs. St. Mary's
Sun.	9:00 AM 10:15 AM 10:20 AM 2:30 PM	Worship Service with Communion Following Retirement Party for Church/School Secretary, Joyce Wiechers 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 12/29/24	\$10,919.24	\$1,012.78	\$886.27

ATTENDANCE: 135

Christmas Eve: Home Fund— \$6,863.00; Mission Fund— \$500.00; Attendance: 235

Christmas Day: Home Fund— \$3,555.00; Mission Fund— \$10.00; Attendance: 118

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

PREPARING OUR EARS TO HEAR – In today’s Scripture readings we hear that *The Lord God Is Manifested in the Incarnate Son.*

The Feast of the Epiphany centers in the visit of the Magi from the East. In that respect, it is a “Thirteenth Day” of Christmas; yet, it also marks the beginning of a new liturgical season. While Christmas has focused on the incarnation of our Lord — that is, on God becoming flesh — the season of Epiphany emphasizes the manifestation or self-revelation of God in that same flesh of Christ. The Lord Himself has entered our darkness and rises upon us with the brightness of His true light (Is. 60:1–2). He does so chiefly by His Word of the Gospel, which He causes to be preached within His Church on earth — not only to the Jews but also to Gentiles (Eph. 3:8–10). As the Magi were guided by the promises of Holy Scripture to find and worship the Christ Child with His mother in the house (Matt. 2:5–11), so does He call disciples from all nations by the preaching of His Word to find and worship Him within His Church (Is. 60:3–6). With gold, they confess His royalty; with incense, His deity; and with myrrh, His priestly sacrifice (Matt. 2:11) *“He who has ears to hear, let him hear” (Matt. 11:15).*

INSTALLATION OF 2025 CHURCH OFFICERS – This morning we give thanks to God for the people who lend their time and talents to the Lord’s service as officers in our congregation. We offer gratitude to those who are leaving their respective offices for a job well done and to those who are being installed today for the New Year 2025. May God bless our service to Him in His kingdom, whether in a formal office or in our own ways and vocations.

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

GRIEFSHARE – New session begins this afternoon!

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.

A BIG THANK YOU to Megan Bostelman and Andrea Oyer for putting together the Children's Christmas Program! The students gave a great performance celebrating the birth of our Savior.

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 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 – There are still some 2025 Women of Freedom program booklets at the narthex table. Please pick up your copy 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.

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



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Thought for the Week...

Is God included in your New Year's resolutions?