



# St. John Lutheran Church

FREEDOM TOWNSHIP

16035 Co. Rd. U ♦ NAPOLEON, OH 43545

## Serving Christ in Freedom

Worship • Stewardship • Mission

February 9, 2025

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NO. 6

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](http://www.sjl.org)

### The Fifth Sunday After Epiphany

Sermon & Text: "Here I Am. Send Me." *Isaiah 6:1-8*  
Order of Service: Service of Prayer and Preaching ~ LSB pg. 260  
Hymns: "Here I Am" (*projected*) ~ 827 ~ 923

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#### WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS

*Welcome to every member, friend, and visitor. You have entered this church, not as a stranger, but as a guest of God. May you who enter here find rest, forgiveness, and strength. May your worship here enable you to see your Savior more clearly, love Him more dearly, follow Him more nearly, and serve Him more sincerely. If you have no church home of your own, we invite you to join the St. John family. Simply fill out the blue Rite of Fellowship card from the pew rack 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* ✘ Erin Damman, Piper Speiser *Acolytes* ✘
- ✘ Denny Bockelman, Dave Myles, Tim Badenhop *Ushers* ✘
- ✘ Karan Niebergall, Karen Lulfs, Kaylee Buchhop, Ronda Wentworth *Altar Guild* ✘

**JAVA JOY TODAY** – It's the second Sunday of February, so join us for JAVA JOY in the front hallway after worship. We thank our host, *the St. John Cheerleading Team*, for providing this time for fellowship and refreshment. *Java Joy hosts are still needed for most months in 2025. The sign-up form and host guidelines are on the table in the narthex.*



**SUPER BOWL SUBS**– If you pre-ordered subs, TODAY is the pickup day. Stop at the kitchen after worship, and take your subs home with you. Payment is due when you pick up your subs with checks made payable to St. John LYF. Thank you for supporting the LYF!

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Activities</b>
Today	<b>9:00 AM</b>	<b>Worship Service with Communion Following</b>
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Study; Sunday School; "The Lamp"
	2:30 PM	GriefShare Support Group – Topic: "Anger"
Mon.	7:00 PM	"Right to Read" Week at St. John School (Mon.-Fri.) Final "Exploring St. John's Past" Workshop
Tues.	<b>8:35 AM</b>	<b>School Chapel</b>
	7:00 PM	Church Council Meeting
Wed.	6:15 PM	Jr. High Confirmation Class
	7:00 PM	Adult Choir Practice
Sun.	<b>9:00 AM</b>	<b>Communion Service</b>
	10:15 AM	Bake Sale to Benefit California Fire Relief
	10:20 AM	Voters' Meeting
	10:20 AM	Sunday School; "The Lamp"
	2:30 PM	GriefShare Support Group – Topic: "Regrets"

**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, and Rozella Gruenhagen* at Genacross
- ❖ *Lawrence Behrmann* at Northcrest Nursing & Rehab
- ❖ Our Shut-Ins: *Irene and Willie Joost* and *Leona Durham*
- ❖ Military: *Justin Atkinson, Jason Rohrs, Emily Carmon, Jordan Lange, Cody Hoffman, Joshua, and Kyle*
- ❖ *Lowell Petzoldt* and *Cheryl Yaw*, for health concerns related to cancer
- ❖ *William Niebergall* undergoing heart surgery
- ❖ *Marietta Damman* recuperating from hip surgery

<b><u>FINANCIAL FACTS:</u></b>	Home Fund	Synod & Missions	Building Fund
Weekly Need	\$11,710.59	\$500.00	\$961.54
Rec'd 2/2/2025	\$7,061.51	\$465.00	\$255.00

**ATTENDANCE: 203**

**2024 END-OF-YEAR CONTRIBUTIONS** – The 2024 individual offering totals (green sheets) are available on the narthex table. These will also be printed in the Church Annual Report. We hope this helps those members in need of this information for tax purposes. If you have any questions on your yearly contribution information, please call Financial Trustee, Jerry Langenhop, at 419-966-3473.

**THE 2025 USHER (blue) AND ALTAR GUILD (pink) SCHEDULES** are available and can be picked up on the narthex table. Thanks again to all who are willing to be of service at St. John!

**CONGREGATIONAL WORKSHOP** – The Transition Task Force is sponsoring three workshops to begin exploring St. John’s past, present, and future as we look forward to new ministry with a new pastor. **The final workshop for “Exploring St. John’s Past” is tomorrow Monday, Feb. 10, at 7 p.m. and will last around 1.5 hours. If you did not come to one of the other sessions, please plan to attend this one.** Fill out the “Exploring the Past of St. John Church & School” Questionnaire ahead of time, and bring it with you to the Workshop (additional copies are on the narthex table).

**PREPARING OUR EARS TO HEAR** – In today’s Scripture readings we hear that *Jesus Comforts His People and Builds Up His Church by the Ministry of His Gospel.*

When Isaiah “saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up,” he was overcome with an awareness of his sin and “unclean lips” (Is. 6:1, 5). But the Lord atoned for his sin, took away his guilt and sanctified his lips with “a burning coal” from the altar (Is. 6:6–7). Not only was he rescued from death, but he was called and sent as a prophet of the Lord’s Word (Is. 6:8–9). Similarly, when Simon Peter and his companions “enclosed a large number of fish” at the Word of Jesus, he humbled himself and said, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man” (Luke 5:4–8). But Jesus comforted Simon, called him to discipleship and declared that he would be “catching men” (Luke 5:10–11). So in the Office of the Ministry, the Church remains the little boat from which Jesus teaches His people (Luke 5:3). Thus are we instructed in the faith, so that we say “Amen” and return thanks with heart, mind, tongue and life. For the preaching of Christ Jesus is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit, by which He builds up His Church on earth (1 Cor. 14:12–19). ***“He who has ears to hear, let him hear” (Matt. 11:15).***

**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.

**VOTERS’ MEETING** – Next Sunday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, 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, and the Audit Committee will report their findings.

**BAKE SALE!** Join The Women of Freedom and St. John Lutheran School for a bake sale after church on Sunday, February 16<sup>th</sup>. All proceeds will go to help those affected by the California fires. Donations are welcome and can be brought with you Sunday morning or dropped off between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. on Saturday (2/15). We are also happy to announce that **Thrivent has offered to match \$1 for every \$2 we raise in the bake sale**, so your impact will be multiplied! ... *Lord, make me an instrument of Your Love, let me be a channel from above. Amen.*

**SERVICE DAY!** On Monday, February 17<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m., the Women of Freedom will be preparing material for baby care kits. Any and all are invited to share fellowship and enjoy a pizza and ice cream lunch while helping in this mission project. No sewing skill required! Bring a set of shears and a measuring tape (if you have them). Call Linda Riefers 419-267-3366 if you have any questions.

**DIRECTORY UPDATES** – There are addresses and phone numbers in the Annual Report directory that need updated. If you (and/or your adult children) have address or contact information changes, please call the church office at 419-598-8961 or email [churchsecretary@sjl.org](mailto:churchsecretary@sjl.org) with updates.

**2024 CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT** –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. **If you have not gotten your report in yet, please do so by Wednesday this week!** Email it to [churchsecretary@sjl.org](mailto:churchsecretary@sjl.org), or drop it in Leah Saylor’s office mailbox.

**GRIEFSHARE** is for those grieving the loss of a loved one, either recently or some time ago; maybe suddenly, tragically, or the slow decline leading to death - all are painful.



Whether the loss of a baby, mom or dad, a grandparent, your spouse, sibling or best friend, grief is love’s response to loss. A caring group has been meeting together, and there is room for more participants. We meet Sunday afternoons, 2:30 - 4:00 p.m. in the Youth & Family Center, for 13 weeks, from January 5 - March 30, 2025. The three-prong approach of GriefShare has proven to provide support, insight, and comfort: using *videos* with expert presenters, a free *handbook* covering weekly themes, and the *shared wisdom* and compassion of fellow grievers and your leaders, Rev. Gary Bender and Nancy Nemoyer. For more information or to register, go to <https://www.griefshare.org/groups/248795> or call Nancy at 717-421-5741. Brochures with more information are also on the back table.

The topics for the next few weeks are: 2/9 - Anger; 2/16 - Regrets; 2/23 - Grief & Your Household

**Christ’s Care  
FOR CHILDREN:  
KENYA**

**THANK YOU FROM THE SCHOOL** – We would like to send out a huge THANK YOU to our families and congregation members that gave so generously to our mission during National Lutheran Schools week. We have raised almost \$500 for Project 24- Christ’s Care for Children in Wamba, Kenya!

**SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE** – Mark your calendars for February 23<sup>rd</sup> from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. This is a new format for Open House this year. We invite all school families to come check out what is going on at St. John. Come join us for a Pancake breakfast from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., and enjoy some family fun activities taking place during Open House. Invite a friend or someone you know who may be interested in St. John School. We will be enrolling for the 2025-2026 school year.

**TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE** – St. John School continues to collect donations of empty egg cartons that hold a dozen eggs. Please make sure they are clean and not damaged.

#### **AREA EVENT**

- ◆ **A VALENTINE’S DINNER FUNDRAISER** to benefit the St. Peter (Florida) and St. Paul (Flatrock) Youth Group will be held on Sunday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, at 5:30 p.m. at St. Peter Lutheran Church. See flyer on the bulletin board or text 419-966-2637 for more details.

**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...*

**God is holy. Therefore, serve Him wholly!**