



St. John Lutheran Church

FREEDOM TOWNSHIP

16035 Co. Rd. U ♦ NAPOLEON, OH 43545

Serving Christ in Freedom

Worship • Stewardship • Mission

February 23, 2025

VOL. 91

NO. 8

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

The Seventh Sunday After Epiphany

Sermon: Guest Pastor ~ Rev. Gary Bernath
Order of Service: Matins ~ LSB pg. 219
Hymns: **871 ~ 843 ~ 845**

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. Please 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.



SERVING IN GOD'S HOUSE THIS MORNING

- ✠ Sharon Damman *Organist* ✠ Brynneleigh Kehnast, Brayden Damman *Acolytes* ✠
- ✠ Denny Bockelman, Dave Myles, Tim Badenhop *Ushers* ✠
- ✠ Karan Niebergall, Karen Lulfs, Kaylee Buchhop, Ronda Wentworth *Altar Guild* ✠

PASTOR OUT OF TOWN – This morning we welcome **Rev. Gary Bernath** as our Guest Pastor! Rev. Gary Bender is out of town from February 21st to 28th. *If you have any pastoral needs while Pastor Gary is out, please contact Pastor Kramer at 567-277-1339.*

SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE AND PTL PANCAKE BREAKFAST – Our school Open House is today, February 23rd. Come check out the new format this year for current and newly interested families. Visit the classrooms and see what they have been working on, check out your child's classroom for next year, and enjoy family activities. Open House will run from 11-1. PTL will be serving a pancake breakfast from 10:30-12. See you there!!!



Date	Time	Activities
Today	9:00 AM	Worship Service
	10:30 AM	Pancake Breakfast Sponsored by PTL
	11:00 AM	School Open House
	2:30 PM	GriefShare Support Group – Topic: “ <i>Regrets</i> ”
Mon.	10:00 AM	NO SCHOOL – Teacher Professional Development
	5:30 PM	LWML Service Project <i>Bread from Heaven</i> Food Pantry Distribution
Tues.	8:35 AM	School Chapel
Wed.	7:00 PM	Adult Choir Practice
Sun.	9:00 AM	Communion Service
	10:20 AM	Sunday School and “The Lamp”
	2:30 PM	GriefShare Support Group – Topic: “ <i>Grief & Your Household</i> ”

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

SURPRISE CARD SHOWER – Marietta Damman will be celebrating her 90th birthday on March 8th!

If you would like to bless her with a card, her address is 15978 Rd V, Napoleon. Also, if you happen to own a “Grandma Damman” blanket and could send or text her a picture of you with the blanket, that would be awesome!! Any questions, give *Sharon Damman* a call or text.

<u>FINANCIAL FACTS:</u>	Home Fund	Synod & Missions	Building Fund
Weekly Need	\$11,710.59	\$500.00	\$961.54
Rec'd 2/16/2025	\$3,572.00	\$180.00	\$430.00

ATTENDANCE:114

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.

ADULT BIBLE CLASS will not be held for the next few weeks due to some different events going on. We will resume on March 16th.

YOUTH “MY DEVOTIONS” BOOKLETS for March, April, and May are on the desk in the narthex. Pick one up for each of your children today!

PREPARING OUR EARS TO HEAR – In today’s Scripture readings we hear that *As the Son of God Is Merciful and Forgives Your Sins, You Also Be Merciful and Forgive.*

Your inheritance as a child of Adam is sin and death, but in Christ you are made alive through His resurrection from the dead (1 Cor. 15:21–22). As you have died with Him in Holy Baptism, so are you raised with Him to newness of life. Therefore, “do not go on sinning” (1 Cor. 15:34). Instead of serving your desires and harming your neighbors, live as “sons of the Most High,” and “be merciful, even as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:35–36). Deal with others as you would have others deal with you (Luke 6:31, 37–38). As Christ loved you when you were at enmity with Him, as He blessed and prayed for those who abused Him, and as He did good to those who hated Him and hurt Him, so also “love your enemies, do good” (Luke 6:27–29, 35). For God sent His Son to bear the cross and suffer death, not to condemn the guilty, but “to preserve life.” So does He provide a place for you within His Church, where He is near and deals kindly with “you and your children and your children’s children” (Gen. 45:5–10). *“He who has ears to hear, let him hear” (Matt. 11:15).*

MINI BAKE SALE! – The Women of Freedom will be holding a “mini” bake sale after church today. If you couldn’t join in on the fun last week due to weather, here’s your opportunity! This bake sale is a Thrivent 50% match event to assist the victims of the California fires. Thank you, thank you, to all who baked and donated for last Sunday’s event!! We are making some good monetary progress! If you couldn’t make either event, but still want to contribute, you may Venmo *Sharon Damman* this week or place cash/check made out to Women of Freedom in The Women of Freedom mailbox in the room next to the sanctuary.... *Lord, make me an instrument of Your Love. Amen.*

SERVICE DAY RESCHEDULED! Tomorrow, February 24th, at 10 a.m., the Women of Freedom will be preparing material for baby care kits in the north end of the Fellowship Hall. 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 at 419-267-3366 if you have any questions.

DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY – What does St. John’s ministry area look like? Who are the people in our area? Their ages, life circumstances, professions, etc.? On March 9th, after church, Ms. Lisa Hall from the Ohio District Office will present a Demographic Study of our area. Pastor Bender encourages all elected and appointed leaders of the congregation, as well as all members of the Transition Task Force and the Call Committee, to attend this presentation. Any member of St. John who is interested may also attend. Let’s get to know the people whom God is calling us to minister to.

ENDOWMENT FUND CONTACTS – Do you have questions about the St. John Endowment Fund? *Krista Gerken* and *Dave VonDeylen* are happy to provide more information to anyone who has questions or interest in making a donation. *Krista* can be reached at 419-966-2596 or lkgerken@henry-net.com. *Dave* can be reached at 419-438-1844 or davevd21@gmail.com.

2024 CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT – Please be sure to get your reports turned in to Leah Saylor promptly. The secretaries of the different church organizations are asked to write up a summary of the year’s activities, and treasurers should submit their financial report for their organization.

ANNUAL CHURCH CLEANING – A list of the people appointed for this year’s annual church cleaning is printed in today’s bulletin 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 shows up to do this each year!

GRIEFSHARE, a class offered at St. John for anyone grieving the loss of a loved one, meets on Sunday afternoons 2:30 p.m. from now until March 30. It is led by the team of Rev. Gary Bender, our TIM, and Nancy



Nemoyer, a member of St. John. You are invited to pray each week for the comfort of participants and the wisdom of leaders. Brochures with more information are on the back table. This week the topic is "Regrets." Upcoming class videos, with workbook and discussion, in March, will be:

- Sunday, March 2 Grief and Relationships - Your Household / Your Friendships
- Sunday, March 9 Questions for God
- Sunday, March 16 Stuck in Grief
- Sunday, March 23 Hope & Resilience
- Sunday, March 30 What Do I Live for Now?

FACEBOOK VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY – Are you interested in serving at St. John, but want flexible times and remote work? Do you enjoy working with social media? We are looking for a member to help take over the management of our church Facebook page. This volunteer will create posts and share information about our worship services, events, etc. This can be done from the comfort of your own home as long as you have internet and a smartphone or computer! Anyone with questions or interest can email Leah at churchsecretary@sjl.org.

ENROLLING NOW – St. John Lutheran School is enrolling students in preschool-grade 8 for the 2025-2026 school year. Come to our Open House today to take a tour, meet our staff and hear more about our curriculum. Interested families can contact Tracy Germann for more information at 419-598-8702 or tgermann@sjl.org

“YUMMY” FUNDRAISER – the “Yummy” Stoller fundraiser is going on now! St. John School is hosting this fundraiser which started February 13th and runs through March 4th. We did very well last year selling the Butter Braid pastries, Amish pretzels, Mrs. Fields cookies, and Joyful Traditions cake rolls! Each one of these items is absolutely delicious; we have never had a negative comment! Contact the school office or a St. John student to place an order. There are also forms on the narthex table, where you can scan a QR code and select a student or simply “St. John Church” to place an order online.

SCHOOL POSITION OPENING:

- **Music Teacher** - This is an open position as of November 1st. This is a one day a week position responsible for teaching children in grades K-5 music according to the state standards. If you know of anyone for this position, please contact Miss Germann at tgermann@sjl.org.

LSGO – It is tax time and not too late to make a donation to the LSGO (Lutheran Scholarship Granting Organization). (<https://lsgoohio.org/about/>). Your donation will provide scholarships to St. John students. You will also have a dollar for dollar reduced state income tax liability up to \$750 per filing individual or \$1,500 as a couple. You make the donation, your tax dollars come back to you, and the donation goes to a student at St. John. It will cost you nothing out of your pocket to make a difference! Please call Tracy at 419-598-8702 or email her at tgermann@sjl.org with any questions. There are SGO giving envelopes on the narthex table.

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.

WORSHIP ANEW is a weekly, 30-minute Lutheran broadcast worship service. Each service includes music, scripture readings, prayers, and a pastor delivering a message that is designed to feel one-on-one to the viewer. Broadcasts can be viewed every Sunday on: *Toledo's WTVG (CW) Channel 13.2 at 9:30 a.m.* or online at worshipanew.org.



LARGE PRINT & CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY BULLETINS are always available on the table in the narthex. The Children's Bulletins are coordinated with the Bible texts for each Sunday.

THE FLOWER CALENDAR for 2025 is posted in the narthex. 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.** It is your responsibility to contact *Nancy Glaser*. Also, please contact the church office with the information for the bulletin.

OHIO ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN: The Ohio Division OGT is located in the north end of the Culligan Water Conditioning building on Independence Drive in Napoleon. Someone is usually there to receive items on the first Tuesday of the month from 9:30-11:30 AM. PLEASE do not drop off items at the warehouse when it is closed. Thank you!

AREA EVENTS

- ◆ **THE CHARTON POLKA BAND** will be performing at St. Martin's Lutheran Church in Archbold **TODAY, Feb. 23rd, at 3 p.m.**

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 owes us nothing yet gives us everything.

2025 ANNUAL CHURCH CLEANING LIST

ANNUAL CHURCH CLEANING will be broken out into three groups. The top two names in each group will be the co-chairmen. If you would like your name removed from the annual cleaning list, please let your chairmen know as soon as possible. Thanks to all of you for giving your time and effort.

GROUP 1: Co-chair: Larry and Cheryl Sausser, Co-chair: Nick and Kelly Sonnenberg
Brad and Amy Rosebrook, Kirk and Tara Sausser, Jordan and Leah Saylor, Linda Schroeder, Matt and Shawna Schroeder, Jerry and Nancy Short, Dennis and Robin Showman, Marlene Showman, Kyle Showman, Bill and Shirley Sigg, Karen Sonnenberg, Leroy Sonnenberg, Roger and Shirley Sonnenberg, Scott and Kylie Speiser, Joel and Nicole Stier, Scott and Kim VanValkenberg, Daniel Volkman, Deb VonDeylen

GROUP 2: Co-chair: Tom and Sandy VonDeylen, Co-chair: Bob and Ronda Wentworth
Dave and Jane VonDeylen, Denny and Diane VonDeylen, Jake VonDeylen, Dan and Deb Wachtman, Todd and Tina Wachtman, Hannah Wachtman, Teresa Ward, Tracy Weber, Jeff and Char Weber, Michelle Weddelman, Eric and Teresa Weller, Maggie Weller, Dan and Joyce Wiechers, Eric Wiechers, Doug and Cathy Willeman, Kirk and Kim Woods, Lexi Woods, Kaleb Woods

GROUP 3: Co-chair: Neil and Anita Badenhop, Co-chair: Josh and Margo Behnfeldt
Jessica Allen, David Badenhop, Dean Badenhop, Glenn Badenhop, Greg Badenhop, Joe and Abbie Badenhop, Tim Badenhop, Kathy Badenhop, Lester and Diane Behnfeldt, Mark Behnfeldt, Micah Behnfeldt, Mike and Shelly Behnfeldt, Karter Behnfeldt, Clay Behnfeldt, Darrel Berhmann, Brian and Lori Bickel, Nate and Christa Bickel, Brad and Lisa Bockelman, Denny and Rhonda Bockelman, Scott Bockelman

GROUP 1: Narthex, Storage Room under Balcony, Balcony (including upper storage rooms), Church itself, Room in front of sanctuary on east side, Entrance area floors

GROUP 2: Cry Room, Pastor's Office, Conference room by church, Furnace room, Restrooms, (Includes Pastor's restroom), hallways (up to metal double doors), (Storage Room by Cry Room will be cleaned by Food Pantry Coordinators)

GROUP 3: Fellowship Hall, Storage Room off of Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, Storage room off of the Kitchen.