



# St. John Lutheran Church

FREEDOM TOWNSHIP

16035 Co. Rd. U ♦ NAPOLEON, OH 43545

## Serving Christ in Freedom

Worship • Stewardship • Mission

March 9, 2025

VOL. 91

NO. 10

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)

### FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

Sermon: "Rejoice in the Lord" *Deuteronomy 26:1-11*  
Order of Service: Service of Prayer and Preaching ~ LSB pg. 260  
Hymns: **435 ~ 785 ~ 571**

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### WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS

Welcome in the name of the Lord. We pray that through this time of stillness and song, prayer and proclamation, you may experience the Spirit of God at work in your life. May God richly bless your worship today! Please 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. If you do not have a local church home, we extend a warm invitation to you to become a part of our church family.

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

- ✠ Sharon Damman *Organist* ✠ Erin Damman, Piper Speiser *Acolytes* ✠
- ✠ Dave Badenhop, Denny Von Deylen, Jerry Short, Dan Wiechers *Ushers* ✠
- ✠ Deb Von Deylen, Elaine Buenger, Teresa Weller, Pat Mahnke *Altar Guild* ✠

**REMEMBERING JUDY** – We remember and grieve the passing of Judy Ann Okuly on Monday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>. Judy's funeral was held here on Friday at 11:00 AM. Please keep in your prayers her children, Jill (Erik) Vidra and Jason (Megan) Okuly; her beloved grandchildren, Brooklyn and Bryson, and Britain, Autumn, Hadley; and her brother, Jerry (Lori) Langenhop. Judy's confirmation verse reminds us to abide in Christ: "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5



**JAVA JOY TODAY!** It's the second Sunday of the month, and that means **Java Joy** after worship. Take a little time to enjoy a bite to eat and some fellowship in the front hallway. We thank *Margo Behnfeldt* for hosting Java Joy for March. Feel like hosting a **Java Joy** on the second Sunday of the month? Please sign up on the table in the narthex.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Activities</b>
Today	<b>9:00 AM</b>	<b>Worship Service with Communion Following</b>
	<b>10:20 AM</b>	<b>Demographic Study Presentation</b>
	10:20 AM	Sunday School and "The Lamp"
	1:30 PM	Gerald Busy Fingers 4-H Meeting
	2:30 PM	GriefShare Support Group – Topic: " <i>Questions for God</i> "
Tues.	<b>8:35 AM</b>	<b>School Chapel</b>
	6:00 PM	Church Council Meeting (Please note the 6 p.m. start!)
Wed.	10:00 AM	Women's Lenten Bible Study
	5:45 PM	Junior High Confirmation Class
	<b>7:00 PM</b>	<b>Midweek Lenten Service</b> ; Offering – <i>Orphan Grain Train</i> Acolyte: <i>Alana Naveau</i> Ushers: <i>Denny Bockelman, Dave Myles, Tim Badenhop</i> Altar Guild: <i>Deb Von Deylen, Elaine Buenger, Teresa Weller, Pat Mahnke</i>
	8:00 PM	Adult Choir Practice
Thurs.	6:30 AM	Men's Bible Study Breakfast
Sun.	<b>9:00 AM</b>	<b>Communion Service</b>
	10:20 AM	Adult Bible Study; Sunday School and "The Lamp"
	2:30 PM	GriefShare Support Group – Topic: " <i>Stuck in Grief</i> "
	4:00 PM	LYF Meeting – Jr. High at 4 p.m. and High School at 5 p.m.

**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 3/2/2025	\$16,407.49	\$855.00	\$275.00

**ATTENDANCE: 168**

**MEMORIALS FOR ELAINE MAHNKE** to the St. John Memorial Fund – \$1455.00

**PREPARING OUR EARS TO HEAR** – In today’s Scripture readings we hear that *Jesus Christ Is Our Champion Against the Devil*.

Jesus Christ, our champion against the devil, endures and overcomes “every temptation” (Luke 4:13) on our behalf. He worships the Lord, His God, and serves Him only by trusting the Word of His Father: “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased” (Luke 3:22). Jesus’ victory is now ours through His gracious Word, which is not far away but near us — in our mouth and in our heart, in the proclamation of repentance and faith. For “with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved” (Rom. 10:10). Our confession of Christ includes the prayer of faith, which is not disappointed, “for ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved’” (Rom. 10:13). The Lord is not oblivious to “our affliction, our toil, and our oppression” (Deut. 26:7), but has mercy upon us. He has brought us out of bondage through the “signs and wonders” of Holy Baptism, “with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm” (Deut. 26:8), and now He leads us by His Spirit even in the wilderness. ***“He who has ears to hear, let him hear” (Matt. 11:15).***

**DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY** – We are excited to announce that Lisa Hall from the LCMS Ohio District Office and the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) will join us **TODAY**, March 9<sup>th</sup>, to present after our church service. She will provide information about the work of the LCMS Ohio District Office and explain how LCEF collaborates with and supports churches in growing God’s Kingdom and sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. Additionally, a demographic study will be presented to help us better understand our neighbors. Remember, to love your neighbor, you first need to know them. We hope you can join us!

**“WHAT I HEARD” REPORT** – Pastor Gary has written a report titled “What I Heard” based on his one-on-one meetings that were held in the fall. A summary of the report was included in last week’s bulletin. Copies of the full report are available on the Narthex table.



**LENTEN DEVOTIONALS** are available on the Narthex table. This year’s devotional book titled “The Hand of The Lord” was written by St. John graduate *Rev. Dr. Matthew Rosebrock*. Pick up a copy, and follow through daily this Lenten season. There are also free devotionals provided by Lutheran Hour Ministries that can be found online at [lhm.org/lent](http://lhm.org/lent).

**LYF MEETING** – The Jr. High and High School LYF groups will be having their next meeting on Sunday, March 16<sup>th</sup> at the Youth & Family Center. The Jr. High (Grades 6-8) will meet at 4:00 PM followed by the High School (Grades 9-12) at 5:00 PM.

**WOMEN’S LENTEN BIBLE STUDY** – The Women of Freedom will be starting a 4-week Lenten Bible Study on **Wed., March 12<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM**. All ladies are invited; no sign up necessary! If you are interested in attending a Tuesday evening Bible study, please sign up in the back of the church today.



Bible Study



**MEN’S BREAKFAST BIBLE STUDY** will meet each Thursday in Lent until Maundy Thursday. **Join us bright and early this Thursday morning** at 6:30 AM for **Men’s Bible Breakfast**. It’s a great way to start your day! Good food, good friends, and a good Word from God!

**CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING** – Church Council will meet this Tuesday at **6 p.m.**

**LENTEN SUPPERS** – We will have our first Lenten supper on Wed. March 19<sup>th</sup> at 5 p.m. prior to the midweek service. We are looking for volunteers interested in hosting meals on Wed. March 26<sup>th</sup>, April 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. Contact the church office if you are interested or have questions. Thank you to all who provide this nourishment and fellowship for the congregation!



**BAKE SALE THANK YOU** – The Women of Freedom wanted to express our sincere gratitude for the incredible support you all showed for the California fire victims. We were absolutely blown away by the generosity of everyone who donated and baked goodies for the fundraiser. A huge thank you also goes out to Thrivent for their amazing 50% matching donation and to St. John School for joining us in this effort! And now for the exciting part... **we raised a total of \$2,871.00 for Lutheran Disaster Response!!** We're so thrilled and truly believe that this donation will make a real difference in the lives of those who lost so much. We hope you enjoyed the treats. May God bless you all.

**ANNUAL CHURCH CLEANING** – A list of the people appointed for this year's church cleaning is available on the narthex table. If you feel you are not physically able to help with the cleaning, let your co-chair know and we'll make a note of that. Thank you to all who show 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<sup>th</sup>. 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.



*Upcoming class videos, with workbook and discussion, in March, will be:*

Sunday, March 9 Questions for God

Sunday, March 23 Hope & Resilience

Sunday, March 16 Stuck in Grief

Sunday, March 30 What Do I Live for Now?

**FACEBOOK VOLUNTEER** – We are looking for a volunteer to help manage 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 interest or questions can email Leah at [churchsecretary@sjl.org](mailto:churchsecretary@sjl.org).

**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!

**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](mailto:lkgerken@henry-net.com). *Dave* can be reached at 419-438-1844 or [davevd21@gmail.com](mailto:davevd21@gmail.com).

**ENROLLING NOW** – St. John Lutheran School is enrolling students preschool-grade 8 for the 2025-'26 school year. Interested families can contact Tracy Germann at 419-598-8702 or [tgermann@sjl.org](mailto:tgermann@sjl.org).

**2024 CONTRIBUTIONS** – The 2024 individual offering totals (green sheets) are available on the narthex table. These will also be printed in the Church Annual Report. If you have any questions on your yearly contribution information, please call Financial Trustee, *Jerry Langenhop*, at 419-966-3473.

**LSGO WINDOW STILL OPEN** – It is tax time and not too late to make a donation to the LSGO (Lutheran Scholarship Granting Organization). Your donation will provide scholarships to St. John students K-8. 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](mailto:tgermann@sjl.org) with any questions.

**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.

**SCHOOL POSITION OPENING:**

- **Music Teacher** - This is an open position as of November 1<sup>st</sup>. 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](mailto:tgermann@sjl.org).

**LWML NAPOLEON ZONE SPRING RALLY** – Ladies, mark your calendars for the Spring Rally on Sat., April 5<sup>th</sup>. More details can be found on the bulletin board in the back of the church.

**THE SPRING LWML QUARTERLY** is available in the tract rack for any ladies to pick up a copy!

**CHURCH SECRETARY DAYS** – Leah Saylor is in the church office on Wednesdays and Thursdays. She can be reached by phone at 419-598-8961 or by e-mail at: [churchsecretary@sjl.org](mailto:churchsecretary@sjl.org). Bulletin submissions will now need to be turned in by end-of-day *Tuesday* in order to be included in Sunday's bulletin.

**COUNCIL MINUTES** – This is just a reminder that council meeting minutes are not published until they are approved a month later. If you would like to read about the most recent council meeting, an unofficial and unapproved copy of the minutes is available for viewing in the church office, usually within a week after the meeting.

**IF YOU'RE EVER IN A PINCH** and could use a little help, the *Good Neighbor Fund* is there to assist you too! Please don't be bashful about asking – everything is strictly confidential. Just give the church office a call, and we'll see what we can do!

**ST. JOHN WEBSITE** – Did you know you can listen to Pastor Gary's sermons and access current and past bulletins online? Just click on "St. John YouTube Channel" or "Worship Service Resources" on the home page of [sjl.org](http://sjl.org).

**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...*

**Sin is the disease; Christ is the cure.**

## MIDWEEK LENTEN SERVICES

During Lent, we gather for special midweek services each Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m. Pastor Gary is preaching a series titled “Words that Last Forever.” Please join us!

# *Words that* **LAST FOREVER!**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Offering</u>
Mar. 12	“Paradise!”	Orphan Grain Train
Mar. 19	“Behold!”	Dakota Boys & Girls Ranch
Mar. 26	“Forsaken!”	Worship Anew
Apr. 2	“Thirst!”	Lutheran Hour Broadcast
Apr. 9	“Finished!”	Mission Endowment
Apr. 17 <i>(Maundy Thursday)</i>	“For You!”	Home Fund
Apr. 18 <i>(Good Friday)</i>	“Hands!”	Home 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.\*\**