



St. John Lutheran Church

FREEDOM TOWNSHIP

16035 Co. Rd. U ♦ NAPOLEON, OH 43545

Serving Christ in Freedom

Worship • Stewardship • Mission

March 16, 2025

VOL. 91

NO. 11

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

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

Sermon: "Mend Your Ways" *Jeremiah 26:8-15*

Order of Service: Divine Service Setting Four ~ LSB pg. 203

Hymns: 728 ~ 708 ~ Choir Anthem: "Lamb of God" ~ Communion: 618, 436 ~ 727

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.



SERVING IN GOD'S HOUSE THIS MORNING

- ✘ Bethann Gerken *Pianist* ✘ Kenlee Coressel, Brayden Damman *Acolytes* ✘
- ✘ Dave Badenhop, Denny Von Deylen, Jerry Short, Dan Wiechers *Ushers* ✘
- ✘ Deb Von Deylen, Elaine Buenger, Teresa Weller, Pat Mahnke *Altar Guild* ✘

BAPTISMS YESTERDAY – This morning we rejoice about yesterday's baptisms of *Abraham Carl Damman* (born May 12, 2021) and *Eli Alan Damman* (born August 26, 2024). Parents Chad and Jamie Damman brought the boys to be baptized along with Abraham's sponsors, Luke Damman and Adrienne Damman, and Eli's Sponsors, Clara Damman and Alex Fewkes. We pray that what God has begun He will bring to completion on the day of Jesus Christ, qualifying Abraham and Eli to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. (*Colossians 1:12*)

EASTER FLOWER ORDERS – It's time again to order your Easter flowers. We are now taking orders for the various flowers to purchase "in memory of" or "in honor of" someone special in your life. Pink order forms are inserted in today's bulletin. Drop your order form and payment (to St. John Lutheran Church) into the container on the narthex table, or return it to the church office. **Order deadline is Sun., March 30th.** No later orders!

Date	Time	Activities
Today	9:00 AM 10:20 AM 2:30 PM 4:00 PM	Communion Service Adult Bible Study; Sunday School and "The Lamp" GriefShare Support Group – Topic: "Stuck in Grief" LYF Meeting – Jr. High at 4 p.m. and High School at 5 p.m.
Tues.	8:35 AM 7:00 PM 7:00 PM	School Chapel Transition Task Force Meeting Women of Freedom Meeting
Wed.	10:00 AM 5:00 PM 5:45 PM 7:00 PM 8:00 PM	Women's Lenten Bible Study Lenten Supper prior to midweek service Junior High Confirmation Class Midweek Lenten Service ; Offering – <i>Dakota Boys' and Girls' Ranch</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> Adult Choir Practice
Thurs.	6:30 AM	Men's Bible Study Breakfast
Fri.	6:00 PM	St. John School Family Movie Night
Sun.	9:00 AM 10:20 AM 1:30 PM 2:30 PM	Worship Service with Surveys to Follow Adult Bible Study; Sunday School and "The Lamp" Gerald Busy Fingers 4-H Meeting GriefShare Support Group – Topic: "Hope & Resilience"

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!*

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
- ❖ *Gloria Maringer* who was moved to hospice care on Tuesday

<u>FINANCIAL FACTS:</u>	Home Fund	Synod & Missions	Building Fund
Weekly Need	\$11,710.59	\$500.00	\$961.54
Rec'd 3/9/2025	\$8,552.00	\$237.00	\$228.00

ATTENDANCE: 121

ASH WEDNESDAY (3/5): \$1,431.00 for Youth Conferences; Attendance- 100

PREPARING OUR EARS TO HEAR – In today’s Scripture readings we hear that *Jesus Rescues Us from Death and Brings Us into Heaven*.

The prophet Jeremiah faithfully preached “all that the LORD had commanded him to speak to all the people” (Jer. 26:8). He called the people to repentance, lest the Lord’s judgment come upon them. The violence that Jeremiah suffered for this preaching foreshadowed the cross and Passion of Christ Jesus, who suffered the judgment of God for the redemption of all people. For Jesus “comes in the name of the Lord” (Luke 13:35) in order to lay down His life for the sins of the world. Earthly Jerusalem was blind to His gracious visitation, and it put Him to death like the prophets before Him. Yet, His sacrifice upon the cross became the cornerstone of the new Jerusalem, His Church. He visits us today in mercy with His preaching of forgiveness, to gather us to Himself within that holy city, “as a hen gathers her brood under her wings” (Luke 13:34), for “our citizenship is in heaven” (Phil. 3:20) *“He who has ears to hear, let him hear” (Matt. 11:15).*

CONGREGATIONAL SURVEYS – The next two Sundays, March 23rd and 30th, we will be administering congregational surveys after worship in the sanctuary for all adult members to complete. The services will be shortened to include the surveys in our normal timeframe. These surveys are an important part of our process of calling a new pastor, so please plan to be here!

DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY – If you were not able to attend the demographic study presentation last Sunday, copies of the report are available on the Narthex table.

“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. Copies are available on the Narthex table.



LENTEN DEVOTIONALS – There are a few more copies of the Lenten devotionals on the desk in the back of church. This year’s devotional book titled “The Hand of The Lord” was written by St. John graduate *Rev. Dr. Matthew Rosebrock*. There are also free devotionals provided by Lutheran Hour Ministries that can be found online at lhm.org/lent.

LYF MEETING – The Jr. High and High School LYF groups will be meeting TODAY, March 16th 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 OF FREEDOM MEETING – All ladies are invited to the Women of Freedom meeting this Tuesday, March 18th, at 7 p.m. in the north end of the Fellowship Hall. Join us for a time of fellowship, devotion, and mission!



THE TRANSITION TASK FORCE will also meet this Tuesday at 7 p.m.

WOMEN’S LENTEN BIBLE STUDY – The Women of Freedom are having a 4-week Lenten Bible Study that started last Wednesday. Join us in the cry room this coming **Wed., March 19th at 10 AM**. All ladies are invited; no sign up necessary!



Bible Study



MEN’S BREAKFAST BIBLE STUDY will meet each Thursday in Lent until Maundy Thursday. **Join us 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!

FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT – Friday, March 21st, beginning at 6:00 PM (with food) followed by the movie at 6:30, we will be having a Family Movie Night. **All church and school families are invited to attend.** The Athletic Boosters are generously providing all food and drinks. The movie will be *Inside Out 2*. We look forward to seeing you there.

LENTEN SUPPERS – We will have our first Lenten supper this coming Wed, March 19th at 5 p.m. prior to the midweek service. The meal is being provided by the youth, and the menu is chili and chicken noodle soups and hot dogs. We are looking for volunteers interested in hosting meals on Wed. April 2nd and 9th. Contact the church office if you are interested or have questions. Thank you to all who provide this nourishment and fellowship for the congregation!



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!

****Group 1 will be having their cleaning sessions on Mon. April 7th and Tues. April 8th starting at 5 p.m.** If you have questions, please contact co-chairs *Nick and Kelly Sonnenberg* or *Larry and Cheryl Sausser*. **

VOTERS' MEETING – Mark your calendars for March 30th. We will be having a voters' meeting in the sanctuary after worship to discuss the hiring of a part-time first and second grade teacher.

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 30th. 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 16 Stuck in Grief

Sunday, March 30 What Do I Live for Now?

Sunday, March 23 Hope & Resilience

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.

EPIC AUSTRALIAN ADVENTURE! – Mark your calendars for **Vacation Bible School** the week of June 9th to 13th from 9-11:30 a.m. This year's theme will be "Epic Australian Adventure" from Concordia Publishing House. More details to come!



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.

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!

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.

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.

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.

LWML NAPOLEON ZONE SPRING RALLY – Ladies, mark your calendars for the Spring Rally on Sat., April 5th at St. Luke’s. More details are 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!

HOPE-FULL LIVING DEVOTIONALS – Worship Anew offers a resource called *Hope-Full Living* which are devotions “written for and by seniors.” Visit hopefulliving.org to read or listen for free! They also offer the option to subscribe to a quarterly mailing of the devotions for \$16/year.

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. 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.

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.

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...

Jesus took your place on the cross to give you a place in Heaven.

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. 19	“Behold!”	Dakota Boys & Girls Ranch
Mar. 26	“Forsaken!”	Worship Anew
Apr. 2	“Thirst!”	Lutheran Hour Broadcast
Apr. 9	“Finished!”	Mission Endowment
Apr. 17	“For You!”	Home Fund
<i>(Maundy Thursday)</i>		
Apr. 18	“Hands!”	Home Fund
<i>(Good Friday)</i>		

We also look forward to our Easter celebrations on April 20th!

Easter Sunrise Service – 7:00 a.m.

Easter Fellowship Breakfast – 8:15 a.m.

Easter Festival Service with Communion – 9:30 a.m.

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.