



St. John Lutheran Church

FREEDOM TOWNSHIP

16035 Co. Rd. U ♦ NAPOLEON, OH 43545

Serving Christ in Freedom

Worship • Stewardship • Mission

March 30, 2025

VOL. 91 NO. 13

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

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Sermon: "God is my Salvation" *Isaiah 12:1-6*
Order of Service: Printed
Hymns: **915 ~ 686 ~ 437**

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

- ✠ Elaine Buenger *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* ✠

CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY – Today, March 30th, we will be administering a congregational survey after worship in the sanctuary for all adult members to complete. The service will be shortened to include the survey in our normal timeframe.

VOTERS' MEETING – We will be having a voters' meeting after worship today to discuss the hiring of a part-time first and second grade teacher.

EASTER FLOWER ORDERS – **TODAY** is your last day to order Easter flowers! We are taking orders for the various flowers to purchase "in memory of" or "in honor of" someone special in your life. Pink order forms can be found on the narthex table. 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	Worship Service with Surveys to Follow
	10:20 AM	Voters' Meeting
	10:20 AM	Sunday School and "The Lamp"
	2:30 PM	GriefShare Support Group – Topic: "What Do I Live for Now?"
Tues.	8:35 AM	School Chapel
	7:00 PM	Transition Task Force Meeting
Wed.	10:00 AM	Women's Lenten Bible Study
	5:45 PM	Junior High Confirmation Class
	7:00 PM	Midweek Lenten Service ; Offering – <i>The Lutheran Hour Broadcast</i> Organist: <i>Sharon Damman</i> Acolyte: <i>Brynnleigh Kehnast</i> Ushers: <i>Derek Damman, Greg Kehnast, Ian Rosebrook</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.	9:00 AM	Communion Service
	10:20 AM	Adult Bible Study; Sunday School and "The Lamp"
	1:30 PM	Gerald BusyFingers 4-H Meeting

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

FINANCIAL FACTS:	Home Fund	Synod & Missions	Building Fund
Weekly Need	\$11,710.59	\$500.00	\$961.54
Rec'd 3/23/2025	\$12,462.03	\$180.00	\$180.00

ATTENDANCE: 186

LENT 3 (3/19): \$1,228.00 for Dakota Boys' and Girls' Ranch; Attendance- 71

THE 2024 ANNUAL REPORT IS COMPLETE! Pick up a copy on the Narthex table today. If you didn't get your directory updates in prior to printing, please still let Leah (churchsecretary@sjl.org) know if you have any changes, so we can update our records accordingly.

PREPARING OUR EARS TO HEAR – In today’s Scripture readings we hear that *Jesus Christ Has Reconciled Us to the Father*.

God the Father has opened His heart to us in love. While we were “still a long way off,” He saw us and “felt compassion” (Luke 15:20). Therefore, He gave His only begotten Son for us, making “him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor. 5:21). By the ministry of reconciliation, He runs to us, embraces us in mercy and clothes us with His glory as beloved sons in Christ Jesus. And so we give thanks unto the Lord our God, who has taken away our sins and turned His anger from us (Is. 12:1). Because He has become our salvation, our strength and our song, we “will trust, and will not be afraid” (Is. 12:2). ***“He who has ears to hear, let him hear” (Matt. 11:15).***

WOMEN’S LENTEN BIBLE STUDY – The Women of Freedom have one more week of their Lenten Bible Study. Join us in the cry room this coming **Wed., April 2nd 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!

LENTEN SUPPERS – We will not be having a Lenten supper this week. We are looking for volunteers interested in hosting the meal on Wed. April 9th. Contact the church office if you are interested or have questions. Thank you to those who provide this nourishment for the congregation!

EASTER FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST – The sign-up sheet for our annual Easter Fellowship Breakfast is on the Narthex table. The breakfast will start around 8:15 a.m. between the Easter Sunrise and Festival services on April 20th. The menu includes eggs, sausage, and hash browns. Anyone wanting to help with preparation and serving are welcome to do so. Thank you for helping in this way as we celebrate the joy of Easter together!

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!

1. **Group 1 will be having its 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*.
2. **Group 2 will be having its cleaning session on Mon. April 7th starting at 5 p.m.** If you have questions, please contact co-chairs *Tom and Sandy Von Deylen* or *Bob and Ronda Wentworth*.
3. **Group 3 will be having its cleaning session on Thurs. April 10th starting at 5 p.m.** If you have questions, please contact co-chairs *Neil and Anita Badenhop* or *Josh and Margo Behnfeldt*.

LWML NAPOLEON ZONE SPRING RALLY – Ladies, mark your calendars for the LWML Spring Rally on Sat., April 5th at St. Luke’s. The flyer is found on the bulletin board in the back of the church. The featured speaker is *Rowen Turner*, a Fort Wayne Seminary student. He has an interesting story to tell about his faith journey. The in-gathering is for the Fort Wayne Seminary Food Bank. There will also be an opportunity to donate to Mites and Napoleon Zone.

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.

GRIEFSHARE, a class offered at St. John for anyone grieving the loss of a loved one, meets today at 2:30 p.m. Today is the last session of this round of classes. 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 for the comfort of participants and the wisdom of leaders. Brochures with more information are on the back table.



DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY – If you were not able to attend the demographic study presentation on March 9th, 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.

THRIVENT CLIENTS – Don’t forget to direct 2024 Choice Dollars® prior to 3/31! If you’re an eligible Thrivent client and have Choice Dollars available to direct, please call your Thrivent office or direct them online by visiting thrivent.com/thriventchoice. Keep up the good work! Your designations are making a difference here at St. John.

OLD CHURCH PEWS – If you are looking for a restoration project, we may be able to help you out. There are 2 church pews from the old church available to anyone interested. They will need some TLC (*tender loving care*), but are very sturdy yet. They are different lengths. If you are interested in them, please see/contact *Dan or Joyce Wiechers*.

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.

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.

THE LUTHERAN WITNESS – If you would like a monthly copy of the *Lutheran Witness* magazine mailed to your home, please contact the church office to be added to the mailing list. The *Lutheran Witness* magazine “seek[s] to help you interpret the world from a Lutheran perspective.”

STOLLER “YUMMY” FUNDRAISER – If you ordered “Yummy” items from the school fundraiser, they can be picked up tomorrow, March 31st after school (3-5 p.m.).

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.

MOVIE NIGHT THANK YOU – Thank you to all the parents involved in making Family Movie Night a success. We appreciate the Church and School families who came out and enjoyed the evening.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.



AREA EVENTS

- ◆ **CPC WOMEN’S HEALTH RESOURCE** (our local pregnancy center) is having its annual **SPRING BENEFIT AND SILENT AUCTION** in Archbold on Tues., April 8th at 5:30 p.m. The event features a meal and guest speaker. More details are on the bulletin board.
- ◆ **A “CHRIST IN THE PASSION” PRESENTATION** will be held at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Liberty Center, on Tues., April 15th at 7 p.m. More details are on the bulletin board.

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Thought for the Week...

In God’s salvation, we are reconciled, and our hearts overflow with praise.

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>
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

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.