



St. John Lutheran Church

FREEDOM TOWNSHIP

16035 Co. Rd. U ♦ NAPOLEON, OH 43545

Serving Christ in Freedom

Worship • Stewardship • Mission

August 24, 2025

VOL. 91

NO. 34

Pastoral Vacancy

Miss Tracy Germann, Principal

Church Office: 419-598-8961

School Office: 419-598-8702

Church Website: www.sjl.org

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Sermon: Guest *Seminarian Mark Langton*

Order of Service: Matins *LSB pg. 219*

Hymns: **913 ~ 510 ~ 819 v. 1, 3, 5 ~ 725**

WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS

You are among Christian friends today. We all have come to the Lord's House to hear what He has to say and to be doers of the Word and not hearers only. We pray that His grace will touch and move you. If you are a visitor, we ask that you fill out the blue Rite of Fellowship card from the pew rack in front of you, and drop it in the baskets at the doors as you leave this morning. Your presence is a blessing to us. If you have no church home of your own, we'd love to have you join the St. John family!



SERVING IN GOD'S HOUSE THIS MORNING

- ✘ Sharon Damman *Organist* ✘ Brynnleigh Kehnast *Acolyte* ✘
- ✘ Dave Badenhop, Denny Von Deylen, Jerry Short, Dan Wiechers *Ushers* ✘
- ✘ Deb Von Deylen, Elaine Buenger, Teresa Weller, Pat Mahnke *Altar Guild* ✘

THE FINAL REPORT FROM THE TRANSITION TASK FORCE has been approved by council, and copies are available to the congregation on the Narthex table. This report details the past, present, and future of St. John based on the interviews, workshops, questionnaires, etc. completed during our transition between pastors.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS – Sunday School and Confirmation classes are scheduled to start back up in just a few weeks on **Sunday, September 7th** after the worship service. Please pray for our Sunday School and Confirmation teachers as they prepare to minister to our youth.

- *If you are the parent of a 7th or 8th grader who has not signed up for confirmation classes or been added to the acolyte schedule, please contact Leah in the church office (churchsecretary@sjl.org or 419-598-8961), so we can get your student added to the class.*

Date	Time	Activities
TODAY	9:00 AM 10:15 AM	Worship Service with Backpack Blessing "Back to School Brunch" hosted by School Board
Mon.	5:30 PM 6:00 PM	<i>Bread from Heaven</i> Food Pantry Monthly Distribution K-6 th Parent Information Night
Tues.	8:35 AM	School Chapel
Thurs.		Preschool Preview Day (4 y/o class)
Fri.		Preschool Preview Day (3 y/o class)
Sun.	9:00 AM	Worship Service

PASTORAL EMERGENCIES – Please contact **Pastor Kramer** at 567-277-1339 with any emergency pastoral care requests.

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, Jordan Lange, Joshua, and Kyle*
- ❖ *Brenda Elling, Lowell Petzoldt, and Julie (Kern) Patterson* for health concerns related to cancer
- ❖ *Stan Gerken* for health concerns

<u>FINANCIAL FACTS:</u>	Home Fund	Synod & Missions	Building Fund
Weekly Need	\$11,710.59	\$500.00	\$961.54
Rec'd 8/17/2025	\$7,927.00	\$725.00	\$400.00

ATTENDANCE: 123

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 to visit our donation page.



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.

WE CONTINUE TO COLLECT EGG CARTONS for the organization "Together We Can Make a Difference." There is a collection box in the Narthex for clean, 12-count only egg cartons. Thank you!

SHARE THE BOUNTY – Has your garden produced a bounty of beans? A crush of cucumbers? An excess of eggplants? If you've got more than you can use, consider sharing the bounty with your friends at church. There is a table outside under the carport where you can drop off the garden produce you *can't* use, and you can also pick up what you *can* use. It's a wonderful way to share the blessing!



PREPARING OUR EARS TO HEAR – In today’s Scripture readings we hear that *The Cross of Christ Is the Way into the Kingdom of God*.

With the cross of Christ, the time has come “to gather all nations and tongues” (Is. 66:18). The sign of the cross is set forth in the preaching of the Gospel, the declaration of the Lord’s glory “among the nations” (Is. 66:19). Many “will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God” (Luke 13:29), but only by the narrow way of the cross. Those who refuse to follow Christ crucified will ultimately find only “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Luke 13:28), whereas Christ’s disciples, called from all the nations, will eat and drink with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God. They will come into “the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb. 12:22) **“He who has ears to hear, let him hear” (Matt. 11:15).**

THE WOMEN OF FREEDOM have two opportunities to share with those in need, and the congregation is invited to join them! Collection boxes will be labeled and in the back of church for:

1. *Together We Can Make a Difference* Initiatives is in need of **new winter hats, scarves, and gloves/mittens for all ages**. We will be collecting up until Christmas, but cold weather will be arriving before we know it, so we will begin now.
2. *Orphan Grain Train* is in need of **new undershirts, underwear, and socks**. These will be collected for the ingathering for the Women in Mission (LWML) Fall Retreat to be held on Sept. 20th at St. John, Stryker.

LWML FALL RETREAT – As noted above, this year’s LWML Defiance/Napoleon Zone Fall Retreat will be held on Sat., September 20th at St. John Stryker. The event will run from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The theme is “He Restoreth my Soul” based on Psalm 23:2. Registration forms are on the Narthex table—they are due by September 12th to Marlene Cripe (1969 Redwood Dr. Defiance, OH 43512) with a \$15 luncheon fee.



“ROAD TO DAMASCUS” BUS TRIP – St. John Lutheran Church in Defiance is planning a bus trip to Sugarcreek, OH, to the Ohio Star Theater to see the production “The Road to Damascus,” a musical theater journey through the book of Acts. They are opening the trip to area churches in order to reach the minimum number of attendees needed to charter the bus. The trip is scheduled for **Thurs., Sept., 25th**, and reservations need to be made by **Mon., August 25th**. The cost is \$125 per person. See the yellow flyer on the Narthex table for more information if you are interested. Please direct any questions or registration forms to the St. John **Defiance** church office (*Jenny George- 419-576-2911*).

‘BREAD FROM HEAVEN’ – Our food pantry’s next distribution will be tomorrow, August 25th, at 5:30 p.m. A note to St. John members needing food assistance – If you could use food assistance from our food pantry, please contact the church office. We are required by the *Northwestern Ohio Food Bank* to keep a record with your name, but we will keep your record separate and confidential.

Contributions can be made at any time. Monetary gifts can be given to the *Good Neighbor Fund* (note it on your offering envelope). Food donations for our pantry can be dropped off in the box by the Archives display cases. Food items especially needed at this time are noted on the whiteboard by the door. Any and all contributions are always greatly appreciated. Thank you so much!

HIRING NOW – St. John Lutheran School has staff positions open: **short and long-term substitutes, school cook, janitor, and music teacher.** Interested candidates, contact Tracy Germann (tgermann@sjl.org).



GIRLS' BASKETBALL COACHING – As you may have heard, Mrs. Shawna Schroeder has decided to step down from her role as head basketball coach at St. John. Shawna has faithfully filled this role for around 15 years, and her joy and leadership have had great impacts on the girls in our church and school! She is a blessing and will certainly be missed. With this news, **St. John is looking for a new girls' basketball coach for the upcoming basketball season.** Anyone interested should contact *Joe Badenhop* at joebadenhop@yahoo.com or 419-438-5435.

ATHLETIC BOOSTER MEMBERSHIP – Memberships are now being taken for the '25-'26 Athletic Booster Club. Prices are \$20.00 for a couple and \$10.00 for an individual. Make checks payable to **St. John Boosters** and turn them into the school office. Forms are available on the Narthex table or outside the office. Join today to help out the children's athletic program.

SCRIP AT ST. JOHN – The SCRIP campaign has begun and will run for the remainder of the school year. For those that don't know, SCRIP is a program where you can purchase gift cards through our PTL for full face value, and a percentage of your purchase is returned to our school. They work for both in-store purchases and online shopping. PTL works through a company that purchases these gift cards in bulk from participating retailers. Think ahead— if you give out gift cards for birthdays, Christmas, or other occasions, consider purchasing them from PTL instead of at the store, so that a portion of that sale stays with St. John Lutheran School. Order forms are available outside the school office and by the table in the Narthex. Please feel free to share with family and friends. Payment must accompany orders and checks should be made out to St. John PTL. Any questions about SCRIP can be directed to SCRIP Coordinator *Kristyn Honemann* (419-966-0207 or honemann@embarqmail.com).

ALTAR FLOWERS – Anyone who wishes to place flowers on the altar for Sunday worship, please contact *Nancy Glaser* at 419-906-0963. **NOTE: The price for flowers through the Women of Freedom is now \$30.00.** Please make checks payable to *Women of Freedom*. Remember that it is your responsibility to call Nancy either way; if you would like the Women of Freedom to order the flowers or if you are going to take care of ordering the flowers yourself. Please also contact the church office with any “in memory/honor of” notes to be put in the bulletin. This will alleviate any confusion.

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Thought for the Week...

**May joy echo through all that we do at
St. John Lutheran Church and School!**

*Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises! Psalm 98:4*

Let's
Make
a Joyful
Noise **2025-26**

Back to School at St. John



"Blessing of the Backpacks"

For all students returning to school, **any school!** When called forward during the service this morning (after the offering), have your student come to the front of the church (bringing his/her backpack if you brought it!) for a special blessing and time of prayer for the school year.

"Back to School Brunch"

Following this morning's worship service, church and school families are invited to join in the Fellowship Hall for a **Back to School Brunch** hosted by the School Board! Meet new staff members, tour classrooms, drop off supplies, and enjoy a delicious brunch as we kick off the new school year.

Let's
Make
a Joyful
Noise **2025-26**

Our theme this school year is **Let's Make a Joyful Noise** based on Psalm 98:4—

"Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises!"

Church and school families are welcome to pick up copies of the "My Devotions" booklets on the desk in the Narthex.

These booklets are great for students to use individually or for a family to use together over the dinner table. The booklets include daily devotions as well as journaling space, coloring pages, and other activities.