



St. John Lutheran Church

FREEDOM TOWNSHIP

16035 Co. Rd. U ♦ NAPOLEON, OH 43545

Serving Christ in Freedom

Worship • Stewardship • Mission

September 7, 2025

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NO. 36

Pastoral Vacancy

Miss Tracy Germann, Principal

Church Office: 419-598-8961

School Office: 419-598-8702

Church Website: www.sjl.org

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Sermon: Guest *Rev. Matthew Montgomery*

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

Hymns: **688 ~ 851 ~ Communion: 626, 605, 783 ~ 918**

WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS

We welcome all who have come to worship our God with us today! Each day we live is a priceless gift from God, loaded with possibilities to learn something new, to gain fresh insights into His great truths. May we be showered with those blessings as we together profess His Name today. If you are a visitor, please fill out the blue Rite of Fellowship card from the pew in front of you and drop it in the baskets at the doors as you leave.



SERVING IN GOD'S HOUSE THIS MORNING

- ✘ Bethann Gerken *Pianist* ✘ Brynneleigh Kehnast, Emma Damman *Acolytes* ✘
- ✘ Derek Damman, Greg Kehnast, Ian Rosebrook *Ushers* ✘
- ✘ Karan Niebergall, Karen Lulfs, Kaylee Buchhop, Ronda Wentworth *Altar Guild* ✘

“WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT” – Faithful servant *Lowell Petzoldt* has gone to be with the Lord. He passed away at Fulton Manor in Wauseon, on Tuesday, September 2nd, at the age of 71. Lowell’s funeral was held here at St. John yesterday, September 6th. Please keep Blake & Kristin, Courtney & Wes (fiancé), and other family in your daily prayers at this time. Lowell’s Confirmation verse reminds us of the hope we have in Christ now and always: “*and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*” (Matthew 28:20b KJV).

MY DEVOTION BOOKLETS for *Sept., Oct., and Nov.*, are available on the desk in the narthex. These are kid-friendly and are great for kids’ individual or family devotion time. Pick up a copy today.

LWML QUARTERLIES – Stop by the tract rack at the narthex table to pick up a copy of the *LWML Quarterly* for Fall 2025. These have nice articles and Bible studies and are available to all ladies.

Date	Time	Activities
TODAY	9:00 AM 10:15 AM	Communion Service Sunday School; Adult Bible Study Confirmation class after church until 11:15
Mon.	1:00 PM 6:30 PM	Grandparents' Day at St. John School <i>including School Chapel</i> PTL Meeting
Tues.	6:00 PM	Church Council Meeting
Fri.	10:00 AM	Grandparents' Day for 3 y/o Preschool
Sat.		Hawks' Pizza Community Day
Sun.	9:00 AM 10:15 AM	Worship Service with Communion to follow <i>Java Joy</i> hosted by St. John School Teachers after the service Sunday School; Adult Bible Study Confirmation class after church until 11:15

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* and *Julie (Kern) Patterson* for health concerns related to cancer
- ❖ *Stan Gerken* for health concerns

FINANCIAL FACTS:

	Home Fund	Synod & Missions	Building Fund
Weekly Need	\$11,710.59	\$500.00	\$961.54
Rec'd 8/31/2025	\$5,490.97	\$190.00	\$240.00

ATTENDANCE: 119

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.

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 *Christ Jesus Has Paid the Cost of Discipleship for You.*

A disciple of Jesus Christ will “bear his own cross” (Luke 14:27) and follow the Lord through death into life. Discipleship is costly because it crucifies the old man with “all that he has” (Luke 14:33), in order to raise up the new man in Christ. The disciple disavows “his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life” (Luke 14:26), in deference to Christ. That way of the cross is impossible, except that Christ Jesus has already paid the cost. His cross is set before you as “life and good, death and evil” (Deut. 30:15). Taking up His cross is to “choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him” (Deut. 30:19–20). To live that life in Christ is also to bear His cross in love, “that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord” (Philemon 14). ***“He who has ears to hear, let him hear” (Matt. 11:15).***

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND CONFIRMATION CLASSES start back up **today, September 7th**, after the worship service. Sunday School will open in the Fellowship Hall before dispersing to the classrooms. Confirmation will meet in the North End of the Fellowship Hall.

➤ *Confirmation students are asked to bring a 1-inch binder, an ESV Bible, and Luther’s Small Catechism to class. You may purchase the Bible and/or Catechism on your own or use copies you already have. If you’d like to purchase these through the church office, please contact Leah Saylor.*

ADULT BIBLE STUDY will meet after church this morning in the *Cry Room*.

CHOIR PRACTICES will resume Wed., September 17th, at 7 p.m. We encourage anyone interested in joining the choir to come; they will be happy to see you! Thank you to Jon Buenger for directing the choir and to each choir member for sharing musical talents!

PRAIRIE PROJECT PROGRESS – We’re excited to share that last Saturday, the *Toledo Zoo* officially began the Prairie Project for St. John School! You may have noticed white flags marking the designated project area next to the parking lot— for everyone’s safety and to help ensure the success of the project, we kindly ask that you stay outside the flagged area. This is a wonderful opportunity to see a native prairie take shape right “in our backyard.” We look forward to watching it grow!

GRANDPARENTS’ DAY – Tomorrow, Sept. 8th, our school will celebrate our grandparents. Grandparents of the 4-year-old preschool class as well as grandparents of students in grades K-6 are invited to come to school from 1:00-2:45 p.m. for fun activities and a Chapel service. Grandparents’ Day for the 3 y/o preschool class will be held on Fri., September 12th from 10-11 a.m.

CHURCH OFFICE VACATION NOTICE – The Church Secretary will be out of office from Wed., Sept. 10 through Wed., Sept. 17. She will be in to work on Mon., Sept. 8 and Tues., Sept. 9, and will return to work Thurs., Sept. 18 and Fri., Sept. 19. The school office will be open as usual, and Pastor Kramer may be contacted for pastoral emergencies. ***Please note the following adjusted bulletin announcement submission deadlines:***

- Submissions for Sun., Sept. 14 should be turned in by 9:00 a.m. on Tues., Sept. 9.
- Submissions for Sun., Sept. 21 should be turned in by 9:00 a.m. on Thurs., Sept. 18.

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.

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.

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



GIRLS’ BASKETBALL COACHING – 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.

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!

SAVE THE DATES – LYF will have its first meeting of the school year on Sun., Sept. 21st. The annual **LYF Ice Cream Social** is being planned for Sun., Sept. 28th.

HAWKS’ COMMUNITY DAYS – Hawks Pizza and Drive-Thru has invited us again to be part of their Community Day fundraiser. On Saturday, Sept. 13th, Hawks will donate 10% of their sales to St. John Lutheran School. Let’s keep up the great support shown for St. John and this local small business by ordering your favorite food at Hawks Pizza on Saturday, Sept. 13th.

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Thought for the Week...

Take your sin seriously. Remember the cross gratefully.