



St. John Lutheran Church

FREEDOM TOWNSHIP

16035 Co. Rd. U ♦ NAPOLEON, OH 43545

Serving Christ in Freedom

Worship • Stewardship • Mission

December 14, 2025

VOL. 91

NO. 50

Pastoral Vacancy

Miss Tracy Germann, Principal

Church Office: 419-598-8961

School Office: 419-598-8702

Church Website: www.sjl.org

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Guest Preacher, *Rev. Matthew Montgomery*

Order of Service: Divine Service, Setting Three, *LSB pg. 184*

Hymns: **346 ~ 345 ~ 331**

WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS

Advent is a season of repentance and preparation for the Coming of Christ. We warmly 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 and gain fresh insights into His great truths. If you are a visitor, please fill out the Rite of Fellowship card from the pew rack in front of you and drop it in the baskets at the doors as you leave today.



SERVING IN GOD'S HOUSE THIS MORNING

- ✠ Elaine Buenger, *Organist* ✠ Stryker Oyer, Piper Speiser *Acolytes* ✠
- ✠ Dennis Showman, Dean Badenhop, Richard Elling, *Ushers* ✠
- ✠ Kathy Behnfeldt, Pat Maassel, Anita Badenhop, *Altar Guild* ✠

A WELCOME ADDITION TO GOD'S FAMILY! –

This morning we are thrilled to welcome *Cody Robert Saylor*, infant son of Jordan & Leah (Maassel) Saylor to God's family. Cody was born on November 25, 2025. Cody will be baptized at the start of the service this morning by Rev. Montgomery. There are no formal sponsors for Cody. Welcome, welcome, little Cody!



SHARE YOUR MUSICAL GIFTS ON CHRISTMAS EVE! We're inviting all musicians and singers, of any age, to contribute pre-service music for our Christmas Eve service. Whether you play an instrument or sing, as a soloist or in a group, your talent will help make the evening special.

To volunteer, please contact **Sharon Damman** directly at **419-966-2164**. If you require accompaniment, kindly inform Sharon Damman by December 15th. Arrangements can also be made for music on CD. Let's celebrate together with your wonderful musical contributions!

Date	Time	Activities
TODAY	9:00 AM 10:15 AM 5:00 PM	Worship Service Children's Christmas practice; Adult Bible Study Confirmation class after church until 11:15 LYF Christmas Gathering (<i>see bulletin note</i>)
Tues.	8:35 AM	School Chapel and Cookie Decorating with Prayer Partners
Wed.	7:00 PM 8:00 PM	3rd Advent Service ; Offering: <i>CPC Women's Health Resource</i> Guest Pastor: <i>Rev. Matthew Montgomery</i> Acolytes: <i>Sadie Bickel</i> Ushers: <i>Dennis Showman, Dean Badenhop, Richard Elling</i> Altar Guild: <i>Kathy Behnfeldt, Pat Maassel, Anita Badenhop</i> Adult Choir Practice
Thurs.	5:30 PM	B-ball: Girls; 6:30 PM Boys @ Trinity - Toledo
Fri.	9:00 AM	Grades K-6 Field Trip to Toledo to see the movie "David"
Sun.	9:00 AM 10:15 AM 7:00 PM	Communion Service followed by Voters' Meeting (<i>in fellowship hall</i>) Children's Christmas practice (full run through); "The Lamp;" Adult Bible Study Children's Christmas 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* and *Norma Damman* at Genacross
- ❖ *Rozella Gruenhagen* and *Bob Nemoyer* at Vancrest
- ❖ *Lawrence Behrmann* at Northcrest Nursing & Rehab
- ❖ Our Shut-Ins: *Irene Joost, Leona Durham, and Marlene Showman*
- ❖ *Brenda Elling, Anne Rausch, and Julie (Kern) Patterson* for health concerns related to cancer
- ❖ *Stan Gerken* and *Rev. Ken Schroeder* for health concerns
- ❖ Military: *Eric Maassel, Justin Atkinson, Jason Rohrs, Jordan Lange, Joshua, and Kyle*

BULLETIN STUFFER VOLUNTEERS – Want to get involved? Why not try volunteering to help with stuffing the bulletins for worship services. It's not too difficult and can be done either at church or in the comfort of your own home. The bulletins are pre-folded. We are looking for about 11-12 couples/families to sign up for this task for 2026. Those interested can sign up for the month that works best for them on the sheet at the narthex table. **NOTE:** If you have stuffed bulletins in the past year, thank you for your service. *We ask that you please sign up again and choose your month. You can also call Lori Langenhop at 419-966-3472 or email her at lahop@bright.net.*

LYF is looking for 2 individuals to get a Thrivent Action Card for the Super Bowl Sub fundraiser. If you are able, please contact Todd or Tina Wachtman at 419-591-6403. Thank you!

EAGLE NEWS: The Eagle News publication for December will be available today. The ushers will be passing them out as you leave today's service.

CHURCH COUNCIL NOTICE: In the event that church services need to be cancelled due to weather related (or other) circumstances, please refer to the 3 different ways below to be notified:

1. Go to the church Facebook page at **St. John Lutheran Church**
2. Go to the church website at **www.sjl.org**
3. Tune in to **WTVG Channel 13 - Toledo**

**KEEP THIS PAGE HANDY SO YOU DON'T MISS OUT
ON CHURCH EVENTS IN DECEMBER!**

(This will be updated as things are added)

DECEMBER HAPPENINGS – Please mark your calendars for some important events and happenings coming up at St. John this month.

- **TODAY ♦ 10:15 a.m. CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE REHEARSAL**
Rehearsals may last a little longer than the normal Sunday School hour.
- **TODAY ♦ 5 p.m. LYF CHRISTMAS GATHERING** *(see bulletin note)*
Jr High and High School LYF will gather at the Youth Center sat 5 PM for pizza, cookie decorating, and gifts. Bring a friend!
- **Wednesday Dec. 17 ♦ 7:00 p.m. MIDWEEK ADVENT SERVICE**
Our midweek Advent theme this year is “Stir Up the Power of...”
- **Sunday Dec. 21 ♦ 10:15 a.m. VOTERS' MEETING**
After worship, while the children are rehearsing, the voters will gather in the fellowship hall to discuss: 1) 2026 budget; 2) Nomination/Election of 2026 officers; and 3) Update from the Call Committee.
- **Sunday Dec. 21 ♦ 10:15 a.m. CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE FINAL PRACTICE**
This will be a final rehearsal (full run through). This may last longer than normal.
- **Sunday Dec. 21 ♦ 7:00 p.m. CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE**
The children will be ready to present you with a very special worship opportunity, and direct our hearts and minds to Christ, the new-born Savior!
- **Wednesday Dec. 24 ♦ 7:00 p.m. CHRISTMAS EVE**
Christmas Eve Service of Carols & Candlelight *(NO Communion)*
- **Thursday Dec. 25 ♦ 9:30 a.m. CHRISTMAS DAY**
Christmas Day Divine Service and Holy Communion, the “Christ Mass”

A PRAYER PAL INVITATION: On Tuesday, December 16th, you will have an opportunity to spend a little time with your student Prayer Pal. We will gather in the church at 8:30am for Chapel and afterwards head to the Fellowship Hall to decorate Christmas cookies together. You will also make a Christmas tree ornament for each other. Please mark your calendar so you don't miss this fun event!

“Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” I Thessalonians 5:17-18

<u>FINANCIAL FACTS:</u>	Home Fund	Synod & Missions	Building Fund
Weekly Need	\$11,710.59	\$500.00	\$961.54
Rec'd 12/07/2025	\$13,388.66	\$330.00	\$300.00

ATTENDANCE: 141

1st Advent Service: *Orphan Grain Train* - \$810; Attendance – 67

CHURCH OFFICE NOMINATIONS - The Stewardship Board would like to announce that the ballot to present at the December Voters' Meeting is shown below. However, names can still be added. If you or someone you know would like to volunteer for an office, please contact a Stewardship Board member. **We are so thankful to God for all those who choose to serve!**

LIST OF 2026 CHURCH OFFICE NOMINATIONS:

ELECTED: Vice Pres. – *Brad Rosebrook*

Treasurer – *Cathy Gerken*; **Financial Trustee** – *Diane Norden*

Elder – *Glenn Badenhop, Derek Damman*

Stewardship Board – *Teresa Damman, Joyce Wiechers*

Board of Education – *Micah Behnfeldt, Steve Marshall, Alicia Wakefield*, (take office in July 2026)

Alt. Delegate Synod – *Todd Hesterman*

APPOINTED **Secretary** – *Sara Myles* **Church Deacon** – *David Badenhop*

Trustee – *Doug Dietrich, Matt Schroeder*; **Cemetery Sexton** – *Ben Kruse*

Cemetery Board – *Brady Gerken, Dave Rosebrook, Mitchell Kruse*

Asst. Sunday School Supt. – *Nicole Stier*

NOTE: The installation of our newly elected and appointed officers for the year 2026 will be conducted in the regular Sunday service on January 4th.

BE A JAVA JOY HOST IN 2026! Would you like to be a JAVA JOY host on the second Sunday of one of the months of 2026? Sign up now at the narthex table! Please remember that hosting does not need to cost you anything – you may reimburse yourself from the Java Joy kitty. Hosting guidelines are available with the sign-up sheet. Thank you for providing this service for your church family!

2026 OFFERING BOXES – Offering envelope boxes are available to pick up in the back of the church. The financial commitments you make as well as how you contribute are between you and God. The church provides envelopes to our members in order to promote faithful and joyful giving as well as to serve as a means to record contributions throughout the year for charitable tax purposes. All new adult members, the 2025 confirmands, all EFT contributors, as well as any envelope user over the past 2 years receive offering boxes. If someone did not get a box and wants one, contact *Jerry Langenhop* at 419-966-3473 or lahop@bright.net and we'll make sure one will be assigned.

A special note to EFT contributors: Please pick up your box which contains envelopes for special church services not covered under your electronic giving, as well as subscription information to synod publications.

Members who elect to not use their envelopes over the course of two years (*for whatever reason*) will no longer be issued a box of envelopes.

MY DEVOTION BOOKLETS for the next quarter, *December, January, and February*, are available on the desk in the narthex. These are nice kid-friendly family devotions. Pick up a copy today!

OFFERING ENVELOPES FOR CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE –

Please note that there is no offering envelope in your boxes for the upcoming Children's Christmas Service. If you wish for your offering at that service to be recorded, use any spare Sunday envelope in your set. Regardless of which envelope you use, unless you specify otherwise on the envelope, your offering will go to *Sufficient Grace Ministries*.



AFTER-CHURCH OPPORTUNITIES – Adult Bible Study will meet in the cry room. Thank you to *Rev. Montgomery* for leading this! Sunday School will open in the Fellowship Hall then disperse to classrooms. The LAMP (high school age) will meet at the Youth and Family Center. Confirmation Class will meet in the North End of the Fellowship Hall.

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.

CHRISTMAS CARDS & CUTLERY – Check out the table in the hallway! The Women of Freedom have put out boxes of Christmas Cards for sale. Additionally, if you are interested in purchasing any Rada cutlery items such as: Paring Knives, Stubby Butcher Knives, Pie Servers, Vegetable Peelers, Slicer Knives, Granny Forks, Carving Forks, Pizza Cutters, Tomato Slicer, or Small Spatula, please contact *Linda Meyer* or *Deb Wachtman* to purchase these.

COLD WEATHER IS HERE! – Will you help keep our neighbors warm? The Women of Freedom invite the congregation to share with those in need. We continue to collect **new winter hats, scarves, and gloves/mittens for all ages** for *Together We Can Make a Difference* Initiatives. You can now hang your donations on the “giving tree” in the Narthex.

VENMO IS HERE! Exciting News...St. John now accepts donations via Venmo! If you need internet access, use our guest Wi-Fi **SJL Open** with the password **sjleagles##** Then scan the QR code to visit our donation page.



AREA EVENT

◆ **TOLEDO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CONCERT – Wed., Dec. 17th at 7 p.m. @ St. Paul's Lutheran Church 16976 CR-Q1 Napoleon, OH.** Tickets are on sale now and can be purchased Mon.-Fri. 10a.m.-2p.m. in their church office (419-758-3522). \$30 for adults, \$20 for school-age, and free for 4 & under. A flyer with more information is on the bulletin board.

✂ ✂ ✂

Thought for the Week...

Jesus is God in the flesh!



From the **Classroom** to the **Congregation**

Notes & Updates from St. John Lutheran School



SAVE YOUR CARDBOARD WRAPPING PAPER TUBES – As you prepare Christmas gifts, please save the cardboard wrapping paper tubes for an upcoming school project. There will be a collection box by the school entrance. Thank you!

SIGNS, SIGNS, EVERYWHERE A SIGN! Tell your friends and neighbors about St. John Lutheran School by picking up a corrugated plastic yard sign in the back of the church. Place it in your front lawn or other obvious place to promote the school. Thank you for telling others about our school!

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!

BASKETBALL SCHEDULES - The 2025-2026 St. John Eagle basketball schedules are posted on the church website and can be viewed on the church calendar. GO EAGLES!

GIRLS' BASKETBALL PHOTOS – We are looking for girls' basketball photos from 2005 to the present. If you have any to share, please email them to info@sjl.org.

SCRIP - Plan to start your Christmas shopping! The SCRIP Order Form is available on the Narthex table. Thank you and happy shopping! Please turn those orders in on Wednesdays (with payment) to *St. John School PTL Scrip Program*. Payment must accompany orders. Gift cards are generally delivered the following Tuesday. Any questions about SCRIP can be directed to coordinator *Kristyn Honemann* at 419-966-0207 or honemann@embarqmail.com.

ATHLETIC BOOSTER MEMBERSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE – 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.

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

MARK YOUR CALENDARS – There will be NO SCHOOL due to Christmas Break from December 22nd through January 4, 2026.