



St. John Lutheran Church

FREEDOM TOWNSHIP

16035 Co. Rd. U ♦ NAPOLEON, OH 43545

Serving Christ in Freedom

Worship • Stewardship • Mission

December 21, 2025

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Pastoral Vacancy

Miss Tracy Germann, Principal

Church Office: 419-598-8961

School Office: 419-598-8702

Church Website: www.sjl.org

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Guest Preacher, *Rev. Matthew Montgomery*

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

Hymns: **350 ~ 357** ~ [Communion: **332, 624**, Watchman, Tell Us of the Night] ~ O Come, Little Children

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* ✠ Kenlee Coressel, Jovi Sonnenberg *Acolytes* ✠
- ✠ Dennis Showman, Dean Badenhop, Richard Elling, *Ushers* ✠
- ✠ Kathy Behnfeldt, Pat Maassel, Anita Badenhop, *Altar Guild* ✠

POINSETTIA PLANTS – The poinsettias are adorning the sanctuary this morning and will be used for the various upcoming Christmas Services. Please see the blue insert in today's bulletin for a listing of those who purchased these poinsettias. If you ordered a poinsettia plant, it can be taken home after the 9:30 AM Christmas Day Festival Service. There will be plastic sleeves to protect them in the side conference room. Thank you to those who purchased poinsettias to decorate the church this year.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE – Please join us this evening at 7:00 p.m. as our youth present: *"God's Gift of Love: A Nativity Story"* at their Christmas Service. This is a combined church/school event. We will have one last practice today, after church, during the Sunday School hour.



PORTALS OF PRAYER for the next quarter, *January, February, and March* are available on the desk in the narthex. Pick up a copy today!

Date	Time	Activities
TODAY	9:00 AM 10:15 AM 7:00 PM	Communion Service followed by Voters' Meeting (in fellowship hall) Children's Christmas practice (full run through); "The Lamp;" Children's Christmas Service
Mon.	5:30 PM	No School – Christmas Break (runs thru Sun., Jan. 4, 2026) <i>Bread From Heaven</i> Food Pantry distribution
Wed.	7:00 PM	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service; (there will be preservice music) Offering: <i>Home Fund</i> Guest Preacher: <i>Rev. Matthew Montgomery</i> Acolytes: <i>Westen Cowell, Zac Kramer</i> Ushers: <i>Carey Damman, Scott VanValkenburg, Mike Maassel</i> Altar Guild: <i>Kathy Behnfeldt, Pat Maassel, Anita Badenhop</i>
Thurs.	9:30 AM	Christmas Day Festival Service with Communion Offering: <i>Home Fund</i> Guest Preacher: <i>Rev. Charles Kramer</i> Acolyte: <i>Owen Stier, Brynnleigh Kehnast</i> Ushers: <i>Dennis Showman, Dean Badenhop, Rich Elling</i> Altar Guild: <i>Kathy Behnfeldt, Pat Maassel, Anita Badenhop</i>
Sun.	9:00 AM 10:15 AM	Worship Service Sunday School; Adult Bible Study; "The Lamp" 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* 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
- ❖ *Dale & Rose Hoffman*, at the passing of Dale's brother, *Roger*, this past week. Please keep the Hoffman family in your prayers at this time.
- ❖ Military: *Eric Maassel, Justin Atkinson, Jason Rohrs, Jordan Lange, Joshua, and Kyle*

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**.

WOMEN OF FREEDOM - The 2026 Women of Freedom program booklets are available at the narthex table. Please pick up your copy today!

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.

• **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"

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*.



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.*

<u>FINANCIAL FACTS:</u>	Home Fund	Synod & Missions	Building Fund
Weekly Need	\$11,710.59	\$500.00	\$961.54
Rec'd 12/14/2025	\$13,383.35	\$1,087.83	\$1,208.83

ATTENDANCE: 192

2nd Advent Service: *Cherry Street Mission* - \$760; Attendance – 54

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 Rosebrock, 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 – There are still several boxes that need to be picked up by members. Please pick yours up, and may God prosper the work of our hands and the giving of His people! 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.

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.

AN EASY OPPORTUNITY TO BENEFIT ST. JOHN SCHOOL: What if you could give more without it costing more? What if that giving helped St. John School? Learn about contributing to the Lutheran Scholarship Granting Organization (LSGO), recognized as a charitable organization by the IRS, by seeing the purple sheet on the narthex table or going to <https://www.lsgoohio.org/>

WHY NOT CONSIDER ST. JOHN? Saint John Lutheran School offers preschool to 6th grade Lutheran education. Students are taught the Word of God. In addition, all the other subjects are taught. Students have the opportunity to participate in a variety of athletics. Bus transportation is available to students in all the local school districts. If you have any questions about enrollment or would like a tour of the school, please call the school office for an appointment.

ST. JOHN CHURCH LIBRARY – Stop in and check out the growing number of books available in the church library, located in the hall next to the sanctuary. The books in this library have been screened to assure that they are true to the Word of God and can be trusted to be theologically sound. To borrow a book, just take it with you, and then return it to the basket when you've finished reading. A complete list of the books in the church's library can be found by clicking on the "Book Inventory" link on the library page of our church's website. <http://www.sjl.org/library.html>

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 the vacancy pastor's sermons on the internet? Just click on "St. John YouTube Channel" or "Worship Service Resources" on the Home Page. There is also a "For Kids" tab which allows you to listen to previous Children's Sermons at St. John.

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.

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.



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Thought for the Week...

He who has no Christmas in his heart will not find it under a tree.

The celebration of Christ's birth has only just begun!
Please come back and join us for our Christmas services.

Children's Christmas Service (Tonight)

"God's Gift of Love: A Nativity Story" – 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve (Wednesday)

Candlelight Service – 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Day (Thursday)

Christmas Festival Service – 9:30 a.m.

