



# St. John Lutheran Church

FREEDOM TOWNSHIP

16035 Co. Rd. U ♦ NAPOLEON, OH 43545

## Serving Christ in Freedom

*Worship • Stewardship • Mission*

February 22, 2026

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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](http://www.sjl.org)

### **THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT**

Guest Preacher: Seminarian Nash Ringquist

Order of Service: Prayer and Preaching (LSB pg. 260)

Hymns: 542 ~ 656 ~ 561

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### **WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS**

*Welcome to St. John Church! "I sought the Lord and He answered me, and delivered me from all my fears" (Ps. 34:4). Let us seek the Lord together this day. Let us offer up our fears and doubts, that we may go forth strengthened and empowered for another week. If you are visiting us today, know that we are honored by your presence. Simply 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.*

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### **SERVING IN GOD'S HOUSE THIS MORNING**

- ✘ Sharon Damman, *Organist* ✘ Stryker Oyer, Owen Stier *Acolytes* ✘
- ✘ Dave Myles, Tim Badenhop, Denny Bockelman, *Ushers* ✘
- ✘ Kaylee Buchhop, Ronda Wentworth, Karen Lulfs, Karan Niebergall, *Altar Guild* ✘

**WELCOME, BABY BOY!** – *George Mitchell Hogrefe* was born on February 13, 2025 at the Fulton County Health Center to parents Mitchell and Alison Hogrefe. We rejoice with them (and proud grandparents!) at the birth of their son.

**2026 CONFIRMATION CLASS MEETING:** The Confirmation Class of 2026 and their parents will meet with Pastor Niermann today., Feb. 22, at 11:15am in the north end of the Fellowship Hall. Very important matters regarding Confirmation (which is being held on Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>) will be discussed.

**MIDWEEK SERVICES** – Join us each Wednesday in Lent at 7 p.m. Seminary Student Joshua Gerken will preach a series on some of the traits of Jesus. This year's offerings will benefit: Feb 25- *CPC Women's Health Resource* | March 4- *Dakota Boys & Girls Ranch* | March 11- *Worship Anew* | March 18- *Lutheran Hour Broadcast* | March 25- *Filling Home Napoleon Campus*.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Activities</b>
TODAY	9:00 AM 10:15 AM	<b>Worship Service</b> Sunday School; Adult Bible Study; "The Lamp"; Confirmation class meets until 11:15
Mon.	5:30 PM	NO SCHOOL – Professional Development <i>Bread from Heaven</i> Food Pantry Distribution
Tues.	8:35 AM	<b>School Chapel</b>
Wed.	7:00 PM	<b>Midweek Lenten Service</b> ; <i>Offering: CPC Women's Health Resource</i> <i>Guest Pastor: Rev. Matthew Montgomery</i> <i>Organist: Sharon Damman</i> <i>Acolytes: Brynnleigh Kehnast, Westen Cowell</i> <i>Ushers: Denny Bockelman, Dave Myles, Tim Badenhop</i> <i>Altar Guild: Karan Niebergall, Karen Lulfs, Kaylee Buchhop, Ronda Wentworth</i>
Sun.	9:00 AM 10:15 AM 10:30 AM 1:00 PM	<b>Communion Service</b> Adult Bible Study; Confirmation class meets until 11:15 School Pancake Breakfast and Open House School Board Meeting

**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, Napoleon
- ❖ *Rozella Gruenhagen and Bob Nemoyer* at Vancrest, Holgate
- ❖ *Lois Arps*, at Genacross – Assisted Living, Napoleon
- ❖ 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*

<b><u>FINANCIAL FACTS:</u></b>	Home Fund	Synod & Missions	Building Fund
Weekly Need	\$11,710.59	\$500.00	\$961.54
Rec'd 02/15/2026	\$15,803.27	\$175.00	\$285.00

ATTENDANCE: 135

**2025 END-OF-YEAR CONTRIBUTIONS** – The 2025 individual offering totals (green/yellow sheets) are available on the narthex table. These will also be printed in the Church Annual Report. We hope this helps those members in need of this information for tax purposes. If you have any questions on your yearly contribution information, please call Financial Trustee Ryan Bostelman 419-770-2029.

**THANK YOU** to *Larry Mahnke* and *Dean Maassel* for their efforts this winter in keeping the church and school parking lot cleared of snow. They have been kept very busy this winter season and Spring is another month away. A special thanks to *Denny Von Deylen* for clearing the parking area at the Youth & Family Center also.

**CALL COMMITTEE UPDATE:** The Convertible Vicar application was submitted/(mailed) last week. We will now await further information from the Ohio District.

**CHURCH OFFICE HOURS** – A great big thank you to *Joyce Wiechers* for coming back to the Church office while Leah Saylor was on maternity leave. Leah returned to the office this last week and will plan on being in on Wednesdays and Thursdays from around 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. as before. Bulletin submissions are due by 9 a.m. on Wednesday to [churchsecretary@sjl.org](mailto:churchsecretary@sjl.org) or 419-598-8961.

**2025 CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT** – Please be sure to get your reports turned in to Leah Saylor. The secretaries of the different church organizations are asked to write up a summary of the year's activities, and treasurers should submit their financial report for their organization.

**DIRECTORY UPDATES** – There are addresses and phone numbers in the Annual Report directory that need updated. Call the church office or email [churchsecretary@sjl.org](mailto:churchsecretary@sjl.org) with updates.

**LADIES, JOIN US FOR A LENTEN BIBLE STUDY!** – We will meet in the Church Cry Room at 10 a.m. on 4 Mondays in March (Mar. 2nd thru Mar. 23<sup>rd</sup>). The topic is *The Women at the Cross*.

**ENDOWMENT NEWS!** St John Lutheran Church is blessed by the generosity of members and friends who support our mission. We are pleased to share that our Endowment Fund can now receive gifts of commodities, grain, and publicly traded securities (*such as stocks or mutual funds*). These types of gifts can offer significant tax advantages for donors. When you donate commodities or appreciated equities directly—rather than selling them first—you may be able to:

- ✓ Avoid capital gains tax on the sale
- ✓ Deduct the fair market value of the gift (*if you itemize*)
- ✓ Support the long-term ministry of our church in a meaningful way

This can be a wise and faithful way to steward the resources God has entrusted to you.

If you are interested in making a gift of grain, commodities, or securities, our Endowment Committee can guide you through the simple process. We also encourage you to consult your tax advisor to understand how these gifts may benefit your individual situation.

**LSGO** – It is tax time and not too late to make a donation to the LSGO (Lutheran Scholarship Granting Organization). Here is more information:

- Go to this URL to make your donation: <https://lsgoohio.org/about/>
- The State of Ohio recently updated the legislation to specify that donors can make a gift to an SGO and qualify to receive the tax credit at any time before they file their taxes for the year. The donor has the option to contribute up to the federal filing deadline of April 15.
- You will also have a dollar for dollar reduced **state income tax** liability up to \$750 per filing individual or \$1,500 as a couple. You make the donation, your tax dollars come back to you, and the donation goes to a student at St. John. It will cost you nothing out of your pocket to make a difference at St. John Lutheran School!
- Your donation will provide scholarships to St. John students.
- Questions??? Please call or email Tracy at 419-598-8702 / [tgermann@sjl.org](mailto:tgermann@sjl.org); Joyce Wiechers at 419-579-4265 (leave message).

**ARCHIVES DISPLAY:** The St. John Archive Display has been transformed recently. Please stop by and check out the section of pictures of students from the current school year. Then, you can take a trip down “memory lane” with the remaining sections of the display. Thank you to the Archives Committee for sharing these with us.

**‘BREAD FROM HEAVEN’** will have its monthly food distribution on Monday at 5:30 p.m. If you are a member of St. John and 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 your record will be kept separate and absolutely confidential.

**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 –**

- ❖ The Ridgeville Township Fire Department is hosting its annual **Pancake and Sausage Breakfast on Sun., March 1<sup>st</sup>, from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Ridgeville American Legion.** Free will donations will go toward fire and rescue equipment.



**From the Classroom to the Congregation**

*Notes & Updates from St. John Lutheran School*



**OPEN HOUSE – March 1<sup>st</sup>** is the date of this year’s School Open House. This will run from **10:30am until 1:00pm.** There will also be a **Pancake Breakfast that day from 10:30am – noon.** Invite a friend, and come check out our school! Meet the teachers, tour the classrooms, check out the family activities in the gym, and sign up for door prizes too. Your door prize entry could win you a free enrollment fee for the 2026-2027 school year.

**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!

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*Thought for the Week...*

**Jesus is coming back. Are you?**