

# THE FORWARD

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF

ST. Paul's EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

NEWARK, OHIO FEBRUARY 17, 2026

Church Phone: 740-345-6115 Web Site: <[www.stpaulselca.org](http://www.stpaulselca.org)>



Cell phone: 586.864.4004

Cell phone: 360-689-9784

Mon-Fri 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Web Site: [www.stpaulselca.org](http://www.stpaulselca.org)

Pastor: Martin P. Gehring

Office Hours: M T W 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. or by appointment

Congregation Council President: Jerry Young

Office Secretary: Jodie Nickles

Church Phone: 740-345-6115

## Beautiful

Ruth and I took advantage of our last snowfall to hike through Dawes in near isolation. The flakes settled on the pinecones and accented the twisted trunks. It revealed hidden nests and blanketed everything in silence. Every few steps my gaze would be drawn to another still-life of branches and snow. And they were all beautiful.

I have yet to see a tree grow ill-proportioned or a flower bloom awkwardly. Each leaf unfolds in perfect proportion to its task, each color finds its perfect niche in the woodland palate. Ugliness is not found in nature. What ugliness there is we make ourselves. When our grasp exceeds our need, or we act in ignorance of our interconnectedness with all manner of life, we scar the earth and each other.

Nature's beauty comes from its creator. The Apostle Paul tells us that God's Spirit, moving through all creation, reveals to us the true nature of God, and it is *beautiful*. In the same breath, however, Paul says that so too the human spirit reveals *our* true nature, which is sometimes beautiful, but sometimes twisted and distorted.

The beginning of scripture opens on a scene of peace and sufficiency. However, our desire for *more* corrupts that peace and sets us on an ugly course of destruction and alienation. The end of scripture is a scene of jubilant healing and restoration around the throne of Christ. You and I live between these two scenes, struggling with both the consequences of our oversized appetites, and our longing for that future restoration.

Shortly before my father died, he advised us, his progeny, to do three things every day: give thanks, pray, and look for beauty. Today I found this

beautiful snow draped landscape, and for this I give thanks. Renewed by such revelation, I pray that I – we – might take one more small step toward that promised restoration where once again we will find our place in God's beautiful creation.

Bless you all! Pastor Martin

**Please keep the following people in your prayers**

**Immediate: *The family of Lori Donahue, Robin Hill***  
*(mother of Dustin Hill), Ann Robertson (Kerrill Foster's*  
*sister-in-law), Kristin Gehring (sister of Pastor Gehring).*



**Ongoing: Cheryl Seabright**

*(In order to keep our worship prayer list current, prayer requests will be included in Sunday worship for three weeks, after which they will be printed in the bulletin as an "ongoing" request. After six weeks, names will be removed unless a request is made to renew them.)*

***If you need an address for anyone or wish to add someone to the list, please call the office.***

**THE WHENS AND THE WHERE'S – let the office know if something needs to be added to the list below!**

PASTOR'S OFFICE HOURS - Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday  
**9 a.m. to 2 p.m. or by appointment.**

**LENTEN SERVICES** Beginning with Ash Wednesday on February 18<sup>th</sup>, there will be an evening service at 7 p.m. in the church. Beginning on February 25<sup>th</sup> and through Wednesday March 25<sup>th</sup> there will be a soup supper/potluck prior to each Wednesday evening service at 6 p.m. If you can make soup for one of these Wednesdays please let the church office know. Please plan on coming and bring your own drink, table service and a dish to share. See you then!

- **Friday Night Game Night – Game Night happens on the first and third Fridays of the month.** Please join us on February 20<sup>th</sup>, March 6<sup>th</sup> and March 20<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. in Weisgerber Lounge! Bring your favorite snack and come join the fun!
- **The Land of Legend Fly Fisherman** meet in Danford Hall on the second, third and fourth Mondays of each month at 7 p.m.
- **ST. PAUL'S BOOK CLUB** meets the third Monday evening of each month at 7 p.m. in Weisgerber Lounge. The book we will begin in February is *Defending Britta Stein* by Ronald H. Balson.
- **AA** meets every Saturday morning at 11 a.m. in Danford Hall and on Tuesdays and Fridays at noon.
- **NA** meets on Friday evenings at 7 p.m. in Danford Hall.
- **Friday Fellowship Bible Study** meets every Friday morning at 10 a.m. in Weisgerber Lounge.
- **Ruth Circle meets next on March 11<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.** in Danford Hall.
- **Church Council will meet February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7 p.m.**
- **Matthew's Kitchen** meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.
- **Grief Group** meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesdays at 1:30 p.m. They meet next on March 11<sup>th</sup>.
- **Crafts & Sewing Group** usually meets the first Saturday of the month at 10 a.m. in Danford Hall. During the winter meetings will be dependent on the weather. *Please contact Connie Baker, 740-334-8961 if you have any questions.*

### **Notes to the Church and Congregation:**

**URGENT NEED FOR FOOD PANTRY ITEMS!** With the ending of SNAP benefits for many, the food pantry is in need of assistance. ***Any shelf-stable items are needed...especially peanut butter.*** Items must be able to be prepared without the addition of milk or dairy and include; powdered milk, juice boxes, cereal, soups, crackers instant mashed potatoes, pastas, spaghetti sauces, bread, toilet paper. The need is real and families and children are going hungry in our community. See a good BOGO sale? Donate the extra. If you wish to give a monetary donation, mark your offering envelope designated to the "Food Pantry".

**SHUT-INS** – If you are in need of pastoral care, a friendly visit, or would like communion brought to your home, please contact the office and leave a message with Jodie between the hours of 10 and 2. Thanks!

## **Unapproved Congregation Council Minutes Jan 19, 2026**

Present: Jerry Young, Beth Warner, Sally Finck, Julie Ingram, Julie Hippen, Jim Rengert, John Grangaard, Kerrill Foster (non-voting), Martin Gehring. Excused – Jerry DePalmo

- Jerry Young opened the meeting with prayer and welcoming new council members Beth Warner and Julie Hippen.
- After a bit of discussion and explanations, Julie Ingram motioned that last year's slate of officers remain the same for 2026; President, Jerry Young, Vice-President, John Grangaard, Secretary & Financial Secretary, Kerrill Foster, Treasurers Mark Finck and Charlie Laidlaw-Smith. Beth Warner seconded the motion and the slate of officers passed unanimously.
- Installation of council members will be Sunday, January 25<sup>th</sup>.
- Treasurer's Report included a brief overview of church finances and encouraged anyone with questions to reach out to her. The end of the year deficit was just under \$23,000 which is much better than the predicted \$80,000! This happened because of higher than expected offerings and a total of \$33,600 transferred from the rental income generated this year. Kerrill asked that a note be put in the bulletin that the vote on the 2025 Annual Report be postponed until the week of January 31/February 1<sup>st</sup> to make sure that the reports get delivered by the post office before the vote. Jim Rengert made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report, Beth Warner seconded, motion passed unanimously.
- Pastor's Report – Thought the meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> with Deb Dingus and others regarding the Community Center went well and several council members agreed that many questions were answered and much information was cleared up. A vote with a ballot will be held on February 8<sup>th</sup> weather permitting. Tim Utterback is retiring and his last Sunday will be February 22<sup>nd</sup>. He will return if we cannot find anyone before Holy Week. Pastor will be out of the office at a conference Tues-Thursday Jan 20-22<sup>nd</sup>.
- President's Report – no report
- Motion to accept pastor's and president's report by Sally Finck, seconded by John Grangaard, motion passed unanimously.

- Rental Properties – Jim reports that the Marx’s at 25 S 28<sup>th</sup> street have been working with a government grant program called Passport that helps low income folks over 60 stay in their homes by affecting low cost home improvements. In past years they installed a walk-in shower at the property and in 2025 installed a wheelchair ramp. Currently the Marx’s are working with Passport to move the laundry room to the first floor from the basement. Jim also referred the Mason’s at 107 W Locust to Passport to assist with a wheelchair ramp if possible.
- Congregational Care and Property – no reports other than what is in the Annual Report.
- Motion to accept the reports made by Sally Finck, seconded by Beth Warner, motion passed unanimously.
- Next meeting Monday February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7 p.m. John Grangaard will chair.
- Pastor closed with prayer.
- Respectfully submitted, Kerrill Foster

### **Sunday Volunteers for March 2026**

	<b>March 1</b>	<b>March 8</b>	<b>March 15</b>	<b>March 22</b>	<b>March 29 Palm Sunday</b>
<b>Cantor</b>	Juli Rauch	Dustin Hill	Ruth Gehring	Julie Hippen	Juli Rauch
<b>Lector</b>	Mark Finck	Kerrill Foster	Elizabeth Kleinknecht	Jon Minard	Diane Ganz
<b>Com. Assistant</b>	Mary Billy	Addison Laidlaw-Smith	Greta Blegvad	Mandy John	Sadie Smith
<b>Usher</b>	Fred Freytag, Charles Cooperider, Steve Wiersma	Charlie Laidlaw-Smith, Charles Cooperider	Greg Everingham John Grangaard	Jerry Young, Charles Cooperider	Charles Cooperider, Florence Knerr
<b>Counter s</b>	Fred & Lindsay Freytag, Sally Finck	Kerrill Foster	Sally Finck, Greg & Kim Everingham	Kerrill Foster & Don Miller	Diane Ganz & Kerrill Foster

## March Anniversaries

- 2 - Willard & Deborah Stamper (58)
- 12 - Carl & Suzanne McElfresh (33)  
    Craig & Alexandrina Wolf (35)
- 17 - Nick & Belinda Baker (58)

- 21 - Gene & Linda Crawmer (56)
- 29 - Gene & Rita Ricketts (46)
- 31 - Bill & Judy Rauch (58)

## March Birthdays

- |                     |                     |                            |
|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 - Terrie Baker    | Julia McCormack     | 19 - Ainsley Laidlaw-Smith |
| Chay Leang          | Laura Triplett      | 20 - Matthew Berg          |
| 3 - Gene Lamp       | 11 - Dan Fischer    | 23 - Allison Gehring       |
| 4 - Belinda Baker   | Benjamin Leber      | Carole Carter(84)          |
| 5 - Greg Everingham | 14 - Kim Everingham | Craig Wolf                 |
| Erin Daly-Zinn      | John McElfresh      | 26 - Don Grube             |
| Amanda John         | 15 - Jim Eastman    | 28 - Gloria Popovich       |
| 7 - Anna Sayatovich | 16 - Linda Cline    | 29 - Kristal Kinser        |
| 9 - Benjamin        | 17 - Geoff Kaercher | Willard Stamper            |
| Ricciardo           | Ashley Shaw         | 31 - Cheryl Fulton         |
| Sally Smith (83)    | 18 - Anne Daly      | Alexander Ricciardo        |
| 10 - Will Kennard   | Bonita Levy         |                            |

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**Easter Lily Ordering Time!** We will be ordering an array of Easter lilies to adorn the altar on Easter Sunday. The plants will cost **\$15.00** each. The form below can be filled out and either put in the offering plate at worship or mailed to the church office (67 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Newark, Ohio 43055) **Last Day to order is March 22<sup>nd</sup>.**

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ I want to  
place an Easter flower for the following reason:

**In memory of** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**In honor of** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**To the Glory of God** \_\_\_\_\_ **NUMBER OF PLANTS** \_\_\_\_\_

## FINANCIAL REPORT

Year to date operational revenue as of December 31,2025	<b>\$232,214.55</b>
Year to date operational expenses as of December 31, 2025	<b><u>254,971.41</u></b>
Deficit	<b>(\$22,756.86)</b>

*St. Paul's expected deficit for 2025 was projected to be over \$79,000. As you can see above, instead it was less than \$23,000. This was due in part to greater than budgeted offering income and the rental properties exceeding their return from \$20,000 to \$33,600. In addition, \$25,000 was moved from a savings account to the general fund to maintain a positive balance.*

*Kerrill Foster, Financial Secretary.*

Received 1/4/2026	Year to Date	Attendance
Current \$ 2,905.00	\$2,905.00	Sat. 4 p.m. 12
Benevolence <u>53.00</u>	<u>53.00</u>	Sun. 10 a.m. <u>49</u>
Total \$2,958.00	\$2,958.00	Total 61

Received 1/11/2026	Year to Date	Attendance
Current \$ 13,984.00	\$16,889.00	Sat. 4 p.m. 12
Benevolence <u>25.00</u>	<u>78.00</u>	Sun. 10 a.m. <u>50</u>
Total \$14,009.00	\$ 16,967.00	Total 62

Received 1/18/2026	Year to Date	Attendance
Current \$ 7,858.00	\$24,747.00	Sat. 4 p.m. 12
Benevolence <u>105.00</u>	<u>183.00</u>	Sun. 10 a.m. <u>52</u>
Total \$7,963.00	\$ 24,930.00	Total 64

January 25<sup>th</sup> – church cancelled due to snow emergency.

*Thank you Thrivent Choice members for your donations to St. Paul's!*

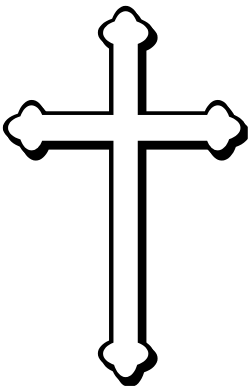
Year to date operational revenue as of January 31, 2026	<b>\$26,399.64</b>
Year to date operational expenses as of January 31, 2026	<b><u>20,626.79</u></b>
Surplus	<b>\$5,772.85</b>

**THE FORWARD** February 17, 2026  
**St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church**  
67 North Fifth Street  
Newark, OH 43055-5031

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

**Non-Profit Organization**  
**U.S. POSTAGE PAID**  
Newark, OH 43055  
Permit Number 117

**SUNDAY  
SCHEDULE**  
**Traditional Worship**  
**10 a.m.**



**SATURDAY  
WORSHIP**  
**4 p.m. year-round**

*“The Mission of St. Paul's  
Evangelical Lutheran  
Church is to **SHARE**, at all  
times and with all people,  
the Good News of **GOD'S**  
**GRACE**, through  
**CHRIST JESUS.**”*